Core French in Eastern Ontario: A language-minority student’s experience

by

JORDANA FRANCESCA GARBATI

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study was conducted to learn about the experiences of one language-minority student learning French in a core French class in Eastern Ontario. In-class observations and interviews with the language-minority learner (LML), his guardian, his teachers and principal were conducted over a six-week period. The data collected helped to create a thick description of the LML’s experiences. The results of the study show that the institution, family and friends all play a role in the LML’s experiences in learning French. It was found that the use and availability of resources, possible curriculum modifications, and effective teaching and learning strategies for language-minority students are important factors affecting the experiences of the LML. This study shows that peers have a strong influence on the experiences of the LML in learning French in the core French context. Finally, the Canadian School Stay program came under scrutiny and information was gleaned from the regional coordinator. Suggestions are made for improved content delivery and further research.
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“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new lands but in seeing with new eyes.”

(Marcel Proust, 1871-1922)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ...................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................................. iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ................................................................................................. iv

LIST OF ACRONYMS .................................................................................................. vii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................. 1

  Context ....................................................................................................................... 1
  Rationale .................................................................................................................... 2
  Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................. 4
  Research Questions .................................................................................................... 4
  Thesis Organization .................................................................................................... 4

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ...................................................................... 5

  Statistically Speaking ................................................................................................ 5
  Permanent Residents .................................................................................................. 5
  Temporary Residents .................................................................................................. 7
  French Enrolment ....................................................................................................... 8
  What do the Curriculum Guidelines say? ................................................................. 9
  French Programming in Ontario ................................................................................ 9
  Joint Intentions ............................................................................................................ 12
  Language Learning .................................................................................................... 13
  Language Transfer ..................................................................................................... 14
  Trilingual Language Acquisition .............................................................................. 16

CHAPTER 3: METHOD ............................................................................................. 19

  Research Design ........................................................................................................ 19
  Characteristics of a Case Study .................................................................................. 21
  Participant Selection Strategies ............................................................................... 23
  Recruitment .............................................................................................................. 25
  Overview of the Method ............................................................................................ 27
  Data Collection Strategies ....................................................................................... 28
  Interviews .................................................................................................................. 29
  Observations .............................................................................................................. 32
  Data Analysis Strategies ......................................................................................... 34

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS ............................................................................................ 37
# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Common Patterns in Relation to the Literature Review

- Characteristics of FSL Programs ........................................ 70
- Teaching Methodology .................................................. 71
- L1 and L2 Assists L3 ..................................................... 73
- Motivation ....................................................................... 75
- Communication .............................................................. 77
- Modification ..................................................................... 79

Recommendations

- Core French Curriculum and Program Design: .................. 80
- At the School and School Board Levels ........................... 80
  - Communication ........................................................... 83
  - French as an Option or a Beginning French Class for Newcomers? ........................................... 84
  - Promotion of French .................................................... 85
- Parental Involvement ....................................................... 86
- Canadian School Stay Program ....................................... 87

Limitations ........................................................................ 87
- Time ............................................................................. 88
- Access to Participants ..................................................... 88
- Demographic and Geographic Location .......................... 89
- Classroom Observation Procedures .................................. 89

Avenues for Further Research ........................................... 90

Conclusion ......................................................................... 92
REFERENCES..................................................................................................................94

APPENDIX A: ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND CURRICULUM
EXPECTATIONS FOR CORE FRENCH ............................................................................. 101

APPENDIX B: STUDENT PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW GUIDES .......................... 102

  Interview 1 - Topics of Discussion ........................................................................ 102
  Interview 2 – Topics of Discussion ......................................................................... 103
  Interview 3 – Topics of Discussion ......................................................................... 103

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL, FRENCH TEACHER AND HOMEROOM
TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................................................................. 104

APPENDIX D: PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE ............................................................. 105

APPENDIX E: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM:
STUDENT ...................................................................................................................... 106

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF INFORMATION: PRINCIPAL ................................. 108

APPENDIX G: LETTER OF INFORMATION: FRENCH TEACHER ............ 110

APPENDIX H: LETTER OF INFORMATION: HOMEROOM TEACHER ....... 112

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF CONSENT: PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS ......... 114

APPENDIX J: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM: PARENT
................................................................................................................................. 115

APPENDIX K: FIELD NOTE SAMPLES ................................................................. 118
### LIST OF ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core French</td>
<td>CF</td>
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<tr>
<td>English as a second language</td>
<td>ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English literacy development</td>
<td>ELD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French as a second language</td>
<td>FSL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First (usually dominant) language</td>
<td>L1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second language</td>
<td>L2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third language</td>
<td>L3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language-minority learner</td>
<td>LML</td>
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<tr>
<td>French teacher</td>
<td>FT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeroom teacher</td>
<td>HRT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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<td>Guardian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
<td>PC</td>
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<td>Librarian</td>
<td>L</td>
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<td>Individual Education Plan</td>
<td>IEP</td>
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Context

As many French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers and researchers are aware, learning a language is a complex process. It involves the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar structures, the development of communication skills, and the awareness of culture. Many Canadians who will read this thesis will recall the difficulties they faced and the successes they celebrated while learning French in elementary and secondary schools. As a young student in a core French (CF) program, I remember being fascinated with the grammatical structure of the language but found learning and singing French songs along with a recording, a challenge. Some readers may relate to this, while others faced different obstacles in their FSL education.

While teaching the CF program in Central Ontario I encountered many daily challenges. Sustaining student motivation, encouraging students to speak in French with their classmates, creating innovative lesson plans, and travelling through the busy student-filled halls with my “classroom” known as “The French Cart”, just to name a few. But the most challenging part of all was determining how to teach FSL to language-minority students. A language-minority student refers to a student who comes from a home where a language other than the dominant language of the society is spoken, and is being schooled in a second language for at least part or perhaps all of the school day (Collier, 1995).

This research is grounded in my personal experience as a CF teacher in Ontario. The successes and challenges I experienced teaching language-minority students in elementary school, the interactions that I had with students, parents, teachers, and
administrators has prompted me to pursue research in the area of the second language acquisition of language-minority students, namely in core French. The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of one language-minority student at the intermediate level in core French in Eastern Ontario.

**Rationale**

In 2005, 88.4% of permanent residents in Canada had a mother tongue that was neither English nor French and 35.9% of permanent residents in Canada reported to possess neither French nor English language ability. With these statistics in mind, investigating educational needs of language-minority learners is of crucial importance. Although much research has been done in the area of second language acquisition (Cummins, 1989, 1996, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1982, 2005), there is little research about the experiences of language-minority learners in core French programs. It is necessary to understand the experiences of language-minority students in CF programs in order to: (a) help those learners succeed academically, (b) to adequately inform teachers, parents and policy makers about the benefits and drawbacks of current core French programming regarding the case of such students, and (c) to increase academic achievement in French for language-minority learners.

In the 2003-2004 school year, over 800,000 students were enrolled in CF programs (i.e., the teaching of French as a subject) in Ontario while approximately 115,000 were enrolled in French immersion programs (i.e., French is the language of instruction for a variety of subjects) (Canadian Parents for French, 2005). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2001a) expects that ESL students participate in the French as a second language (FSL) program along with their grade-level peers. At this point in time,
very little research has been conducted relating to the experiences of language-minority learners in the core French program and it is necessary to focus on these learners as our Canadian immigration statistics continue to rise.

The focus of this study is to gain a full understanding of the CF experiences of one intermediate language-minority student in Ontario, where English is the student’s second language (L2) and French is the third or additional language (L3). I strongly believe that a generous amount of knowledge can be gained from a sole participant and that this can provide a good understanding of the experiences of such students in FSL. Through careful observation and documentation, this research provides administrators, teachers, and researchers, a glimpse into the world of one language-minority student.

Careful observation and systematic data collection in this study reveal the attitudes and motivations of the student participant, as well as government, educator, and parental expectations of the language-minority student in the core French classroom. I believe that this information sheds light on implications for the future of FSL and by extension to ESL programs and policies. It is an important addition to limited existing research, and the insight gained from this research suggests areas for future research directions.

This study provides valuable information that can be used when designing instructional units so that teaching is appropriate to language-minority students’ current and future goals. Theoretical research helps to explain benefits and drawbacks of learning FSL and ESL simultaneously. Policies to support language development of language-minority students will be examined. For example, are new permanent residents of minority languages obliged to fulfill the same language requirements for graduation as non-native English or French speakers in Ontario? What support structures are in place in Ontario to help with the English and French language development of the language-
minority student who speaks neither of these two languages? This research begins to uncover some answers to these questions.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of one intermediate language-minority learner in a core French classroom in an Eastern Ontario school.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the design and analysis frameworks of this qualitative research study:

1. How does a language-minority student experience core French in an Eastern Ontario core French class?
2. What are the feelings and attitudes of the language-minority student’s parents, teachers, and administrators about the core French program of the student in an Eastern Ontario school context?

**Thesis Organization**

Chapter 2 of this thesis is a comprehensive literature review of: (a) statistical data, (b) curriculum guidelines, (c) Ontario Ministry of Education policies, (d) language learning theories, (e) language transfer theories, and (f) trilingual language acquisition. Chapter 3 describes the research method. Chapter 4 explores the findings of this research. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses this research, addresses limitations of the research, and provides directions for future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research stems from my personal teaching experiences of the core French (CF) program in an elementary school in Central Ontario. I faced various successes and challenges with this teaching position, one of which was how to teach French to language-minority learners. This personal experience gave me a starting point to design and conduct this study. In this literature review, I examine: (a) Canadian immigration statistics and French enrolment statistics, (b) current Ontario CF curriculum guidelines and Ontario Ministry of Education policy relating to ESL learners in CF, (d) research on how to improve teacher/student rapport in the area of joint intentions, (e) language learning, (f) language transfer theories, and (g) trilingual language acquisition issues.

Statistically Speaking

I begin the presentation of immigration facts by looking at Canadian statistics relating to permanent residents and temporary residents. The main focus is on statistical information pertaining to permanent and temporary residents in Ontario because it is the Canadian province that has the highest permanent and temporary resident status; it is also the province where I reside, and it is the province where this research study took place.

Permanent Residents

The report, Facts and Figures: Immigration overview-Permanent and temporary residents: 2005, issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada presents the annual intake of permanent and temporary residents to Canada from 1980 to 2004. A permanent resident, one who has been granted permanent resident status in Canada, must live in Canada for at least 730 days (two years) within a five-year period or risk losing their...
status. They have all their rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms such as equality rights, legal rights, mobility rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. They do not, however, have the right to vote in elections (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006).

In 2006, Statistics Canada issued a report on immigration facts and figures that offers some important statistical information regarding the status of permanent residents (i.e., newcomers who plan to stay), in Canada in 2005 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). The following are a selection of those statistics, reflecting immigration figures in 2005 that are relevant to this research:

- In 2005, there were a total of 262,236 permanent residents in Canada;
- 22% of permanent residents in Canada were between the ages of 15 and 24;
- 15.5% of permanent residents in Canada were between the ages of 0 and 15;
- 48.6% of permanent residents in Canada were from non-English speaking countries;
- 88.4% of permanent residents in Canada had a mother tongue that was neither English nor French;
- 35.9% of permanent residents in Canada reported to possess neither French nor English language ability;
- 53.6% of all permanent residents in Canada resided in Ontario;
- 43.0% of permanent residents in Ontario resided in Toronto;
- 0.2% of permanent residents in Ontario resided in Kingston;
35.1% of permanent residents in Ontario reported to possess neither French nor English language abilities. (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006)

In other words, almost half of all permanent residents in Canada in 2005 were from non-English speaking countries and more than half of all permanent residents in 2005 resided in Ontario. Almost half of all Ontario permanent residents in 2005 lived in Toronto’s urban area. With 35.1% of permanent residents in Ontario possessing neither English nor French language ability, the question of education can be raised. What programs are in place to educate learners who cannot speak even one of the official languages of Canada? Is integration (i.e., students fully involved in the mainstream classroom activities) the most effective way to educate these learners? What tools do language-minority learners use in everyday classroom situations? Fortunately, much research has been conducted in an attempt to answer these questions and increase the quality of education that language-minority students receive in Canada (Cummins, 1989, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982, 2005) although little information has been gleaned about these students in core French.

**Temporary Residents**

“Temporary residents are people who are lawfully in Canada on a temporary basis under the authority of a temporary resident permit” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006, p. 113). Citizenship and Immigration Canada admits a wide range of temporary residents who come to Canada as workers, students or visitors. Temporary residents include foreign workers, foreign students, and the humanitarian population (i.e., refugee claimants) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). The following statistics
represent the status of temporary residents on December 1, 2005 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006):

- There were 471,704 temporary residents in Canada;
- 153,996 temporary residents were foreign students;
- 19% of foreign students in Canada were reported to be in secondary school or less;
- 53% of foreign students in Canada were at the university level;
- 40% of foreign students came from the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of Korea;
- In Ontario, foreign students amounted to 57,281 or 32.2% of the total number of temporary residents in Canada;
- 20.7% of foreign students resided in Toronto;
- 0.5% of foreign students resided in Kingston.

As almost 20% of foreign students in December, 2005 were in secondary school or below and one-third of the total number of temporary residents in Canada were foreign students, educators are responsible for their education while they are in our country. These students are in our schools and educating them is our responsibility. Kanouté and Saintfort (2003) say that for some immigrant families, the school connection in the country of origin is different from the one experienced in Canada where schooling has an important socialization aspect.

**French Enrolment**

Specifically in Ontario, a reported 86% (Statistics Canada, 2001) of the population are English speakers who are enrolled in a variety of FSL programs. FSL education in
Ontario is part of the mandatory curriculum. In the 2003-2004 school year, over 800,000 students were enrolled in core French programs (i.e., the teaching of French as a second language) in Ontario while approximately 115,000 were enrolled in French immersion programs (i.e., French is the language of instruction for a variety of subjects) (Canadian Parents for French, 2005). With 35.1% of permanent residents in Ontario possessing neither English nor French ability (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006), how to educate language-minority students in a second (i.e., English) or third (i.e., French) language is of particular importance. With over 800,000 Canadian students enrolled in core French, the quality of core French education is a significant area to investigate in this country where, under section 16 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, “English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada” (Department of Justice Canada, 2006).

**What do the Curriculum Guidelines say?**

**French Programming in Ontario**

Currently there are several FSL programs in place in the province of Ontario. These programs include French Immersion, Extended French, and Core French. French Immersion and Extended French are FSL programs in which French is not only taught as a subject but also serves as the language of instruction in other subjects. French Immersion and Extended French programs in Ontario generally start when a child enters Grade 1. In a French Immersion program, French must be the language of instruction for a minimum of 50% of the total instructional time at every grade level of the program and must offer at least 3800 instructional hours in French by the end of Grade 8 (Ministry of
Education, 2001b). In contrast, an Extended French program requires 1260 hours of instruction in French by the end of Grade 8, with a minimum of 25% of instructional time in French (Ministry of Education, 2001b).

Core French refers to the teaching of French as a subject and usually involves 20 to 45 minutes of instruction per day (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2004). The aim of secondary core French in Ontario is for students to develop a usable command of fundamental communication skills that they can expand through further study or contact with French speaking people (Ministry of Education, 1999). In 2003-2004, the majority of Ontario students were enrolled in a core French program. Core French enrolment in that year was 861,251 students versus the French immersion enrolment of 114,792 students (Canadian Parents for French, 2005).

The Ontario Ministry of Education is responsible for all aspects of educational matters in the province including defining the curricula. It is expected that teachers follow the objectives set out in each curriculum document. The aim of the core French curriculum, stated in the first two pages of the Ministry of Education curriculum document, 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. The Core French program offers students a valuable educational experience and the opportunity to develop a basic usable command of the French language that can be expanded through further study or contact with French-speaking people. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 2)

The curricula issued to teachers by the Ontario Ministry of Education outlines the achievement levels and expectations of a student for a particular subject at each grade
level. The achievement levels for core French and the Grade 8 curriculum expectations, found in Appendix A, provide an example of the expectations of the Ministry of Education. The characteristics of student performance given for level three represent achievement that is considered to be the standard for the grade (Ministry of Education, 1999).

This curriculum document also outlines the role of parents, teachers and students in regards to the learning of French. Some of the roles of parents are as follows:

Even if they do not speak or understand French, parents still have an important role to play in supporting their child’s learning. By reading the curriculum, parents can find out what their children are learning in each grade and why they are learning it. ... Participating in parent conferences, working on the school council, encouraging children to complete assignments at home, and reinforcing the value of French and other languages and cultures in society are just a few examples. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3)

Part of the teacher’s role is to:

…make every reasonable attempt to motivate students to want to learn French by providing a supportive environment where second-language skills are gradually introduced, continuously practiced, and consolidated. ... Learning activities that are based on students’ interests, needs, and desire to communicate will achieve the best results in a core French classroom. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3)

The Ministry of Education also describes the role of the students. Their role is described in the following way:

Students who are willing to make the effort required and who are able to apply themselves will soon learn that there is a direct relationship between achievement
and hard work, and will be motivated to work as a result. ... Regardless of their circumstances, learning to take responsibility for one’s progress and learning is an important part of education for all students. ... Students are encouraged to pursue opportunities outside the classroom to extend and enrich their skills in French. The ability to communicate in French should be viewed as a valuable skill that enhances and reinforces overall communicative ability. (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3-4)

Although there is a section in this curriculum document about core French for exceptional students at the elementary level, there is no information regarding French education of language-minority learners. The Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum document for ESL and ELD (English Literacy Development) states that, “it is expected that ESL/ELD students will participate in the French as a second language (FSL) program along with their grade-level peers” (Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 24).

**Joint Intentions**

As mentioned above, part of the teacher’s role is to design learning activities that are based on students’ needs and interests (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 3). How are teachers to know students’ wants or needs without constantly checking on them? Olson (2003) refers to joint communicative activities when speaking of teaching and learning strategies. In joint communicative activities (i.e., greetings, lecturing, questioning, reading, preparing reports, participating in class discussions), “each person must recognize his or her single part as a component of a joint project, the expression of a joint intention” (Olson, p. 245). Are real-life teachers and students aware of their individual responsibilities and roles? “Joint activities involve a number of participants, a fixed set of
roles, and a shared criterion for success” (Olson, p. 245). When teaching, the teacher’s role is to coordinate these activities into a lesson that “fulfills the teacher’s responsibilities and allows the students to fulfill theirs” (Olson, p. 245). In the core French classroom context, are the intentions shared between the teacher and the language-minority learner? Are their individually constructed goals made known to one another?

**Language Learning**

Cummins (2000) has argued that it takes five to seven years, while Collier (1995) believes it takes four to twelve years to develop a second language to the level necessary for successful academic performance. This refers to what is required for students to attain grade norms on academic (context-reduced, cognitively demanding) aspects of language proficiency (Cummins, 1996). A pedagogical approach that promotes language awareness can help students to know those aspects of language that can be borrowed and adapted to other languages so as to improve their linguistic resources (Cenoz, Hufelsen, & Jessner, 2001). Tuveng and Wold (2005) studied how problems comprehending the language of instruction contributed to language-minority children’s difficulties with different mathematical tasks. Could the same be true for tasks in a second and third language class? In other words, if L2 is the language of instruction for L3, does the language-minority learner have comprehension problems that will affect his/her ability to complete educational tasks? In what ways do language-minority learners overcome these possible challenges and what support structures are, or should be, set up to help them? Specifically regarding core French programs, recommendations from a survey of university students who had taken core or extended French programs conducted by the Canadian Parents for French (CPF) include increasing speaking and listening comprehension practices in core
French programs, and the possibility of increasing the program time and intensity. These recommendations aim to increase speaking and understanding of French as students progress through the core and extended French programs (Canadian Parents for French, 2004). CPF also report, “ESL students in Extended French have an advantage, because they’ve already practiced strategies to learn a second language. …they tend to be successful” (Canadian Parents for French, 2004, p. 47). Would the same be true for ESL students in core French?

**Language Transfer**

Researchers such as Tucker (1991) and Edwards (1998) have conducted extensive research in the field of second language acquisition in diverse students. In his research on bilingual education, Tucker (1991) draws several conclusions. He observes that children learn a second language in different ways depending upon their culture, their group, and their individual personality. One can wonder then, how this could affect a child learning a third language simultaneously to a second language. Evidence shows that a child who acquires basic literacy or numeracy concepts in one language can transfer these concepts and knowledge easily to a second or third or other late-acquired languages (Tucker, 1991; Edwards, 1998). In addition to this, there is a need to develop basic functions of literacy, numeracy and scientific discourse in a student’s first language (L1) to the fullest extent while facilitating transfer to the second language (L2).

Bilingual education theory states that many non- or limited-English speaking students require instruction in their native language in order to attain high academic achievement in English (Goldenberg, 1996). In his reflection on the education of language-minority students, Goldenberg (1996) reports that, according to the bilingual
education theory, language-minority students are generally best served in programs that build academic knowledge in students’ home languages while helping to build proficiency in English. If this were the case, then would the same be true for language-minority students enrolled in a core French program in addition to an ESL program?

Taylor’s (1992) research aims to shed light on the question of how language-minority children adapt to and succeed in early French immersion programs, both linguistically, and overall. Taylor’s (1992) case study approach addresses these questions and provides insight into the experiences of one language-minority student in early French immersion. Although generalizations from her study were not established, Taylor (1992) found that the student of her case study succeeded linguistically and academically, and adapted socio-psychologically in his Early French Immersion program. Learning two languages simultaneously did not seem to hinder his social and academic developments. While her research contributes to the future of French language education, it does not touch upon any experiences of language-minority students in core French. With a higher enrolment of Canadian students in core French than in French immersion, why has extensive research not been conducted on the experiences of language-minority students in core French?

According to Schmid (2001), language, socio-economic background and marginal schools influence the low educational attainment of many limited English proficient students. Her research, conducted mainly in the United States, shows that racial and ethnic segregation and poor and under funded urban schools, rather than the lack of desire to learn English, are major factors in insufficient English communication skills and low educational attainment. If this is also the case in Canada, then what are the factors
affecting communication skills of language-minority urban youth more specifically in third language classes, namely CF?

**Trilingual Language Acquisition**

Dagenais and Day (1998) have contributed to research in the area of multilingual education. Their case study documents the classroom language experiences of three trilingual French immersion students in British Columbia and investigates teachers’ perceptions of these students and representations of trilingualism. The researchers find that interests, habits, and strengths influence the literacy practices in both French and English of the three students. The teachers involved in this study describe trilingualism as a resource that students can draw upon but that may be a handicap for some students (Dagenais & Day, 1998). I raise the question of how educators can help language-minority students experience their multilingual ability as a resource rather than as a handicap. While we can learn from the Dagenais and Day (1998) study, it is clear that this research contributes directly to the field of French immersion education. It does not relate to the experiences of language-minority or multilingual learners in core French programs.

Cenoz, Hufelsen, and Jessner (2001) have made significant contributions to research on multilingual education. In their research of third language acquisition and trilingual education, they find that third language acquisition in the school context and trilingual education are complex phenomena related to a large number of sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and educational factors. These factors include: (a) the acquisition of one or more foreign languages in a monolingual context versus languages spoken in the community, (b) the route and the rate of the process of acquiring a third language, and (c) linguistic difference between L1 or L2 and L3. Cenoz, Hufelsen, and Jessner (2001)
believe that third language learners present advantages over second language learners because of highly developed learning strategies, metalinguistic awareness, and communicative sensitivity. When language-minority learners are learning L2 and L3 simultaneously, which of these factors still apply?

The results of studies by Clyne (1997) and Dewaele (1998) indicate that L3 learners often rely on a second language as a ‘default supplier’ for L3 production. This means that L3 learners use their knowledge of L2 to help them communicate in L3. Jessner (1999) states that the development of competence in two or even more languages can result in higher levels of metalinguistic awareness facilitating the acquisition of language. Cruz-Ferreira (1999) reports that the speech of multilinguals is characterized by systematic intrusions of one of their languages into another, resulting in utterances where structural features ascribable to more than one language are present. Jessner (1999) shows that one of the processes that multilinguals use is to look for equivalent expressions or cognates in the languages that they have been in contact with in order to help them understand another language. Specifically in the case of language-minority students in core French, how and when does this occur? How do language-minority students learning L2 and L3 simultaneously use their knowledge of one of these languages to help them understand the other? The research proposed here may provide insight into these issues.

Linguistic distance refers to how linguistically similar languages are. A language family is a group of languages related by descent from a common ancestor. The group of romance languages (i.e., Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian) is, for example, a branch of the Indo-European language family comprising hundreds of related languages and dialects descending from Latin (Language Family, 2007). Language families and linguistic distance are an important factor in L3 acquisition because the acquisition of
languages that are typologically closer to the L1 or L2 can potentially facilitate the process of acquisition but can also favour code-mixing (Cenoz, Hufelsen, & Jessner, 2001). Linguistic distance has important educational implications because the similarity between the L1 or L2 and the target language is an important element in deciding the amount of exposure to the different languages that is desirable in the curriculum both in terms of intensity and the optimal age to start learning a second and a third language (Cenoz, Hufelsen, & Jessner, 2001). If the L1 of a language-minority learner is linguistically distant from the L2 or L3, then what challenges does the student face?

To investigate some of the ideas presented above, I carried out observations of a language-minority student, who had French as a third language (L3), during his French lessons at school. I also conducted interviews with the language-minority student, his guardian, his teachers, and his principal. The following chapter describes in detail the method that I used to conduct this research.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Research Design

The focus of my research was to understand the experiences of one language-minority student in an intermediate core French program in eastern Ontario. To carry out this research, I chose a qualitative approach based on case study because of its descriptive and interactive characteristics. I believe that this research approach is best suited to this type of investigation and it fulfills the aims of my research. Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception (Merriam, 1988). This research attempts to understand the experiences of one language-minority student in a core French program rather than to create a theory or generalization about a phenomenon. The qualitative case study approach allows me to achieve as full an understanding of the phenomenon under study as possible. Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest, “one main advantage of case studies is that they allow the researcher to focus on the individual in a way that is rarely possible in group research” (p. 172). Well-known researchers in the field of qualitative research have explored many definitions of a case study. As a form of research, case study is defined as a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 2000). Schram (2006) defines case study as an analytic focus on an individual event, activity, episode, or other specific phenomenon, not necessarily as the method used for investigation. A qualitative case study entails an intense, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit (Merriam, 1998). A qualitative case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena (Merriam, 1998).
Stake (2000) identifies three types of case studies (a) intrinsic case study, referring to an intrinsic interest in a particular case, (b) instrumental case study, intended mainly to provide insight to an investigation into an issue or to redraw a generalization, and (c) collective case study, which refers to an investigation of a phenomenon, population, or general condition. Although it could be said that Stake (2000) seems to be looking at qualitative case study through quantitative lenses when he speaks of generalizations, researchers (Merriam, 1998; Schram, 2006) agree that the case study approach is used when the research objective is to understand a particular bounded phenomenon. In my opinion, the case study is the most suitable method for this research because my study is designed to understand a specific and bounded phenomenon (i.e., one language-minority student enrolled in an Ontario core French program).

I conducted this research partly because of an intrinsic interest in this particular phenomenon. Stake (2000) describes intrinsic case study as research that is undertaken when the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case. He states that the specific case itself is of interest rather than building theory or understanding a generic phenomenon (Stake, 2000). As was previously mentioned, I have had experience teaching language-minority students in core French classes over several years. I have the desire, not only to understand this particular case, but to also inform readers of my research so that we can further develop our understanding of this phenomenon. Merriam (1998) states that the decision to focus on qualitative case studies stems from the fact that this design is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing. Schram (2003) suggests undertaking qualitative inquiry “not so much to achieve closure in the form of definitive answers to problems but rather to generate questions that raise fresh, often critical awareness and
understanding of problems” (p. 6). In conducting a qualitative case study with a sole participant, I acknowledge that generalizations must be made with caution. Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest, “it may be difficult to recognize idiosyncrasies” (p. 172) from a single case study.

**Characteristics of a Case Study**

Merriam (1998) suggests four characteristics that are essential properties of qualitative case study: (a) particularistic, (b) descriptive, (c) heuristic, and (d) inductive. I will examine each of these characteristics below as they impact my research. First the case study described in this thesis focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent (Merriam, 1998). In my research, the particular phenomenon will be the language development and attitudes of one language-minority student in an Ontario core French program. Second, I use descriptive so that the end product of the case study is a rich description of the phenomenon. I spent approximately seven hours interviewing the participants of my study and spent approximately three hours observing the language-minority student during his core French lessons. My data collection took place over a period of six weeks. I contacted and interviewed people (i.e., parents, teachers, principals) who directly or indirectly have an influence on the education of the language-minority student. Third, the case study will illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998). In my research, I provide a rich description that encompasses many aspects of the language-minority student’s life – not only the student’s background, and family situation, but also issues surrounding the student’s motivation and learning attitude, government policies and regulations affecting
the education of this student, and support programs in place from the school or school board for language development. Other areas of investigation included difficulties and successes of the student in the Ontario school system, description of life outside of the school for the student, personality traits, the student’s learning style, and parental involvement with the student’s ESL and FSL development. Finally, in my case study I will not rely on inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning means that “generalizations, concepts, or hypothesis emerge from an examination of data” (Merriam, 1988, p. 13). As I do not intend to generalize about a certain issue, inductive reasoning is left to the reader of this research. Discovery of new relationships, concepts and understanding, rather than verification or predetermined hypothesis, characterizes qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1998). Comparisons to other systems will be left up to the reader. The readers will use their previous knowledge and judgement to evaluate the case study as credible and applicable to other systems in which they may be involved. Stake (2000) suggests that readers with intrinsic interest in the case (i.e., a case that is selected due to its inherent value to the researcher) learn more directly from the description, not necessarily ignoring comparisons with other cases, but not concentrating on the comparisons. I believe that the case study, as described by researchers (Schram, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000) is the best way to conduct the qualitative research described in this thesis.

Merriam (1998) believes that research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education. “Case study has proved particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1998, p. 32).
Participant Selection Strategies

I used a case study approach to obtain rich data on the French language experiences of one language-minority student in a core French program. It was important to find a good participant for this research. What follows is a description of the criteria that I used to select the language-minority participant. The language-minority participant had to fit into the following categories: currently an intermediate level student (i.e., in grades 7-10 in a core French program), have arrived to Canada within the past 2 years, have strong English ability so as to participate in interviews, and live in an urban environment. In addition to these criteria, the participant had to have a mother tongue (L1) that was not from the romance language family (i.e., descending from Latin) so that there was no facilitation or transfer from L1; the environment from which the participant came should have no previous contact with French culture so there was no cultural familiarity, and the participant should not have prior knowledge of French before entering into the Ontario school system so that the information gleaned is about a new situation for the participant. However, according to Cenoz, Hufelsen, and Jessner (2001), a participant who possesses a mother tongue linguistically distant from the L2 or L3 may face more obstacles than if the mother tongue was not linguistically distant. For this research, in other words, we understood that a student who has a mother tongue linguistically distant from French might face more obstacles in the core French setting. The issue of linguistic distance is common for most new residents in Ontario. Of the 25 top mother tongue languages of permanent residents in Canada in 2005, 24 do not descend from a romance language (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). These languages include, but are not limited to, Mandarin, Arabic, Urdu, and Korean.
Involving a participant with the language background as described above should make for influential and significant research. As was previously stated, there is a need for research in this field. Research involving this type of participant in the described context has yet to be explored. As such, I believe that a great amount of knowledge about such a student’s experiences can be acquired from following a sole participant.

There are several reasons for my interest in this particular type of participant. To begin, it should be made clear that I have an intrinsic interest in learners at the intermediate grade level and that my experience as a core French teacher at this level directly influences my research. In addition to this, I believe that one can learn a great deal from the experiences of a relatively recent permanent resident with limited English language abilities enrolled in a core French program. As was previously mentioned, 35.1% of permanent residents in Ontario reported that they speak neither of Canada’s two official languages (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). With such a large percentage of people who do not speak the dominant languages of the society, it is of particular interest to examine the school experiences of young learners. The Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum on ESL and ELD states that, “it is expected that ESL/ELD students will participate in the French as a second language (FSL) program along with their grade-level peers” (Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 24). Knowing that the majority of Canadian students are enrolled in core French programs, that a large percentage of permanent residents possess neither French nor English language ability, and that the Ontario Ministry of Education dictates that ESL students participate in the FSL program, surprisingly little research has been conducted addressing this issue. Policy makers, administrators, teachers, and parents alike may therefore find this research beneficial for future program planning, as well as for the creation of possible support
structures for language-minority learners and for the development of effective teaching methods.

Recruitment

To recruit participants for this study, I explored several techniques. I concentrated this study in Ontario for two reasons. First, Ontario is the Canadian province with the highest population of permanent residents. Not only do 53.6% of all permanent residents in Canada live in Ontario but Ontario also has a high percentage (35.1%) of people who possess neither French nor English language ability (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). Second, I have an intrinsic interest in the experiences of language-minority students in this province as it is the province in which I live, work, and study. When I first proposed this research, I planned to concentrate this study in one of two locations – a large metropolis or a small town. I thought it would be interesting for me to focus on a student in a large metropolis, as it is where most of my FSL teaching experience comes from. A large metropolis in Ontario also has a high percentage of permanent residents. I thought a small town within driving distance from a major city would be another ideal place to conduct this research. I acknowledged that it might be a challenge to gain a language-minority participant in this town because of its small size and population. In 2005, in terms of permanent residents, there was a ratio of 1:290 between the metropolis and small town (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). I thought it could be interesting, however, to discover how a language-minority student copes in a town where there is not a large language-minority population. It was my belief, at the beginning of this research, that no matter where my study was conducted, it would still be descriptive, informative and useful for future research in education.
To recruit participants I contacted professional and personal colleagues in both location types. I believed that the benefits of conducting my research would help to draw the attention of administrators and teachers to my study, and might motivate them to participate. It was important to me that I find participants with the language characteristics previously described and who were eager to be involved in this study. Once school board ethics committees approved my research, I contacted personal and professional colleagues via email, in-person meetings, and phone conversations. I sent letters of information consent forms to school administrators in both location types and followed-up via phone conversations, email or in-person meetings. As the recruitment process developed, I found it quite challenging. It was difficult to get in touch with school administrators to request their permission to conduct my study. In the end, the language-minority participant in my study resided in the small town.

I contacted twelve elementary and secondary school principals in order to recruit participants. Of the twelve schools, one school principal agreed to participate in my study and had a student who fit the criteria of my participant description. I was not able to speak with any administrator at three of the schools since they did not return my phone calls or respond to my voice-mail and in-person messages. Seven schools declined to participate in my research. Of these seven schools who declined to participate, two schools did not have participants who matched my criteria, two schools had participants who fit my criteria but the administrators of these schools felt that these students were not at an appropriate stage to participate in my research, and three schools declined to participate because too much research had already been conducted in their schools and they were too busy to invite more research. The final school that was located in a metropolitan area, had a participant who fit my criteria, and had all the consents in place.
A few days before I was scheduled to start my data collection at the school, however, I learned that this student did not take part in French class. It was brought to my attention that this student’s teachers did not expect him to take part in French and as such, did English work during the French period. I concluded that he would not be a suitable participant for my study. The recruitment process for my study took approximately three months of active searching before I was able to begin data collection with the participating school.

**Overview of the Method**

I used a multi-dimensional approach for this study. “Case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data from testing to interviewing can be used in case study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 10). Case study researchers seek both what is common and what is particular about the case, but the result regularly portrays something of the uncommon (Stouffer, 1941), usually because of one or more of the following: the nature of the case, the case’s historical background, the physical setting, other contexts (e.g., economic, political, legal, and aesthetic), other cases through which this case is recognized, and those informants through whom the case can be illuminated.

Stake (2000) describes a case as having a conceptual structure. It is usually organised around a small number of research questions or issues that are complex, situated, and problematic relationships. The focus of my research is to understand the experiences of a language-minority learner in an Eastern Ontario core French program. Some issues central to this research include: (a) the attitudes and motivation of language-minority students in core French, (b) the expectations of teachers, administrators and
policy makers for language-minority students in core French, and (c) parental and school support available for language-minority students’ study of French. A critical investigation of the Ontario Ministry of Education policies, FSL and core French curriculum objectives and expectations, will be undertaken in order to complete a descriptive analysis of the core French experiences of a language-minority learner.

**Data Collection Strategies**

The language-minority student was the central participant in my research study. Data was collected from this participant mainly in the form of interviews. In addition, interviews were conducted with his teachers, principal and the student’s parents. At the start of this research, I predicted that interviewing the language-minority student and his parents could be challenging depending on their English ability level and that several measures might need to be taken to facilitate communication. Interview questions might need to be altered or simplified during interviews, and pictures might be used to represent the student’s feelings and attitudes. If communication was difficult, I thought that a community resource volunteer could act as a mediator to facilitate communication between the researcher and some participants. As the research progressed, I learned that the language-minority student had adequate knowledge of the English language to communicate with me and these measures were not needed. Questions such as the ones found in Appendices B, C and D were used to facilitate in-depth discussion between myself and the language-minority student, teachers, principal, and parents during interviews. Some of these questions have been modified from Mady’s (2003, 2006) research on the motivation of ESL students to learn in a core French setting.
Interviews

The focus of the semi-structured interviews was to gather information from the central participant about his French language development, his attitude toward learning French and his motivation to learn French. The interviews conducted with other participants in this study (i.e., teachers, parents) question the expectations and policies surrounding core French education of language-minority students in Ontario, effective teaching strategies of core French for language-minority students, the influence the learning environment might have on the language-minority learner, and support structures for language-minority students learning French. An advantage of conducting interviews in second language research is that they allow “researchers to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, such as learners’ self-reported perceptions or attitudes” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173). Conducting several interviews allowed me to develop interview prompts and to gain the most information possible from the language-minority participant about his experiences in core French. Conducting several interviews and being present in the school consistently over a six-week period also allowed me to develop a relationship with the language-minority participant as well as with the other participants.

Clear communication between me and the participants was essential, not only to gain insight into the experience of the language-minority students, but to also gain trust and respect from the students in order to make for a credible and ethical account. Questions were rephrased for clarification and unanswered questions were revisited during subsequent interviews.

In case study methodology, Stake (2000) emphasizes the importance of being reflective. Local meanings are important; foreshadowed meanings are important; and
readers’ consequential meanings are important. Qualitative case study is characterized by researchers spending extended time, on site, personally in contact with the activities and operations of the case, reflecting, and revising the meaning of what is going on (Stake, 2000). Throughout the research process, I maintained constant communication with the participants. I was present at the school once or twice per week over a six-week period. I stayed in close contact with people who were directly and indirectly involved with the FSL education of the language-minority learners to get a better grasp of the influence the learning environment may have on the language-minority learner. During the six-week data collection period, I held meetings with the language-minority student. These meetings took the form of three individual semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour in length. Semi-structured interviews are well suited to case studies as the researcher can adapt the main questions to suit people’s roles and can explore their different perspectives at length (Drever, 1995). Sample interview questions for these semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendices B, C, and D.

Participants were given the opportunity to voice their opinions freely. Interview questions were revised after each interview in order to subsequently gather a better understanding of the student’s experiences in French class. The real names of all participants, the school, the school board, and school board programs are not used in this study. Participants were given a letter of information and a consent form (Appendices E, F, G, H, and I) prior to interviews and classroom observations. The language-minority participant’s interviews were organized in the following way: Interview 1 served as a general introduction to the language experiences of the language-minority student and helped to develop a trusting relationship between the researcher and the participant. Interviews 2 and 3 explored the attitudes, feelings, and experiences of the language-
minority student in core French. Interviews 2 and 3 took place after a class where I was present, as an observer.

I also conducted one informal, semi-structured interview of approximately one hour in length with each of the following people: the homeroom teacher, the French teacher, the principal, and the guardian of the language-minority student. Conducting a semi-structured interview of approximately one hour in length with these people added to the rich description of the language-minority student’s experiences in school and in French. Interview question samples for these participants are found in Appendix C. The interview with the language-minority student’s parent gave me a better understanding of the value placed on French from his family’s perspective. It also gave me insights into the support provided to the language-minority student at home. I did not find a need to arrange subsequent interviews for clarification purposes. Sample interview questions for the parent interview are found in Appendix D. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed me to develop more questions during the interview for the purpose of expansion or clarity of issues.

Once a week, I went to the participating school. On each visit to the school, I conducted an interview with one of the above-mentioned participants, or I observed a period of French in which the language-minority participant took part. This schedule was designed in collaboration with the school principal. I conducted an interview with the LML after two of the three in-class observation times.

The schedule of my visits was arranged through the principal once ethical approval from the university and the school board were obtained. I interviewed each participant at a time that was convenient to him or her. Interviews took place in either the school library resource room or the principal’s office. I conducted individual interviews
in English. Interviews lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to 60 minutes. All interviews were audiotaped and I took field notes during all interviews.

Three interviews were conducted with the language-minority student during his lunch period. Interviews with the French teacher, the homeroom teacher and the parent were conducted during the teachers’ planning times on the days that I visited the school. The interview I conducted with the principal took place at a time that was convenient to her.

**Observations**

I conducted three observations of the language-minority student in his French class over the six-week data collection period. Gray and Guppy (1999) describe observational studies in the following way:

Observational studies of micro-behaviour are often most effective when only a small number of participants are involved. … Observation of behaviour in everyday settings is referred to as observation that is carried out in natural environments. The researcher does not manipulate the setting, the events, or the behaviour, but instead observes events as they unfold and often supplements his or her observations by listening to conversations and asking questions. (pp. 86-97)

Through repeated observations, the “researcher can gain a deeper and more multilayered understanding of the participants and their context” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 176). The purpose of the observations was to explore how and when the language-minority student participated with other students and with his French teacher in class. The in-class observations assisted me in determining what languages and learning strategies the language-minority student used in class. During observation periods, I took detailed field
notes (see handwritten and typed samples in Appendix K). While conducting the in-class observations, I intended to gather handouts and copies of students’ notes to help create a descriptive understanding of the language-minority student’s language experiences in the core French program at his school. There was, in reality, no opportunity to do so.

The schedule of my French class observations was arranged with the principal and the French teacher. I observed the French class three times over the two-month data collection period. The first observation period was 20 minutes in length. The remaining two observations were each 40 minutes in length. I stayed for the duration of the French period. I arranged with the teacher prior to the commencement of class to seat myself at the back of the class. During each observation period, I had an unobstructed view of the language-minority student participant. I took detailed field notes in which I wrote about this participant’s engagement in French tasks, his interaction with other students and with the French teacher, and his general participation in class. I also wrote notes about the activities that the whole class was involved in and about what the French teacher was doing. I documented verbal utterances by the French teacher, by other students, and by the language-minority student in both English and French when possible. During the observation periods, the language-minority student and the French teacher did not acknowledge my presence by speaking with me. I was in the role of a non-participant observer and my presence did not seem to affect the behaviours of either participant although the literature suggests that an additional presence affects the learning environment.

In addition to interviews and class observations, I collected a brochure about the school from the school office and two brochures about the French programs with the board from the board office. The language-minority student did not receive any handouts
during the French classes that I observed although I did look at his French duotang on my final observation day. This duotang contained about forty worksheets on topics in French such as: the alphabet, numbers, colours, days of the week, months of the year, and some basic verb conjugations.

Finally, I looked for evidence of promotion of French at the participating school. I looked for instances such as: French posters on walls around the school, French announcements over the loud-speaker, and other teachers and students speaking French outside French class. I also asked all participants about how French was promoted at the school.

Data Analysis Strategies

Data analysis is the process of making sense of one’s data (Merriam, 1988). The goal of data analysis, according to Taylor and Bogdon (1984, p. 139) is “to come up with reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on a preponderance of the data.” I describe my data analysis strategies here.

After I conducted each interview, I transcribed each audiotaped interview that took place over the data collection period. The field notes that I took while conducting class observations were typed as a word document. Real names of participants and schools are not used in my research. For each transcription, I coded each turn (T), a place or point at which a change occurs (Dictionary.com, 2007), in order to note speech turns and topic changes. I numbered the turns and each turn is identified in the word documents and is referenced in this thesis, using the following format: (month/day/turn number).

During classroom observation periods, I wrote my thoughts and comments about what I was observing in parentheses directly in my field notes. These comments were
then typewritten in italics in word documents. The use of parentheses and italics distinguished my comments from the actual field notes.

As I progressed through my data collection, I wrote several comments and summaries along the way. These summaries included my thoughts about the direction of my research, notes about recurring themes and questions about existing research. This analysis technique helped me keep track of changes in data collection strategies and evolving ideas. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) refer to this analysis technique as interim analysis.

Transcriptions and observational field notes were coded using an inductive analysis technique. Through the use of inductive analysis, categories and patterns primarily emerge from the data, rather than being imposed on them prior to collection. Coding was done using a template analysis style whereby codes were derived and applied to the data (McMillan & Schumacher). I derived the codes mostly from the interview and observation data and partly from the interview guides I developed. The coded classifications were frequently revised during the data analysis stage of the research. Some initial codes for my data set included: L1 use, L2 assisting L1, L3 spoken, and student-teacher interaction. Codes were then grouped into categories (i.e., teacher support, social interaction, independent problem solving). Merriam (1988) suggests that “the categories one constructs should be internally homogeneous; that is, all items in a single category ought to be similar” (p. 135). McMillan and Schumacher state, “the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to make general statements about relationships among categories by discovering patterns in the data. A pattern is a relationship among categories” (p. 373). From the list of categories, I then was able to seek patterns about the
relationships. These patterns (i.e., institution, family, friends) are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

From the notes that I took while reading the interview and observation transcripts, “regularities – things that happen frequently with groups of people” (Merriam, 1988, p. 131) were found. I speak about these in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Description of the Participants

The focus of this research was to explore the experiences of one language-minority learner in core French in Ontario. The participants involved in my study were as follows: the language-minority learner (LML), his guardian (G), his French teacher (FT), his homeroom teacher (HRT), and his principal (P).

The Language-Minority Learner (LML)

The LML is not a Canadian citizen, nor is he a permanent resident. The LML is a Grade 8 student enrolled in a Canadian School Stay Program offered by the school board. This means that the LML is in Canada for one year, resides with a host family, and returns to his home country at the end of the year. Further details about the Canadian School Stay Program follow.

When asked about his language skills, the LML stated that he is fluent in Korean, and is okay in English. He stated that he has no knowledge of French.

Canadian School Stay Program

The Canadian School Stay Program is a program that is organized by the school board. Foreign students from countries such as Korea, Japan, and Mexico, pay tuition to the board to be a student enrolled in a school with the board. Students participating in Canadian School Stay are placed with a host family for the period of time that they are enrolled in a school. The host parents act as their legal guardians while the students are in Canada. The time that the students stay in Canada can be anywhere from a few months to a year. Students also have the option of extending their stay.
The school board website states that included in the Canadian School Stay Program is the instruction of the curriculum of the Ontario government, a certificate at the completion of the program, small class sizes, well-equipped schools with computer labs, internet access, and modern libraries, opportunities for the students to participate in athletic and student life of the school, and development of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and support, as required. Tuition for this program is $11,500 (Canadian funds) for two semesters. This tuition includes a full-academic program, including English-as-a-Second Language training, health care, use of textbooks, student activity and athletic fees, services of a teacher-counsellor, regular reporting to the student’s parents on progress, school picture package, and yearbook (School Board, 2007).

The Canadian School Stay Program helps students embrace the Canadian culture by connecting them with a friendly, secure and loving Canadian family. Foreign students are placed with families that can provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment (School Board, 2007). The cost for this is $700 (Canadian funds) per month. This money is given to the host family.

Students who are interested in the Canadian School Stay Program at the elementary level must meet the following criteria: (a) elementary student in home country, and (b) desire to experience North American culture.

Foreign students who are enrolled in the Canadian School Stay Program meet the criteria that I outlined in Chapter 3 for the research that I have conducted. That is, they do not have English or French as a first language, they have been in Canada for a short period of time, they are enrolled in the core French program, and they have no previous exposure to French culture. The difference with these foreign students is that their parents
remain in their home country. During my study, I was not able to conduct an interview with the LML’s parents.

**The Guardian (G)**

The guardian (G) is the LML’s host father. He lives with his wife and his son in the community of the LML’s school. They have been participating in the Canadian School Stay Program for four years and hosted many students in those years. The G said he has enjoyed his involvement with the program and has generally had positive experiences as a host parent. The G has known the LML since his arrival to Canada in September 2006. The G is also a teacher at the LML’s school.

When asked about his language skills, the G stated that he has knowledge of a few languages. He is fluent in English and Greek. He speaks Spanish fairly fluently. His French language skills are basic. The G told me that he has a strong connection with his Greek heritage.

**The French Teacher (FT)**

The LML’s French teacher (FT) has known the LML since September 2006. She teaches French to the LML’s class every day of the week for one forty-minute period each day. She has been teaching core French for several years at the LML’s school and prior to that, she taught in various schools in northern Ontario.

When asked about her language skills, the FT stated that she is fluent in both English and French.
The Homeroom Teacher (HRT)

The homeroom teacher (HRT) teaches the LML language, math, computers, and physical education. In the school, the HRT is the teacher that has the most interaction with the LML in a school day. He is sometimes present during the LML’s core French class.

When asked about his knowledge of languages, the HRT states that besides English he has no knowledge of other languages.

The Principal (P)

The principal (P) has been an elementary school administrator for several years. Prior to that, the P was an elementary school teacher. The P does not have too much contact with the LML on a daily basis but is aware of his general progress at the school.

When asked about her knowledge of languages other than English, the P stated that she speaks an Italian dialect. She has a basic knowledge of French, although her father and grandfather were French. She identifies with her Italian heritage more than her French heritage.

Summaries of the Common Patterns

Coding and categorizing of the data sets in this study revealed three major patterns revolving around the relationships between the LML and (a) the institution, (b) his host family, and (c) the people in the LML’s social network (i.e., friends). This chapter presents summaries of these patterns.
Institution

When I speak of institution, I refer to the teachers, administrators, school board officials, and the Ministry of Education, that directly and indirectly affect the experiences of the LML in core French. Olson (2003) describes the school in the following way:

School as an institution takes over responsibility for the student’s learning and knowledge, and because the school is responsible to the state or nation that created it, it sets the standards, procedures, norms, and rules in terms of which this learning, thinking, and knowledge are judged. (p. 291)

Kanouté and Saintfort (2003) suggest that it is necessary for schools to better understand the social practices of immigrant families. Doing this would validate certain family practices in the eyes of the students and because the school shows them respect, shows that they trust them, immigrant families could have less resistance to the new school practices. In this summary of findings relating to LML’s relationship to the institution, I present issues relating to: (a) the curriculum, (b) French teacher support to student, (c) board support to French teacher, and (d) promotion of French in school. Within these categories, I describe participants’ opinions, feelings, and attitudes as they were presented to me during interviews and observations during the data collection stage of my study. I also touch upon positive and negative experiences for various participants within some of these categories.

Curriculum: Scheduling, Modifications

During my analysis of interview and observation data, I found that English was frequently used in the core French class. English was used in spoken and written form by
the French teacher on a regular basis. The LML and other students in the class also used it in conversations with the FT and with each other. The fact that English was used in the core French class on a regular basis, aided comprehension for the LML. In all three interviews that I conducted with the LML, he commented on how, when the FT spoke English, it helped him: “[The FT] speaks French and sometimes when I can’t understand French, she speaks English for me” (03/26/T15). The LML explained to me that he thought his French teacher spoke French 60% of the time and English 40% of the time. When the LML does not understand something that his French teacher says in French, he “asks her again and she tells me in English” (03/26/T37).

**English in French class.** The LML expressed to me during different interviews that he usually waits for his French teacher to explain things in English so that he does not have to understand the French or pay attention when the FT speaks French. He says, “she speaks English after she speaks French to make us understand” (04/02/T19). During our third interview, he said, “teacher always tell us French and English” (04/23/T10). The teachers and the principal that I interviewed also commented on how the use of English in French class aided comprehension for The LML. The French teacher told me, “I want them to know exactly what I’m expecting of them so I’ll say it in French and then I repeat it in English. That way, I’ll know I’m guaranteeing they know exactly what to do and how to do it” (04/05/T28). The homeroom teacher said, “And certainly there’s enough English spoken during French class that he’s not out of the loop. I’m in the class fairly often and I don’t see it as an exclusive environment” (04/12/T4).

**Core French as a choice.** In regards to the core French program for language-minority learners, the HRT believes that French should be a choice:
I don’t think [studying French] should be a requirement. I think it should be a choice. ... Parents [would be involved in the decision making]. ... I don’t think that language should be a requirement. ... When you legislate too much, I think you get into a problem. ... Not excluding French but not forcing it. (04/12/T16)

**Modifications.** There was evidence that modifications were being made for the LML on a regular basis. The LML’s guardian, French teacher, and principal, and the LML himself were aware of various modifications that were being made for him in French class. During my second interview with the LML, he said, “And the French teacher wrote French sentences and English sentences so I could do it.... She gave us sentences and she helped us a lot (04/02/T2).

In our third interview, the LML spoke about modifications to his French test. He said, “Everybody was doing different harder tests and I was doing easy test. ... There was one sheet and on one page there was 20 words and on the back, other questions. I didn’t have to do the other questions” (04/23/T4).

These modifications were aimed at helping the LML succeed in French. Some of the modifications, according to the LML, could have been further developed to help him. As he explained to me in our final interview, “It was English words and I had to write French words. So it was hard. But if it was French to write English, it might be easier” (04/23/T8).

The HRT did not know about modifications being made for the LML’s French program. He said, “I’m not aware. I haven’t seen it” (04/12/T20). Although he went on to say, during the same interview, “I think any language has context clues. I think the particular style that this teacher uses, there’s usually English injected or icons, or visual support” (04/12/T18).
Evidence of modifications to the LML’s core French program appears on his report card. The principal suggested that teachers should not feel stressed about evaluating language-minority students on the French abilities because the provincial report card has an ESL comment built into it. The principal stated,

And if we feel we can’t evaluate him because of an ESL barrier, we don’t have to give him a formal mark. That saves people a lot of headache and worry about how you evaluate a child when you don’t really know how they’re doing, technically. (04/16/T6)

The Ontario Ministry of Education mandates that the following statement must be included in the “comments” section of the provincial report card, “The (grade/mark) for (strand/subject) is based on achievement of the expectations in the (ESL or ELD) program, which vary from the Grade ___ expectations” (Ministry of Education, 2004). “Checking the ESL or ESD box indicates that accommodations and/or modifications or curriculum expectations are in place for that student” (Ministry of Education, 2004).

French program.

Although modifications were being made to the LML’s French program, no one seemed to take responsibility for French programming for language-minority students. The French teacher took it upon herself to make modifications to the program to help the LML succeed. But the French teacher felt that no one had any expectations for her to do so. There was no guidance for the French teacher or support about how to make modifications or what modifications are appropriate and effective for language-minority students in core French. During our interview, the FT stated the following,

To tell you the truth, no one has come to me and said really what to do. Just from experience, I’ve put together a package of really basic stuff. And once they do
that, they’ve gone through the alphabet and the numbers, I’ll give them another
duotang that’s a little more advanced. So I’ve kind of put that together myself but
I haven’t had anyone come and tell me what to do or how to do it. (04/05/T9).

The principal of the school told me that it is up to the principal to identify students
as “non-participatory” in French but she rarely takes that step. The principal in this study
believes all students should be involved in the French program, including language-
minority learners. “I would never have an ESL student not participate. ... I guess for me,
it’s the whole idea that French, or Korean, or English or Italian or Spanish gives you
another way to think about your world” (04/16/T29). Although I could find no evidence
of written documentation of what “non-participatory” actually means, The Education Act
states that it is the duty of the teacher to “teach diligently and faithfully the classes or
subjects assigned to the teacher by the principal” and “to encourage the pupils in the
pursuit of learning” (Education Act, 1990).

It is not stated in any curriculum documents that ESL students should be exempt
from French. The principal explained it to me in this way,

It’s assumed that they [language-minority learners] will participate because
elementary students are not exempt from French. I have just a small handful of
children who don’t ‘participate’ in French at the elementary level. ... For their
IEPs, it is not deemed appropriate that they explore a second language. ... You
can’t be officially exempt in elementary school, I do know that. You can be non-
participatory. (04/16/T25)

This appeared to be the case of one student that I initially recruited for my study but then
learned that the student’s teachers did not expect him to learn French or take part in
French lessons.
French Teacher Support to Student

The French teacher believes that learning French from a language-minority student’s perspective could be a bit challenging. When asked about this, she stated, “Well, I mean, it’s always good to learn another language.” Then she paused for a while and continued by saying,

“Well, obviously it’s tough. And luckily he’s in a really good school. I know some schools wouldn’t be as kind to ESL kids. May not include them in their project or laugh at them when they’re trying to say the word and of course they’re going to have trouble speaking.” (04/05/T14)

Another finding to come out of this research relates to support provided by the French teacher to the language-minority student. When I speak of teacher support for the LML, I am referring to the assistance given to the LML by the FT during and outside of French class time.

Verbal interactions. During the three classroom observation periods, I did not hear or see the LML speak French at any time. This includes verbal utterances between him and other students, as well as between him and the FT. The LML and FT always interacted in English. No attempt was made by the LML to speak French and I saw no evidence of the FT encouraging the LML to speak French to her or to other students.

When asked about his French oral abilities, the LML responded, “I think it’s hard” (03/26/T33). On another occasion, the LML said, “I don’t know French well so if I write, I spell words wrong” (04/02/T7). When asked about his French reading abilities, the LML said, “I don’t know how to read French. It’s different than English. It’s hard to read” (04/02/T15).
Setting the LML up for success. During classroom observations and interviews, I saw some evidence of the French teacher trying to set the LML up for success in his learning of French. Although the LML expressed his frustration with learning French at various times during data collection, the LML did recognize that the French teacher tried to help him succeed. When the students were assigned a written and oral project on the topic of careers, the LML was able to work with the other language-minority student in his class. Together with another student, the LML presented their assignment orally to the class. On other occasions, the LML waits for the teacher to speak English so he can understand tasks. He says, “She speaks English after she speaks French” (04/02/T19).

The French teacher seems quite aware that setting up the student for success will help him have positive experiences in French. She has said, “If the students are working on projects, I will say ‘I’d like you to do this’ but obviously I’m not expecting as much. Or I’ll pair him up with a group of kids and then have him just put words on projects rather than paragraphs like the other guys are” (04/05/T10).

During one classroom observation, the students were playing a drawing game (i.e., while one student draws a picture of an object, other students guess the name of the object that has been drawn). During this activity time, I observed the LML completing work for another subject and occasionally shouting out words in English that corresponded to what one student was drawing on the board. Near the end of the period, the teacher quietly walked over to the LML and asked him if he wanted to have a turn drawing a picture on the board for the other students to guess. He agreed and started to draw. The FT reassured him and the other students that it was a word that they definitely knew in French. When one student said the right answer, other classmates clapped and the LML had a big smile on his face. In this instance, the French teacher encouraged the
LML to take a risk and to take part more actively. The word the FT chose was easy to
draw and easy for classmates to guess in French, and as such, the LML achieved a goal
and had a positive response to the activity. The LML recognizes this assistance and seems
appreciative of the efforts that the FT makes for him.

**Teaching strategies.** The French teacher uses a variety of teaching strategies to
help support the LML in French class. Over the three classroom observation periods, I
noticed the following teaching strategies: subject integration with art, group work, written
tests, and individual attention. Incorporating a variety of teaching methods may have
helped the LML achieve success. When I asked the LML what he liked about French, he
replied, “When we have French projects. We make group with friends and work together”
(03/26/T25). On two separate occasions, the LML spoke to me about his enjoyment and
satisfaction with a few of the activities he completed in French class. He said, “It was fun
because I made stuff” (04/23/T2). When the teacher speaks in French and then English,
the LML said that this is helpful for him. He told me during our last interview,
“Sometimes when I was reading sentence and I stop because I don’t know the word,
teacher tells me” (04/23/T27). The FT used a variety of activities in the classroom, which
concurs with suggestions made by the Canadian Parents for French (2004) for effective
language learning. Some of these classroom activities for core French and extended
French students include: group work, drama, debates on current issues, simulated TV and
radio broadcasts, games, oral presentations, French cultural activities, and guest
francophone speakers.

**Extra help.** The LML acknowledged in a couple of interviews that, although he
receives modifications to his French program, some of the onus to learn French is on him.
When he repeatedly told me that French was hard for him, I asked him what could make
French easier for him. One of his responses was “work harder” (03/26/T39). This indicates to me that while he appreciates the modifications that the French teacher has made for him, he realizes that it is his responsibility to put effort into his work. When he spoke to me about a French test that he had recently completed, he told me how he could have improved on the test by studying a bit more. He said he “studied a little bit. Like 20 minutes at school and 15 minutes at home” (04/23/T12).

**Disconnect between FT and LML.** There seemed to be a disconnection between what the LML and the French teacher thought was an appropriate dictionary to assist him in class. The French teacher stated during our interview,

[The LML] uses a dictionary. I always make sure he has a dictionary. A good one. I don’t have enough for everyone but I always make sure he and the other language-minority learner have one. And they use it quite regularly too, which is good. (04/05/T29)

The LML, on the other hand, described his dictionary use in the following way, “It takes a long time to find words. [I use it] not very much. Like twice [a week]. My friend has French to English translator. Electronic. You type French word to see.” (04/23/T22). I got the impression that the LML finds it easier and quicker to use the electronic translator than an actual dictionary. Although the French teacher thinks that the LML is making use of the French-English dictionary, he finds it time consuming and difficult to use.

Another recurring theme from the data involved participants’ feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of language-minority learners in core French. The principal and the homeroom teacher were eager to talk about the advantages of learning French during our individual interviews. The principal thought, “[Learning another language] gives you another way to process information and see somebody else’s point of view. It
builds tolerance and understanding” (04/16/T29). The homeroom teacher said, “Well, as far as I understand it, learning a language before age 12 is a huge advantage. Learning as many languages as possible. ... Learning another language, I can’t speak against it” (04/12/T12).

The HRT and P also spoke about the disadvantages of the LML learning French. The HRT said that he thought that, “The way the program is structured sometimes makes it difficult for any student to learn well. But I don’t think it’s any different to learning math or music because those are languages too, in my opinion. So it’s just another language” (04/12/T12). The principal said,

I mean, 30, 40 minutes a day doesn’t give you a whole lot of ability to understand another language. You have to really like it and be open to it. ... It’s very few and far between that a student in elementary digs into a second language. I just don’t see it anyway. ... It’s reflective of the curriculum and the time allotment and the focus. French kind of comes and goes. It’s not embedded in anything else. It’s just in French. Unto itself. ... They [French Teachers] try to embed cultural activities to get the kids to think outside of the fact that it’s only 40 minutes. (04/16/T31).

It is interesting to note that when the LML’s guardian and FT were asked to speak about their thoughts about the advantages of language-minority learners in core French, they had very little to respond. The French teacher responded in this way, “I don’t know. I mean it’s always good to learn another language. I don’t know. I’m not really sure” (04/05/T14).

The guardian had this to say,

I think [the LML] soaked up any advantages in the first month and then after that it became something he had to go through. The advantage being seeing how it
works, seeing how our students learn another language. Interacting with the
language teacher, that sort of thing. But that can only go so far. (04/02/T17)

**Board Support to French Teacher**

Another theme that appeared during data analysis was regarding the support given
to the French teacher from the school board. This topic was discussed with the
participating teachers and principal at the school. Within this theme, there are two key
issues that were brought up by participants: (a) resources and (b) Canadian School Stay
Program.

**Resources.** The most prominent idea was surrounding the availability of
resources. The French teacher chooses the resources that she uses in her French class. She
receives no guidance from the principal or the school board about what resources should
be used in her class to assist language-minority learners. The French teacher did not
explain anything about resources offered to her from the school board regarding language
learning or teaching strategies to assist language-minority learners. The French teacher
expressed her feelings about the French program she designed for the LML in this way,
“Whenever I’m doing something that I know [the LML] wouldn’t be able to do, he works
in his duotang” (04/05/T11).

Although there was little evidence of board support to the French teacher in the
data collected, during the interview I conducted with the principal, some thoughts about
the support to the French teacher by the school surfaced. When I questioned the principal
about French resources and support to the French teacher from the school or school
board, she replied, “I try and give them as much money for basically as many resources
as they want. We give things, books, dictionaries. They know I’m pretty good about that.”
(04/16/T32).

During the interview I conducted with the French teacher, I asked about the availability of French resources at the school. She replied, “There are French books here in the library which is helpful. And there are also French games on the computer.” (04/05/T22). When I probed deeper into this topic and asked the French teacher if the students made use of these resources, specifically about the computers in the library that apparently had French programs and games installed on them, she said, “I don’t know. Because I don’t have computer time with them. ... I’ve never had computer time here” (04/05/T24). In reference to the French books in the library and whether the students checked them out, the French teacher told me, “I don’t know. You’d have to talk to the librarian” (04/05/T26). It seems that the FT is quite unaware of the availability of French resources in the school that could possibly assist her in her teaching and the students in the learning of French. When I spoke briefly with the librarian (L), she told me that they were very rarely used, let alone borrowed from the library and because of their lack of circulation, she has stopped purchasing new French books (L, personal communication, April 12, 2007). On a visit to the library one afternoon, I noticed a bookshelf of French books. There were approximately 50 French books in the library, mainly picture books, on a shelf in a corner, tucked behind a table and a few chairs. I did not have the opportunity to log onto the computers at the school to explore what computer games were available.

When I asked the LML if he knew if there were French books and computer games in the library, he replied, “I don’t know.” (04/23/T19). Although resources such as books and educational computer programs in French exist at this school, their use is
minimal and does not seem to be incorporated into the French class. The LML did not know about these resources and therefore could not make use of them. Availability of resources is important but of increased importance is when and how these resources could effectively be incorporated into the class. And how these resources could help develop the French language acquisition skills of a language-minority student.

**Canadian School Stay Program.** Another theme that appeared during the analysis of the data was concerns in regards to the Canadian School Stay Program. This is a program run through the school board to recruit foreign students to study in the school board. Foreign students pay a tuition fee, are placed with a host family, and are enrolled in an elementary or secondary school within the school board. In regards to the Canadian School Stay Program, there was evidence across the data set of concerns about the functioning of this program. For this research, a full analysis of the program was not conducted. A full evaluation of this program, however, may be useful for the future. I think it is important to examine teachers’ and parents’ thoughts about this program at this time because in the end, how the program functions directly affects the education of the language-minority learner and the other learners in the class. I asked the LML’s principal, guardian, and teachers about their feelings about the Canadian School Stay Program. Most participants had similar thoughts about the support that the Canadian School Stay Program provided to the teachers. The LML’s French teacher does not receive any support from the Canadian School Stay Program. She has had no contact with the student’s real parents in South Korea. The French teacher expressed that she has not received guidance about how to teach French to the LML. In the two schools that she teaches at, she has four language-minority students and she is not sure if they are all part
of the Canadian School Stay Program. This tells me that there is a lack of communication between the Program Coordinator (PC) and the French teacher.

The homeroom teacher seemed quite sceptical of the Canadian School Stay Program. He did not seem to believe that information from the school was related back to the LML’s real parents. He believes that the program is “an extremely lucrative thing for the school board” (04/12/T7). He spoke at length about various situations that he has experienced with the program or that he has been made aware of. The homeroom teacher feels that “there is a disconnect from the real parents. [They aren’t in] regular communication with the host school” (04/12/T8).

The principal openly acknowledged the fact that the Canadian School Stay Program run by the school board is a “money-making venture [developed] as a result of declining enrolment in our end of the province” (04/16/T3). Although the principal believes that the program has made some good developments, she feels that more needs to be done in the future. She feels that “there’s not a lot of support there [for the host parents] yet” (04/16/T40).

The LML’s guardian generally spoke positively about the program. He has been hosting foreign students for four years and has rarely experienced difficulty with the program. He enjoys hosting the LML and did not express negative opinions about the program during our interview.

I was not expecting to learn about the Canadian School Stay Program but information about the program continued to be present during my interviews. Although I gained a great deal of information about the school board’s program from the board website, I was left with some unanswered questions. In order to get a complete picture of this program, I contacted the program coordinator (PC). Although he has a teaching
background, the coordinator describes his role as “to market the program abroad and to recruit new participants” (0723/T3). The PC confirmed that this program was developed as a money-making venture. The program was put in place in order to help deal with the government’s financial cut-backs in the mid 90s. As well, as the school board’s enrolment declined (a loss of 1200-1300 students over a five-year period), this program allowed for an enrolment increase. The gross revenue to the board from this program is $2.5 million (07/23/T11).

When I asked him about how the program is evaluated, the PC told me that it is all through word-of-mouth. “As long as the number of participants increases” and the revenues increase, the program is succeeding in its function (07/23/T21). Feedback from the students, parents and host-family about the program comes in the form of conversations (phone or in-person) between them and a program staff approximately once a month. Questions such as “How is the program?” and “How do you feel?” are asked. Generally, the PC feels that if there are no problems being reported from any of the participants, the program is running well. The PC is often in the home countries of the students and hosts seminars and discussions for parents of these students. Questions and concerns can be raised to the coordinator in-person at these meetings. During our conversation, the PC did not mention formal questionnaires or evaluations that are used in this program.

In regards to support that the program offers to students, parents, host-parents or teachers, I learned that the students and their parents are given a handbook outlining the expectations of the program, and explanations of cultural norms. One of the high schools in the school board has strong ESL support in place, including “sheltered courses” (i.e., civics, science and geography courses that are specifically designed and modified for ESL
students). There does not seem to be any formal programs in place at the elementary level and this could be because there are less Canadian School Stay participants at this level in the board.

**Promotion of French in School**

Another theme that emerged from the data analysis related to the promotion of French in the observation school. By promotion, I refer to evidence of French outside the French class (i.e., announcements in French, French posters outside the French class, the use of spoken and written French outside of French class and by non-French teachers, and French-related field trips).

During several visits to the observation school, I noticed one chart paper with a list of students’ birthdays with months written in French. This chart was posted on a wall in the hallway near a grade eight classroom. As I previously mentioned, there was a collection of French reading material in the library, although I learned that this reading material was rarely borrowed from the library. During my visits to the school, I did not hear announcements in French, teachers speaking French, or any other evidence that showed that French was taught at the school.

The class where the French teacher taught French to the grade eight students was in their grade eight classroom, their homeroom classroom. The French teacher did not have a classroom of her own. She travelled with a cart full of teaching materials to each classroom. In the LML’s grade eight class, there was one poster in French. This poster was on one of the bulletin boards and said “Bon Voyage.” Around the poster were items relating to topics in science.
I asked the French teacher, the homeroom teacher and the principal about the promotion of French at the school during their individual interviews. The French teacher and homeroom teacher did not speak too much about how French was promoted in the school. The French teacher did speak about her appreciation of other teachers greeting her in French. She said,

Once in a while [the teachers] will say something in French. Like a little sentence. I like that because it shows the kids that they’re not just learning French because they have to. It is something they’ll use later on in life. (04/05/T22)

The French teacher told me that she made an effort to promote it on her own, “After kids are done their projects, I often put them up in the hall and everyone can look at them.” (04/05/T22). The French teacher did not mention school-wide French events, class trips, or French spoken at various times throughout the school day. The homeroom teacher expressed his thoughts about French promotion in the school in the following way, “I think the French teacher brings enthusiasm. Outside the French teacher, I don’t see other people marketing it” (04/12/T14).

The LML’s guardian is not only his host parent, he is also a teacher at the LML’s school. Knowing this prior to my interview with the guardian, I asked the guardian about how French is promoted at the school. He did not see evidence of French being promoted at the school in any way. He stated,

In this school? It’s not really. I think the culture dictates that there are other things that are more important. ... The other subjects. Math and English and Science. It’s unspoken but it’s just that you get that feeling that it’s not the most important or even anywhere near. (04/02/T27)
After speaking with the French teacher, the homeroom teacher and the guardian, I gathered that promotion of French at the school was left up to the FT and that there was very little school-wide promotion of French.

The principal, on the other hand, felt strongly that French was being promoted in the school. She talked at length during our interview about this topic and was the only participant to mention French activities that took place outside the French class. She explained French promotion at the school in the following way,

The classroom teachers honour and respect it and the office honours and respects it. It gets planning time priority. Kids who misbehave are dealt with. ... One of the French teachers runs a French club and kids join. They do cafés with the grade eights, a chocolate fondue and tourtière and those cultural things. And every other year the grade sevens and eights alternate and go to Quebec City for two nights and three days. (04/16/T33)

**Family**

Another major theme to surface during data analysis was the relationship between the LML and his host family. Kanouté and Saintfort (2003) highlight certain competencies in being a “good” parent: help the student to understand the school culture, encourage a positive contact between the school and the school teachers, promote learning, work with the student on school work at home, and understand the expectations of the school. Some topics that were discussed during our interviews included the type of influence the LML’s host family has on his French language acquisition; the LML’s awareness of his host family’s opinions of French; and the ways in which French language acquisition is promoted or demeaned at home. It was clear during analysis of the
data that the LML’s host family had both positive and negative influences on his attitude toward learning French. The LML and his guardian spoke about this during separate interviews. In this section, I refer specifically to the following sub-themes regarding the relationship between the LML and his host family: (a) the family’s view of French, (b) language background and use of languages at home, and (c) the family’s influence, whether positive or negative, on the LML’s French language acquisition.

**View of French**

During the interview with the LML’s guardian, I learned that the guardian does not see any advantages to the LML learning French while he is at school in Canada. The guardian feels that learning French is difficult and that he could use his time more effectively by taking part in other subjects. When I asked him how he felt about the LML learning French, he said, “Here? For him? I just think it’s just a waste of his time” (04/02/T15).

The guardian feels that any advantages that the LML could have profited from expired shortly after his arrival in Canada. He said, “I think he soaked up any advantages in the first month and then after that it became something he had to go through” (04/02/T17). Although the guardian feels that it is important for foreign students to learn about Canadian culture, the focus for those students involved in the Canadian School Stay Program is to learn English. The guardian said,

Well, first of all, they’re paying for him to come learn English. The primary objective is to learn English. French is a bonus but I think it’s very difficult for him. ... When you try to talk to him about it, he says he doesn’t know anything and he just turns it off in class. (04/02/T15)
On the other hand, when I asked the guardian about his thoughts about learning French for non-Canadian School Stay Program participants, he stated his opinion in the following manner, “If they’re here to stay…I think they should be doing it. I think it’s a valid part of our program. And eventually they will get something out of it” (04/02/T25).

The guardian believes that the subject of French should be a choice for language-minority students. During our interview, the guardian said, “If they’re coming over in the junior or intermediate grades, I think it should become a choice for them and a choice for the family whether or not they should be taking French” (04/02/T25). In this way, once they develop their first language skills, then they could devote time to learning French.

During data collection, I was unable to get in touch with the LML’s real parents. This was because of lack of connection and language barriers. I was not able to ask the LML’s real parents about their opinions of their son learning French at a Canadian school. During one interview with the LML, however, I asked him about what he thought his parents might say if I asked them for their opinion. The LML replied, “They think it’s just my plan to learn English. And at school we learn French too. So they think it’s fine. It’s a good chance to learn French” (04/02/T46).

**Language Background and Use**

I think it is important to reflect upon the language background of the family and the language use at home as this could have a direct influence on the LML’s French language skills. Besides the contact the LML has with his teachers and friends at school, he has a strong relationship with his host family and as such, could be influenced by what they say and do.
In regards to language background of the family members, I learned that the LML’s guardian speaks three languages fluently (i.e., English, Greek, and Spanish). French is the guardian’s fourth language but he said he is not fluent in it at all. He has basic communication skills at most. He did not carry on with French courses after the mandatory subject requirements in his elementary and secondary schooling. The guardian stated that if he listens to French, he is able to understand the gist of it and that his knowledge of Spanish sometimes helps him understand French. Although there are members of the household that are multilingual, I learned that no one in the family has much knowledge of French. The guardian’s own child is in grade six at the LML’s school and does not appear to be interested in learning French. Another Canadian School Stay Program participant hosted by the family, a high school student, is not taking French at her school and often speaks her mother tongue with friends she brings to the house.

I gathered that the host family does care about the LML and his academic and social progress in Canada. I saw no evidence of French being promoted at home. French does not appear to be a topic of discussion at home. Members of the household rarely have contact with French and French homework never appears at home. When I asked the guardian if the LML spoke about French class at home or if he ever brings French homework home, the guardian said “no” to both of my questions. When I asked the guardian if the French teacher assigned the LML homework, he replied, “I’m not sure. I don’t think so” (04/02/T19). When the LML does have French homework, he does not seem to require any help. When I asked the LML if anyone at home helped him study for his French test, he told me, “No. I didn’t need help. I studied like read” (04/23/T14). Members of the family rarely provide assistance in French to the LML because, first, the
LML rarely has French homework, and secondly, it appears that no one at home has adequate French knowledge to help the LML.

**Family Influences – Positive and Negative**

In my opinion, the participating host family has both a positive and negative influence on the LML’s achievement in French at school and his language development in general. I feel that language learning is embraced by the host family, the LML hears other languages spoken at home, and is exposed to foreign languages on a regular basis. Often it is through his host parent speaking Greek to relatives, and sometimes through another foreign student speaking Chinese.

The host family allows the LML to use computer technology to speak with his real parents in South Korea. He does this via MSN Messenger (i.e., an online chat tool). The LML uses his mother tongue, Korean, to chat with his real parents on a regular basis. The LML told me that sometimes his parents encourage him to speak English to them. This shows me that his real parents encourage language learning, specifically the learning of English.

The guardian encourages the LML to speak English on a regular basis. There is rarely a time when the LML is speaking anything but English at home (except for when he is communicating with his regular parents). I believe that, in general, the host family encourages language learning, but there is not much focus or encouragement to learn French.

Therefore, although it seems that English language learning is encouraged in the LML’s household, French is rarely used or promoted. As I have explained, it seems that the LML’s host family does not make any use of French at home. There is rarely any talk
of French at home and French cultural excursions and activities never take place. During
the first interview I conducted with the LML, he told me that although he has not traveled
to any French areas in Canada while he has been here, he wants to. He wants to go
somewhere where French is spoken. I think the LML is not motivated to learn French,
due in part to the fact that there is no time or place for French use and acquisition at
home. Some family members do not have strong French language skills and believe that
French is not useful to the LML at this time. The guardian certainly encourages the LML
to learn and practice his English but there is rarely an opportunity to use French at home.
The guardian’s opinion is that the primary objective is for the LML to learn English and
that the LML is “not benefiting from learning French at all” (04/02/T16).

Friends

It became evident to me during the interview and observation process as well as
during data analysis that the LML’s friends have an influence on the experiences he has
in his core French class. In this section, I present findings relating to the relationship
between the LML and his friends and how this has impacted the LML’s achievement in
French. I also present findings relating to the positive and negative experiences that the
LML has had with his friends in French class.

Positive Experiences

Over the course of our interviews, the LML described several positive experiences
in French that were directly related to his friendships. I also observed these during my
visits to the French class. These instances fall into the following categories: (a) working
with another language-minority student, (b) group work, and (c) assistance from friends.
During observation times, I learned more about the LML’s personality and how he interacts with other students in French class.

**Working with another language-minority learner.** In the LML’s grade eight class, there was one other language-minority learner. The LML often spoke to me about his interaction with this student and always had positive things to say about this relationship and the help that this student provided to him during French class. The LML seemed to feel comfortable working with this student on a regular basis because as he said, “our other friends are good at French” (04/02/T34). The LML described to me that this language-minority learner’s mother tongue was similar to French so learning French was easier for her than it was for him. Often he would be her partner for assigned projects. When working on an individual assignment, the LML and the other language-minority learner were given a list of sentences as a modification that the teacher provided. The LML told the FT in English what he wanted to write and the FT wrote the French translations for him. The LML was then responsible for copying the French sentences onto his project poster board. The LML said that sharing the list of sentences with the other language-minority learner helped him with his own assignment.

During one of the classroom observation times, I observed student presentations. One student at a time went to the front of the class, held up their individual project and read from their notes. During this time, the LML was seated at his desk in the front row next to the other language-minority learner in the class. These presentations lasted for the full 20 minutes that I was observing. During these 20 minutes, I observed the LML laughing, clapping, and smiling. At times, he was speaking with his neighbour and laughing. At other times, he was completely focused on the presenter, smiling, and then clapping at the end of the presentation. Throughout this observation, the LML spoke often
with his neighbour. When I later asked the LML about what he was doing during class, he
told me that he was finishing his project. He also told me that he listened to his friends’
presentations, but did not understand anything. This behaviour indicates to me that he is
willing to support his friends in their achievement and tries to learn something from them
by listening to them, even though he admits he does not understand what they are talking
about.

When I asked him about his neighbour, he told me that she was the other
language-minority learner in the class and they were sharing some work. This shows that
he relies on his friends sometimes for assistance and perhaps finds French class more
enjoyable when he is working with a friend. This observation period, generally, showed
me that the LML is a social person and enjoyed this French class because he was working
with another language-minority student. At the end of this observation period, the French
teacher told me that when students are able to form their own groups for an assignment,
the LML and the other language-minority learner always like to work together. The
French teacher being aware of this confirms to me that other people are aware that the
LML finds enjoyment in working with the other language-minority learner and believed
that the LML gets along well with his peers.

**Group work.** On several occasions, I asked the LML what he liked most about
French class. Sometimes his response was “making stuff” and “being creative” but on
several occasions, he told me that he found French enjoyable when he interacted with his
friends. He appreciates the time that he receives to work with the other language-minority
learner, partly because he believes she is good at French and can help him and partly
because he receives a modified program. Other times, he enjoys French class because of
the particular group tasks that the French teacher assigns. On our very first meeting, the
LML explained to me that during French class, he likes “When we have French projects. We make group with friends and work together” (03/26/T25).

The LML explained to me that he leaves French class once a week to go to ESL class. He generally enjoys ESL class because they play games and in his words, “ESL class is fun. … Sometimes I want to do ESL all day” (04/02/T51). During our second interview, the LML described a time when he did not want to leave French class to go to ESL. “Once we had project in French. Our group was my best friend’s group and we were working and I had to go to ESL and it wasn’t good” (04/02/T52). When I asked him why it was not good, he said, “Yeah, I wanted to stay” (04/02/T52). When I asked him why he wanted to stay in French instead of going to ESL class, he said, “Because I wanted to work with my friends” (04/02/T52). It was clear to me, while getting to know the LML, that he found enjoyment in working in a group and working with friends. It was apparent to me during observations as well that the LML is a very sociable boy.

The French teacher recounted a story of the LML presenting a project with the other language-minority learner in front of his classmates, which was a change for him, because normally in situations like this, he presents his work to the French teacher alone. So in this instance, the French teacher noticed “they treat him just as one of the class. … They clapped for him. They were proud of him” (04/05/T16). The French teacher notices that the LML goes to his friends for assistance. Having supportive classmates seems to help the LML be successful in French. The LML’s friendships definitely influence the experiences that he has in learning French.

The LML’s homeroom teacher, when asked about his opinion of the LML’s general attitude toward education, responded in the following way,
I think he really likes being in school. I’m not sure that he’s always interested in the academic aspects of it but I think when I look at a kid’s school experience, it has more to do with their social interaction. I think he finds it a safe place. I think he’s connected really well with a lot of friends. I think he’s typical in the sense that he looks forward to being around his friends.” (04/12/T3)

As I listened to these words, I learned more about the LML’s personality. He has strong social connections at the school and he values them. His teacher’s comments confirmed the fact that the LML’s experiences at school were strongly influenced by his social network.

**Assistance from friends.** A third theme that came across in regards to positive experiences with friends in French is about the assistance that the LML receives from them. The LML said, “friends help me understand French” (04/02/T20) and that he often asks his friends for help in French. When I asked him why he asks his friends for help rather than the French teacher, he told me it is because “friends are more comfortable to speak with” (04/02/T24). I was surprised to hear him say this because he often told me about the modifications that the French teacher made for him and how he understood her explanations. Part of the reason he may feel more comfortable asking his friends for help rather than the teacher is because of cultural differences. His teachers described his social interactions during our interviews. The LML’s French teacher told me that she notices “certain kids, especially the ones that sit around him, trying to help him or he’ll ask them ... He’ll often go to [boy] and ask him ‘what’s this’ or ‘how do you say that’. They’re wonderful” (04/05/T15). The French teacher also notices the LML’s interactions with his classmates. Listening to the LML telling me that he would rather ask his friends for help than his French teacher makes me feel that a stronger bond needs to be formed between
teacher and student. In addition to this bond, it shows the influence of peers on the LML’s own attitude and experience in French.

**Negative Experiences**

Now that I have spent some time exploring the positive experiences that the LML has with his friends in French class, I would like to look at the other side of the coin. What negative experiences has the LML had with his friends? First, when I asked the LML about his French ability in relation to others, he told me that he believes that other students have strong French language skills and he does not. He repeatedly told me, over the course of the data collection period, “French was hard” (03/26/T24, T26, T33, T38; 04/02/T7, T15, T16, T36; 04/23/T5, T7, T8). This included the reading, writing, and oral components of French. The fact that the LML believes he lacks ability in French in relation to his friends means that he has a negative view of what he is able to do and possibly what he is willing to do in French.

When I asked the LML about homework, he told me that he did not do French work at home. When I asked him if his friends did French homework, he told me they did not “because we don’t have French homework” (04/02/T47). Knowing that his friends do not do French homework may make the LML think that it is also okay for him not to do any additional French work at home. The LML is aware of what his friends accomplish in French and what work they do in comparison to him. The LML told me that one of his friends who is Korean takes ESL instead of French class whereas he is only doing one ESL class a week at the time of his scheduled French class. As he said this, I gathered that he would rather take part in more ESL classes rather than remaining in French class. It seemed to me that the LML thought that it was unfair that he was only taking part in
one ESL class per week when one of his friends, with apparently the same language background as him, took part in ESL class more often.

When I asked him how he felt about this, he told me that “sometimes I want to do ESL all day” (04/02/T51). Although the LML did not tell me that he did not want to take part in French at all, he is aware of what other students like him (i.e., language-minority learners) are doing in school. He compares his schedule to other language-minority students that he knows.

On the second observation day, about a week after the first, the students are playing a drawing game. During this time, the LML was completely off-task. For the duration of the French period, the LML is working on work for another subject. Although I observed that he was not participating in the game, he later explained to me that he was finishing work for another subject. While his classmates were for the most part actively participating in the activity, the LML often turned to speak with other students. He once threw his pencil case to a boy seated in the row in front of him. This showed me that if he is not interested in the task, he will choose not to take part and sometimes display disruptive behaviour. This task was a large group game and he may have felt overwhelmed and intimidated to join in.

I have found that the LML also compares his language abilities, both in English and in French to that of other students, of native English speakers, and of language-minority learners’. This could have a negative impact on his self-esteem and confidence in his language skills.

In the following chapter, these findings are discussed in detail.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Common Patterns in Relation to the Literature Review

At this point, I would like to focus on making connections between the existing research in the area of second and third language acquisition and the findings of my study. I have found that my findings both agree with and contradict ideas presented in previous research about second and third language acquisition. The LML’s experiences in core French may in many ways parallel what is experienced by other newcomers to Canada who speak neither English nor French. As such, I believe that what is learned from this case study is even much more important because of the possible transferability.

At this point in the discussion, I would like to highlight some common patterns in this study. These are: (a) characteristics of FSL programs, (b) teaching methodology, (c) how L1 and L2 assist learning L3, (d) language-minority learner’s motivation to learn French, (e) teacher – student communication, and (f) modification to core French programming for language-minority learners.

Characteristics of FSL Programs

John Dewey (as cited by Noddings, 1992, p. 41) argued that it is “not the particular subject that is studied but how it is studied” that makes the difference.

According to an evaluation of the Edmonton Public School District (CASLT, 2002), successful French Immersion and FSL programs demonstrate the following fourteen characteristics:

1. positive district support;
2. positive principal support;
3. competent, enthusiastic teachers;
4. positive community support;
5. FSL as an integral part of the regular program;
6. sufficient instructional time;
7. clear and relevant curricular expectations;
8. students engage in interactive learning;
9. quality learning resources;
10. well-articulated programs;
11. professional development;
12. promotion and marketing;
13. student access, support and recognition;
14. financial support.

If I compare the findings of my case study to these characteristics, I can say that the research that I conducted shows that it is lacking in some of these characteristics. In order to improve the program in general, and assist the language-minority learner, the curriculum, professional development programs, and school support could perhaps benefit from a more in-depth evaluation. Could the lack of these characteristics in my case study contribute to the positive and negative experiences of the LML in core French class?

*Teaching Methodology*

Research in the area of language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Krashen, 1985) points to the notion of comprehensible input, that is, acquiring by understanding messages. Krashen (1985) says that “we acquire a new rule by understanding messages that contain this new rule. This is done with the aid of extralinguistic context, knowledge
of the world, and our previous linguistic competence.” (p. 9). Comprehensible input is the essential ingredient in language acquisition (Krashen, 1985). Using visual aids, reading and listening activities, building vocabulary, and being concerned about whether messages are understood by students, are all important comprehensible input implications for classroom practice (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). We obtain comprehensible input in a low-anxiety situation, when we are presented with interesting messages and when we understand these messages (Krashen, 1985, p. 10). In my study, the French teacher often spoke French, then transferred to English. I question whether or not students would make an effort to speak or understand French when they know that the same information will be presented in English.

The French teacher plays a critical role in designing appropriate and motivating French lessons. The French teacher is responsible for using strategies that will support an ESL student in learning French. According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2001a), providing a warm and welcoming environment for the ESL/ELD student from the start will facilitate a smooth transition into the new school and classroom and will have a positive impact on the newcomers’ confidence, motivation, social adjustment, desire to learn, and even his or her health and attendance. (p. 16)

From the three observations that I conducted of the LML in French class, I noticed that this was sometimes the case, but there were also times when the LML was rarely acknowledged in a forty-minute French period and as a result, the LML used this time to complete independent assignments for other subjects.

The Ministry of Education resource guide on ESL/ELD offers many strategies to use with ESL/ELD students. Some of them are as follows:
1. Gather language-learning materials that the student can use independently or with a buddy (i.e., picture books, dual-language books, interactive CD-ROMs).

2. Use themes such as colours, classroom, school, feelings, clothing, for vocabulary development.

3. Encourage the student to use the first language in journals, personal dictionaries, word lists, and oral discussions.

4. Work collaboratively with all teachers of ESL/ELD students.

5. Provide notes that highlight key ideas and new words.

6. Make frequent use of a variety of concrete and visual supports. (Ministry of Education, 2001a, pp. 16-19)

   Other teaching strategies to support English language learners in every classroom include: completing dual-language assignments, working with same-language partners who discuss a problem and clarify information in the first language before switching to English, and creating multilingual displays or signs (Ministry of Education, 2005). Although these strategies generally refer to English language support, I think they could also be used for all subject areas, including French. In my study, I observed the French teacher using some of these strategies listed above but she could definitely be incorporating many more of these strategies into her teaching to aid the LML in his learning of French.

   **L1 and L2 Assists L3**

   Language learning refers to the “process of internalizing a language—either a mother tongue or a foreign language” (Crystal, 1982, p. 218). Clyne (1997) and Dewaele (1998) suggest that L3 learners use their knowledge of L2 to help them communicate in
L3. I believe this is partly true in my case study. In some instances reported, the LML used his knowledge of English (L2) to assist him in understanding French (L3). He never mentioned using his L1 (Korean) to help him understand his L3 (French). Crystal (1982) defines interlanguage as a “language system created by someone who is in the process of learning a foreign language. This intermediate state contains properties of both the first and the second language, and varies according to the learner’s evolving system of rules” (p. 190-191). In my study, the LML did not use Korean to support his learning of French but he used English. I think he did not use his L1 (Korean) in French class perhaps because he was shy about using his L1 because of the classroom environment, the school population, and the teachers’ language teaching strategies.

Researchers (Clyne, 1997; Cenoz, Hufelsen, & Jessner, 2001; Dewaele, 1998) report that third language learners present advantages over second language learners because of high metalinguistic awareness and communicative sensitivity. The experiences of the LML that I have described in the previous chapter demonstrate that the LML uses his knowledge of L2 (English) more than L1 (Korean) on a regular basis. Using his knowledge of English (L2) to understand French (L3), the LML feels involved in French activities and makes an effort to succeed. Although the LML told me on several occasions that “French is hard”, he generally felt positive about understanding French by using his knowledge of English, and on occasion, he spoke to me about trying to make comparisons between the two languages. During our first interview, the LML told me “Korean is not similar to French so it’s hard.” I believe that L1 and L2 would be of more assistance to learning L3 if the languages were linguistically similar. On the other hand, there is less risk of interference between the two languages. Interference is “the introduction of errors into one language as a result of contact with another language”
(Crystal, 1982, p. 189). During my interviews and observations, it was challenging to observe experiences of interference from the LML as this was not the primary focus of my study.

I reflected on how code switching and code mixing were evident as I observed the core French lessons. Code switching is “the use by a speaker of more than one language, dialect, or variety during a conversation” (Crystal, 1982, p. 69). Code mixing, in bilingual speech, refers to “the transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another” (Crystal, 1982, p. 69). I observed instances of these from the French teacher. She often said one thing in French and then transferred to English. What implications do code switching and code mixing by the French teacher have on the LML? Another area that could benefit from further exploration is individual teachers’ knowledge and teaching practices of language learning.

Motivation

Motivation has long been recognized as a crucial ingredient in second language learning (Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1989). Gardner and Lambert (1959) found that L2 achievement was not only related to language aptitude but also to motivation. Mady (2003) compared the motivation of Canadian-born students and language-minority students to learn French and found that language-minority students were more motivated to learn French than Canadian born students at the grade nine level. Although I did not do a comparison study, I did not find that the LML was very motivated to learn French. I think this was because his family, his friends and his host family did not encourage him to learn French. I also feel that the LML did not see learning French as beneficial for him. The LML did express his desire to learn English and that this was the focus of his time in
Canada. The strong push for him to learn English may have deterred him from becoming very involved with his French studies. This could be due to the fact that he was in Canada for a short term; however, I did learn that the LML had the desire to stay in Canada for his grade nine year. It would be interesting to see if the LML would be more motivated to learn French in his second year in Canada.

Researchers in the field of second language acquisition define motivation to learn an L2 as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). As I learned through my study of the LML’s experiences in core French and his little motivation to learn French, I came to question why newcomers with no French experience are put in the same grade-level French class as they are with other subjects. Could this affect their motivation to learn and participate in French activities?

The Ontario Ministry of Education states that ESL/ELD learners are to participate in the FSL program along with their grade-level peers (Ministry of Education, 2001a) yet there is little explanation for this expectation. Could it be more effective for newcomers if they were placed in appropriate ability-level French classes?

It appeared that the LML’s peers also influenced his experiences in learning French. Krashen and Terrell (1985) suggest that “peer evaluation is probably the single most important factor in the behaviour of an adolescent. For this reason it takes a very talented instructor to create an atmosphere favourable for acquisition among a group of young teenagers” (p. 179). When I spoke with the LML about his opinions of his peers’ attitude towards French, I learned that few of his friends were enthusiastic about learning French. This could have had an effect on his motivation to learn French and to participate in class activities.
Through my conversations with the LML’s teachers, principal and host parent, I learned that the LML is generally a good student, a hard worker and conscientious learner. According to his teachers, the LML is generally motivated to get his work completed, is motivated to learn French, and to be part of a group of friends. Although the LML generally completes his French work, he often takes more time than other students, and does not often boast about his achievements. During several interviews, the LML spoke self-consciously about his achievements in French. During one observation the LML took out a workbook to complete work for another subject during the whole class. If the LML was engaged in learning French, he probably would not have done this for the whole French period.

**Communication**

I have found a slight discrepancy between what the teachers think are appropriate modifications for ESL students and what the LML believes. In my study, I have found a lack of communication between the LML and the French teacher. More open communication could alleviate some stress for the student and help him succeed in core French. With ongoing communication between teacher and student, realistic learning goals could be set. As well, expectations of both the teacher and the student could be more clearly defined. This coincides with Olson’s ideas about joint planning between teachers and students. Olson (2003) suggests that in pedagogical contexts,

This is not simply the sharing of intentions as may occur in a conversational dialogue but rather an achieving of joint intentions by teacher and student in which the beliefs of the student are formulated and evaluated in terms of the
norms and standards represented by the beliefs and intentions of the teacher. (p. 278)

Olson also suggests that the teacher and student have obligations to themselves and to each other when they have jointly and individually constructed goals and intentions.

Freeman and Freeman (as cited by Ministry of Education, 2005) express their ideas about language learning for language-minority students in the following way,

There may be a gap between what the schools expect and what students bring, but that does not mean that these students do not bring anything. They each have a language, a culture, and background experiences. Effective teachers draw on these resources and build new concepts on this strong experiential base. (p. 17)

Culture may have a significant role in the findings of my research. Ashworth (1992) says, “Cultural differences can cause misunderstandings among people of any age. … Teaching and learning styles is an example of one such cultural difference that affects children” (p. 14). Freeman and Freeman (1994) suggest that students “learn both language and content when lessons are centred on students’ culture and family history” (p. 147). The data from my research do not show any acknowledgement of the LML’s culture and no inclusion of aspects of his culture in the French class, although the LML did tell me that French presentations could be more interesting if students “write about Korea. In French” (04/02/T12). This continues to show that there is a lack of communication between the French teacher and student at this school and that this has an effect on the LML’s experiences.
Modification

I have learned that many decisions about French language programming for language-minority learners are left completely up to the French teacher. Modifications are the French teacher’s responsibility, yet there does not seem to be any support programs in place or professional development in this area at the school or school board levels. Other responsibilities for the teacher include seeking out support, acquiring appropriate resources, and having continuous dialogue with parents and administrators to ensure that students are receiving quality French education. From my conversations with the French teacher, I learned that she could benefit from more information about how language-minority students learn and about appropriate resources to use in her teaching. Olson (2003) reports that “some environments are conducive to good teaching and learning—a degree of order, of clearly defined goals and clear criteria for success—and policy directives and resource allocation are important to creating such environments” (p. 281).

Recommendations

In conducting this study, I have had the opportunity to learn a great deal about the experiences of one language-minority learner in core French in an Eastern Ontario school. Although this study was conducted with a participant who intended to stay in Canada for only one year, there are implications for other students who remain in Canada for an extended period. There are also implications for teaching and for FSL programming. I started this study in hopes of learning about the success and challenges that a language-minority student in this context would have. I expected to hear about the modifications that were made to his French program and about the support structures that were in place at home and at school to help this student learn. I did not expect to learn as much as I did,
however, about the influence of the language-minority learner’s friends in his learning of French, about participants’ feelings about the core French program in general, and about the Canadian School Stay Program—an exchange-type program offered by the board for foreign students.

From the data that I collected and analysed for this thesis, with the above discussion in place, I would like to take this opportunity to provide some recommendations. These recommendations are intended to be used for (a) future core French curriculum and program design for language-minority learners, (b) parents of language-minority learners, and (c) Canadian School Stay Program development.

**Core French Curriculum and Program Design:**

*At the School and School Board Levels*

A key recommendation resulting from this study is about core French curriculum planning and core French program design for language-minority learners. As a result of the interviews and the classroom observations I conducted, I learned that there is a lack of support for the core French teacher. The core French teacher in my study did not have extensive experience in modifying her French program for language-minority learners. The French teacher in this study received no training or guidance from the school administrators or the school board in regards to making modifications to her French program to assist language-minority learners in learning French.

In order to assist the French teacher in modifying the program for language-minority learners one must start by looking at the Ontario curriculum expectations. Olson (2003) suggests that “the role of the government is not to micromanage teaching and learning but rather to provide the framework of plausible goals, the resources needed for
teachers and learners to achieve them, and clear criteria for assessing success or failure” (p. 288). The Ministry of Education achievement levels for core French (see Appendix A) do not address possible modifications for ESL students who have had no prior contact with French. If the provincial standard is level three, how could students with limited English language skills achieve this level if teachers are teaching French using English? Would it work if French teachers taught using French only (and perhaps visual aids and other means) to make themselves understood? If there were more clearly outlined expectations for ESL students in core French, then the French teacher would have more guidance in designing her French program. As the Ministry of Education has clearly stated curriculum expectations for all subjects and exceptional learners, it would also be important to have guiding expectations for ESL students in core French program. As it stands, much is left up to the principal and teacher in regards to French and the participants in this research study seemed unaware of the Ministry regulations about these learners. Expectations, I found, were not clearly outlined or easy to find. Teachers and principals used their own judgement in dealing with language-minority learners. Olson suggests that the “role of the institution is to provide the resources and the framework in which teachers, and students too, can set and achieve socially valued goals, and thereby earn respect” (p. 289). At the same time, he states that no person “can accept responsibilities unless he or she is also granted the autonomy needed to exercise individual judgement in meeting them” (p. 289). It seems necessary, therefore, to have clearly defined goals and expectations from the institution and government, while at the same time allowing teachers to use their individual judgements. When teachers are unable to make certain decisions, they should feel confident to seek assistance.
One strategy that the French teacher could use to assist the LML’s learning of French is to design group activities for the LML. The Ministry of Education (2005) reports that “where language acquisition is concerned, there’s safety in small numbers” (p. 22). The LML in this case study often spoke about his enjoyment of group work and of working with a partner. I did not observe instances of this during the three observation periods I conducted. Group work, the Ministry of Education (2001a) suggests, is a suitable teaching and learning strategy for ESL/ELD learners. This could be in the form of teacher support (i.e., one-to-one instruction, or small group instruction) or in peer support (i.e., think-pair-share activities, collaborating with peers, peer evaluation, and small group work) (Ministry of Education, 2001a).

In the particular school involved in the study, I learned that outside French resources (i.e., books, educational computer programs) were rarely used. I recommend that French teachers be taught about appropriate resources that can be used for language-minority learners. Researchers, administrators and curriculum developers need to continue to have open dialogue with the language-minority learners themselves in order to learn about what could help their learning. Over the course of this study, the LML spoke about several modifications that could have been made to help him learn and be more successful in French. One of his suggestions was to have the opportunity to use an electronic dictionary to translate words from English to French. While the skill of using a dictionary is important, this student felt that using a large French-English dictionary was time-consuming and he did not enjoy using it. Having even a few electronic dictionaries in the French class for language-minority learners might encourage them to learn new vocabulary. I have learned that electronic multilingual dictionaries are available at various prices although many of them translate from French to English and English to
Korean. This in-between step may be confusing for some learners. More affordable are computer programs that translate words and phrases from Korean directly to French and could perhaps be installed in school computers. Myers (2003) suggests that tools such as computer technologies and learner-centred dictionaries “would enable learners to get on with their learning instead of being often interrupted searching for meaning in more general types of lexicons.”

**Communication**

John Dewey (1963) argued years ago that teachers had to start with the experience and interests of students and make connections between that experience and whatever subject matter was prescribed. Another recommendation for the core French program is to encourage more open communication between language-minority students and French teachers. If French teachers could involve their language-minority students in the decisions about their French tasks and expectations, then the language-minority learners may be more motivated to do their work and be encouraged to take initiative. If the expectations are reasonable, clearly defined, and decided upon by both the teacher and the student, then the chances of success might be greater. The Ministry suggests that rubrics (i.e., an assessment tool that uses a scale consisting of a set of achievement criteria and descriptions of levels of achievement for a particular task) “developed with students before a task is assigned help students succeed by ensuring that they know which expectations are being assessed” (Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 27). There is the notion that rubrics should be negotiated jointly between teacher and students. This would give an opportunity for ESL learners to have input as to how they would be evaluated fairly to show their knowledge.
With more open communication, one may find that language-minority learners would be more motivated to learn French if they had a choice in assigned tasks. Offering students choice may motivate them to learn. These choices could be discussed between the student and teacher as the modified program is being created. Frequent communication between student and teacher would give opportunity for the teacher to listen to the student’s opinions about what modifications could help them succeed. On a few occasions during my study, the LML mentioned things that might have motivated him and helped him learn but he never spoke to his French teacher about these modifications. Freeman and Freeman (1994) suggest that one strategy that teachers can use to support students’ primary language is to have “bilingual students read and write with aides, parents, or other students who speak their first language” (p. 173). In supporting the language-minority student’s first language skills, this strategy could also help the student communicate with his/her teachers. In this way, the aide, parent or student could act as a mediator for the language-minority student and help facilitate communication between the student and the teacher.

**French as an Option or a Beginning French Class for Newcomers?**

On the grander scale, perhaps policy makers and curriculum designers should be looking at the option of having core French as an optional subject for language-minority learners, particularly when language-minority learners are new to the country or to the program. Both the guardian and the homeroom teacher involved in this study mentioned this as a reasonable program change. The French teacher, although she did not suggest having French as an optional subject, repeatedly acknowledged the fact that she perceived French as difficult for language-minority learners. The principal in this study, on the other
hand, did not seem open to having French as an optional subject. Before a decision about having French as an optional subject could be made, I feel more research and discussion needs to take place with many participants. I wonder if having French as an option would be an effective strategy for newcomers. When I reflect back to the recruitment process of my study, I learned about one language-minority learner in a school in the metropolis area who was neither expected to learn French nor evaluated in French, but was required to remain in class during French lessons and worked independently on non-French assignments. I wonder if having French as an option could help this learner succeed in other subject areas. On the other hand, I also wonder if it is fair for newcomers to be left out of experiences with Canadian bilingualism.

**Promotion of French**

Another recommendation to come out of this study relates to the promotion of French. From the data collected in this study, it appears as though the school and home communities’ view of French needs to change before language-minority learners become more accepting of French. There should be more acceptance and acknowledgement of French as a worthwhile subject at the school level. Teachers, students, and administrators should encourage one another to use French on a regular basis. French was not heard outside the French class during my observation times at the school. As the principal told me during our interview, “It’s reflective of the curriculum and the time allotment and the focus. French kind of comes and goes. It’s not embedded in anything else. It’s just in French. Unto itself” (04/16/T31). If there were more integration of French throughout the curriculum, then perhaps it would be more positively viewed. On a visit to the school board, I did not notice any French being advertised or promoted. As French language and
culture is part of the whole Canadian culture, one might wonder why it is not present more often in the school and school board involved in this study. In addition, communication across different levels of administration could be encouraged and increased so that, for instance, a principal would be aware of the lack of activities in French rather than promoting the school blindly.

Parental Involvement

The guardian involved in this study seemed to be in relatively close contact with the teacher and principal at the school. This was partly due to the fact that the parent was a teacher at the participating school. In regards to the Canadian School Stay Program, the parent has been involved in the program for several years and did not offer suggestions for how the program could be improved. During our interview, the parent did not speak about concerns he had in his host-parent position.

In terms of the French language program for parents, I would recommend that parents get involved with the French program. The school or the classroom and French teacher could encourage their involvement. By making parents aware of what students are learning in French class, there could be more opportunity for them to support their children in their learning at home. Kanouté and Saintfort (2003) suggest that children who adapt best to school (i.e., social interactions and on-task focus) are those whose parents participate the most. Perhaps a recommendation for the Canadian School Stay Program would be to assign students to host families where guardians are able to provide support in all school subjects.
Canadian School Stay Program

Although this case study was by no means an evaluation of the Canadian School Stay Program, much discussion about the program took place over the course of the data collection period. The participating teachers and principal raised some concerns about the program. As such, I present several recommendations for the future development of the program. The first recommendation that came out of this research in terms of the Canadian School Stay Program is to have increased teacher support for foreign students who are new to the school. Teachers may not be aware of strategies to use when teaching these students, of how to incorporate them into their pre-existing program, and what additional support these students may need to be successful in a Canadian school context. By educating teachers about language learning issues and cultural diversity, they may be better prepared to teach the language-minority learners more effectively. For other host parents involved in this program, one recommendation I have for the board is to offer more assistance to host parents in terms of what to expect when hosting a foreign student, how to approach diversity, and how to help a foreign student adjust to life in Canada.

An increase in appropriate resources is a final recommendation to the Canadian School Stay Program. It seems as though teachers, principals, and host parents would be better prepared for the foreign students if they had resources to help them – be they, curriculum units, program assistance for language-minority learners, or information about the education system and culture of the foreign students in their school.

Limitations

“A case study is, by definition, limited in scope” (Taylor, 1992, p. 753). It is important for readers to be aware of the limitations of this study in order to judge it and to
develop further research possibilities. By reflecting on the limitations of this study, I make known the possible conflicts and restrictions of my research. Some of these limitations include: (a) time, (b) access to participants, (c) demographic and geographic location, and (d) classroom observation procedures.

**Time**

I was restricted by time in that access to participants in school was designated at various times throughout the school year. Although I hoped to conduct my interviews and observations within a one-month span, it was not possible due to school scheduling conflicts, and teacher absences.

**Access to Participants**

It was difficult to find a willing elementary school-aged permanent resident participant. Contacting and discussing my research with principals was time-consuming and did not always produce willing participants. During the recruitment process, I encountered some resistance from principals and parents. As such, I was limited to one language-minority learner who was a temporary resident. Although this participant fit most of my participant criteria, the fact that the student was not a permanent resident in Canada, might have had an impact on his attitude and this could be reflected in the findings. Results of the study could have varied if the language-minority participant had been a permanent resident and if his biological parents were also interviewed, as opposed to a host parent.
Demographic and Geographic Location

Transferability is where “the research context is seen as integral. Although qualitative research findings are rarely directly transferable from one context to another, the extent to which findings may be transferred depends on the similarity of context” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 180). As this research study had a very specific context (i.e., age and language background of the language-minority student, geographic location), it is limited in its transferability. I acknowledged previously that my study did not intend to make generalizations but the demographic and geographic location of the participant could be seen as a limiting factor of this research.

It would be worthwhile to conduct a similar study in various parts of Ontario in order to build knowledge in this field of research, and then, perhaps, create more general ideas about the experiences of language-minority students in core French. At this point, I cannot conclude that language-minority students in various geographic locations or with different language backgrounds would have similar experiences in core French as the participant in my study.

Classroom Observation Procedures

Perhaps a final limitation of this study is how the classroom observations were conducted. Although I carried out repeated classroom observations and supported observational data with interviews, it could be noted that more insight might have been gained if more structured observations took place. As I relied on my field notes of classroom observations, some details of the student’s behaviour, his interactions with the French teacher or peers, and audio details may not have been recorded. Audio or video recordings of the French lessons could have led me to analyze language use and teacher-
student interaction in greater detail. As well, using an observation scheme (i.e., a checklist) could have helped me to give more attention to “facets of the instruction related to the research problem” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 199), an advantage of observation schemes in second language research.

**Avenues for Further Research**

Although we have learned a great deal from my study, there remains a need for further research in this area.

This area of research could benefit from a longer longitudinal case study involving more than one participant in various locations across Ontario, and perhaps across Canada. Conducting a similar study with various learners would create a more detailed description of language-minority learners' experiences in core French. Conducting a similar study in another part of Ontario would also allow for exploration of how the city and community could influence their learning.

Much discussion centred on the relative value attached to the Canadian School Stay Program by the school board. It seems to me that this program could benefit from a formal evaluation. A formal assessment and evaluation of the program would ensure continued success and development of the program as a whole, and would ultimately help foreign students succeed while in a Canadian school.

In conducting this research, I did not have an opportunity to speak with the ESL teacher at the school board. Due to scheduling conflicts, I was not able to seek more information from this participant. Through my interviews with other participants, I learned about what ESL support is given to the LML but it would be interesting to learn more about the details of this support from the ESL teacher’s perspective.
This research study centred on the LML, a language-minority student who was in Canada for almost a full year and who wanted to extend his stay. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study with a language-minority student whose parents were also in Canada. Speaking with language-minority parents would offer another perspective to this research.

Finally, I suggest that we examine the curriculum guidelines for ESL students in core French and make improvements to these documents. Currently there is relatively little guidance from Ontario Ministry of Education documents about how to effectively teach core French to ESL students, what modifications could be made, and what teaching and learning strategies are effective in this particular context. The core French curriculum guide (Ministry of Education, 2001b) does not have recommendations for teachers about how the program can be modified for these students. The ESL resource guide says, “core French curriculum expectations may need to be modified according to the age, ability, and/or background of individual students” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 25) but does not offer any modification suggestions. The same guide, however, does offer sample adaptations and modifications for a variety of subject areas (i.e., Social Studies, Science and Technology, Language, Math, History, and Geography). Perhaps in a future ESL or FSL curriculum document, some modification suggestions could be offered. Modifying the Ministry of Education documents, while keeping the results of this study in mind, could offer more guidance and clarification for core French teachers and administrators about how to effectively teach language-minority students in core French. The core French teacher in my study could have benefited from more guidelines for teaching core French to language-minority students, as her experience in the area was quite limited. I have no doubt that there are other teachers in similar positions.
Conclusion

The aim of the case study I conducted was to follow one language-minority learner over the period of a month to understand and gain insight into his experiences of learning French in a core French program in Eastern Ontario. As the data collection period progressed, I was able to uncover more details about the case. This research extended beyond a month and the case study led me to inquire about topics that I had not anticipated (i.e., the Canadian School Stay Program). One advantage of qualitative research is that it allows for exploration of new lines of inquiry.

The case study led me to areas of investigation that I did not plan for. The role of teacher-student communication is one example of an investigation that took place after the data collection period. This theme emerged from the data set and led me to research in this area. In addition, as is typical for this type of research, I continued to uncover more in the areas of the Canadian School Stay Program, motivation, and peer influence, as the data analysis proceeded and I followed these threads. It was necessary to get in contact with people that I originally did not think I would involve in the study (i.e., teacher-librarian, Canadian School Stay Program coordinator) in order to learn more and provide a more complete and detailed description of the case. Thus I was able to create a thick description of the case, as per Mackey and Gass (2005). In other words, there is sufficient detail in the report of my findings for readers to understand the characteristics of my research context and participants.

In summary, some of the major suggestions that evolved from my research about the experiences of a language-minority student in an Eastern Ontario core French class involve: (a) modifications, (b) resources, and (c) influence of peers. I have learned that
there is a large need for appropriate and well-developed modifications of programs for language-minority students. Teachers of language-minority students need to be educated and well-trained about effective language teaching and learning strategies. In addition, there needs to be open communication between the student and French teacher, and the French teacher and principal.

A second implication of this research comes from what was learned about resources. Teaching and learning resources (i.e., books, computer software, dictionaries, library time, computer lab access) should be made easily available for teacher and student use. Time and access to these resources need to be consciously scheduled for core French teachers who are rotating between classes, as was the case in my study. French teachers should be responsible for learning about what resources are available and how they could be used to support the language-minority students in their learning of French.

Finally, an important result from this case study was what was learned about the influence of peers on the experiences of the language-minority learner in the core French class. Group work and assistance of peers played an important role for the student in this research. Teachers should be aware of the role that peers play and think about ways to incorporate peer support and cooperative learning in their core French classes. My research shows that group work and peers supported the language-minority learner in learning French. Perhaps supportive peers should be identified and trained to assist language-minority learners. In a similar vein, perhaps mediators can assist with identifying cultural issues and assisting teacher-student communication.
REFERENCES


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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_family


APPENDIX A: ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND CURRICULUM

EXPECTATIONS FOR CORE FRENCH

Figure 1. Achievement Levels: Core French.

### Figure 1. Achievement Levels: Core French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge/Skills</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>The student communicates:</td>
<td>The student communicates:</td>
<td>The student communicates:</td>
<td>The student communicates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– only with constant teacher support, in highly structured situations</td>
<td>– with frequent teacher support, in structured situations</td>
<td>– with occasional teacher support, in structured and open-ended situations</td>
<td>– with little or no teacher support, in structured and open-ended situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– using a few basic forms, structures, and vocabulary</td>
<td>– using some basic forms, structures, and vocabulary</td>
<td>– using most basic forms, structures, and vocabulary</td>
<td>– using all or almost all basic forms, structures, and vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>The student demonstrates understanding:</td>
<td>The student demonstrates understanding:</td>
<td>The student demonstrates understanding:</td>
<td>The student demonstrates understanding:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– of a few of the main ideas and details</td>
<td>– of some of the main ideas and details</td>
<td>– of most of the main ideas and details</td>
<td>– of all or almost all of the main ideas and details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– relying on non-verbal cues</td>
<td>– using some verbal cues, but relying on non-verbal cues</td>
<td>– using mostly verbal cues, and a few non-verbal cues</td>
<td>– using all or almost all verbal cues and a very few non-verbal cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization of ideas</strong></td>
<td>The student organizes:</td>
<td>The student organizes:</td>
<td>The student organizes:</td>
<td>The student organizes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– only with constant teacher support</td>
<td>– with frequent teacher support</td>
<td>– with occasional teacher support</td>
<td>– with little or no teacher support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– by copying from a model</td>
<td>– by using a model and making minor changes to it</td>
<td>– by creating new forms or making some changes and additions to a model</td>
<td>– by creating new forms or making significant changes and additions to a model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application of language knowledge (spelling, grammar, vocabulary)</strong></td>
<td>The student applies language knowledge:</td>
<td>The student applies language knowledge:</td>
<td>The student applies language knowledge:</td>
<td>The student applies language knowledge:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– with constant major errors</td>
<td>– with frequent errors</td>
<td>– with occasional errors</td>
<td>– with few or no errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– using few or none of the required elements</td>
<td>– using some of the required elements</td>
<td>– using most of the required elements</td>
<td>– using all or almost all of the required elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B: Student Participant Interview Guides

Interview 1 - Topics of Discussion

1. Biographical Information: age, grade, country of origin, languages spoken at home, languages learned at school, immigration status/arrival in Canada

2. Schooling history: years at current school, years in Canadian school system

3. Language History:
   a. Languages spoken? Written? Able to read?
   b. Language spoken with: a) parents, b) teacher, c) French teacher, d) friends
   c. Background of mother tongue: When is it spoken? With whom? Ability in this language. Feelings about speaking this language.
   d. Background of second language (English, French or other second language): When was it introduced? When is it spoken? With whom? Ability in this language. Feelings about speaking this language.

4. French Language History
   a. Schedule of French language classes: When did you start learning French?
      How often do you have French in one week?
   b. Feelings about French class: What do you like about learning French?
      What do you dislike about learning French?
   c. Purpose of learning French: Why do you think French is a subject you have to take at school? How do you think you will use French when you are older?
   d. Relationships with the French community: Have you come in contact with anyone who speaks French? Have you had any friendships with francophone people?
e. French language use: When do you speak French? With whom? How much French do you use in class? Can you understand the French that is used in class?

**Interview 2 – Topics of Discussion**

1. Participation: How did you participate in French class today? What activities did you enjoy? What activities did you not enjoy?
2. Attitudes: How did you feel in French class today? What did you like about French class? What did you dislike about French class?
3. Challenges: Did you have any problems understanding today? Who usually helps you solve problems in French? How? Do you ask for help in French? Who do you ask? Do you get help in another language?

**Interview 3 – Topics of Discussion**

1. French homework: What kind of French homework did you have this week? Did you need help from someone else? Who helped you? What did you like about this homework activity? What did you not like about this homework activity? Do you usually do your homework? What happens if you don’t do your French homework?
2. Opinions of French: What do you think your parents think about French? Do your friends do French homework? Why do you think you learn French in school? How does French class compare to your other classes? Do you feel different in French than in ESL? How so? Do you feel different in French than in your other classes? How so?
APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL, FRENCH TEACHER AND HOMEROOM TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participants will select or be given pseudonyms for the study. The following questions can be used to probe:

1. Interaction with participant: How long have you known the participant? In what capacity? In your opinion, what is his/her general attitude or outlook towards education? In your opinion, what is his/her general attitude or outlook towards French? Have you had any contact with the learner’s parents? In what capacity?

2. ESL students and French: Are you involved in the decision making in regards to ESL students’ French programming? How are those decisions made? What are the advantages and disadvantages for ESL students studying French? In what ways is French promoted in your classroom and at this school? Do you think new immigrants who arrive in Canada who do not know much or any English should be required to study French? Why or why not?

3. (Primarily for the French teacher): How do you think ESL students cope when task directions are given in French? In English? Have modifications been made for these students? What do you place emphasis on in French for ESL students? What French support is offered to ESL students? Their parents?
APPENDIX D: PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participants will select or be given pseudonyms for the study. The following questions will be used to probe:

1. Language experiences at home: Which languages do you speak? Which languages does your child speak? Which language do you speak at home? With whom? Which language does your child speak at home? With whom?

2. Comparison of language experiences: Did you study English in a classroom? Did your study of English prepare you for coming to Canada? Can you describe the type of instruction you received? Have you had any language instruction in Canada? How did it compare? How would you describe the type of language instruction your children have received in your home country? In Canada? What are the advantages of language instruction in your country? In Canada?

3. Opinions about French language instruction: How do you feel about your child attending an English school? How do you feel about your child learning French? What are the advantages and disadvantages of your child learning French? Are there things you do to encourage your children to learn languages?

Many students who arrive in Canada do not know English. Do you think these individuals should study French? Why or why not? Were you aware that Canada had two official languages before you came?
APPENDIX E: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM:
STUDENT

LETTER OF INFORMATION (Student)
Title: Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French

I am writing to request your participation in research about French education programs. I would like to understand the experiences of language-minority learners in core French. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the __________ School Board.

I would like to learn about your experiences in an intermediate core French program. To do this, I would like to interview you. I will also interview your homeroom teacher, your French teacher, your principal, and your host parents to learn about the experiences and rules about French for ESL students. I am inviting you to participate in three interviews.

If you agree to participate, I will interview you at your school at a convenient time. There will be three one-hour interviews and all interviews will be audio taped. I may also take notes during the interviews. These notes will be written up and saved as a computer file. The audio tape will be destroyed once the information is written up. None of the information will contain any name, or the identity of your school. Data will be secured in a locked office and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

I also wish to observe your French class. I will collect copies of hand-outs and your notes to help create a full description of your experiences in the core French program.

I do not see risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions you find uncomfortable. No information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

This research may result in publications. Real names will not appear in any publication. A pseudonym will replace all names on all data that you provide to protect your identity.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jordana Garbati at (613) 532-0013, email 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca. The thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers can be reached at (613) 533-3032, email myersmj@educ.queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca

Sincerely,

Jordana Garbati
LETTER OF CONSENT (Student)

I agree to participate in the study entitled *Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French*, conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

I have read and saved a copy of the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.

I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

I understand that the researchers intend to publish the findings of the study.

I understand that participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my child or myself from this study at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher, Jordana Garbati, at (613) 532-0013 or 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers, at (613) 533-3032 or myersmj@educ.queensu.ca, if I have any questions about this project, and I am aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Name (Please Print): __________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________________

Date: ________________  Telephone number: ____________________
APPENDIX F: LETTER OF INFORMATION: PRINCIPAL

LETTER OF INFORMATION (Principal)
Title: Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French

I am writing to request your participation in research aimed at shedding light on French education programs. The ultimate goal of this research is to understand the experiences of language-minority learners in core French. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, and by the __________ School Board.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the experiences of two language-minority learners enrolled in an intermediate core French program. To do this, I am planning to conduct several individual interviews with the two learners. I am also planning to conduct one interview with each of the following people: their homeroom teacher, their French teacher, their principal, and their parents to learn about the experiences and regulations of FSL for ESL students. These people will be interviewed individually. I am inviting you to participate in this interview.

The individual interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient to you. The individual interviews will be for approximately one hour each and all interviews will be audio taped. In addition, the interviewer may take notes to make a written record of the sequence of questions and answers. These notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. The taped interview will be transcribed, and then the tape will be destroyed. None of the data will contain any name, or the identity of your school. The school will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Your name will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide, and your name or the identity of your school will not appear in any publication created as a result of this research. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity. If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jordana Garbati at (613) 532-0013, email 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca. The thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers can be reached at (613) 533-3032, email myersmj@educ.queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or
complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca

Sincerely,

Jordana Garbati
APPENDIX G: LETTER OF INFORMATION: FRENCH TEACHER

LETTER OF INFORMATION (French Teacher)

Title: Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French

I am writing to request your participation in research aimed at shedding light on French education programs. The ultimate goal of this research is to understand the experiences of language-minority learners in core French. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the __________ School Board.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the experiences of two language-minority learners enrolled in an intermediate core French program. To do this, I am planning to conduct several individual interviews with the two learners. I am also planning to conduct one interview with each of the following people: their homeroom teacher, their French teacher, their principal, and their parents to learn about the experiences and regulations of FSL for ESL students. These people will be interviewed individually. I am inviting you to participate in this interview.

The individual interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient to you. The individual interviews will be for approximately one hour each and all interviews will be audio taped. In addition, the interviewer may take notes to make a written record of the sequence of questions and answers. These notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. The taped interview will be transcribed, and then the tape will be destroyed. None of the data will contain any name, or the identity of your school. The school will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

In this part of the research, I also wish to observe each language-minority student during French class. The purpose of the observation is to explore how and when the student participates and in what capacity. The in-class observations will also inform the researcher as to what languages and learning strategies the students use in French class. During each of the two observation periods, the researcher will aim to sit unobtrusively in the class and as per the French teacher’s request. Hand-outs (if any) will be collected during these observations to help create a full description of the language-minority students’ experiences in the core French program.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Your name will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide, and your name or the
identity of your school will not appear in any publication created as a result of this research. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity. If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jordana Garbati at (613) 532-0013, email 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca. The thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers can be reached at (613) 533-3032, email myersmj@educ.queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca

Sincerely,

Jordana Garbati
APPENDIX H: LETTER OF INFORMATION: HOMEROOM TEACHER

LETTER OF INFORMATION (Homeroom Teacher)
Title: Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French

I am writing to request your participation in research aimed at shedding light on French education programs. The ultimate goal of this research is to understand the experiences of language-minority learners in core French. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the __________ School Board.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the experiences of two language-minority learners enrolled in an intermediate core French program. To do this, I am planning to conduct several individual interviews with the two learners. I am also planning to conduct one interview with each of the following people: their homeroom teacher, their French teacher, their principal, and their parents to learn about the experiences and regulations of FSL for ESL students. These people will be interviewed individually. I am inviting you to participate in this interview.

The individual interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient to you. The individual interviews will be for approximately one hour each and all interviews will be audio taped. In addition, the interviewer may take notes to make a written record of the sequence of questions and answers. These notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. The taped interview will be transcribed, and then the tape will be destroyed. None of the data will contain any name, or the identity of your school. The school will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

I do not foresee risks in your participation in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Your name will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide, and your name or the identity of your school will not appear in any publication created as a result of this research. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity. If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jordana Garbati at (613) 532-0013, email 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca. The thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers can be reached at (613) 533-3032, email myersmj@educ.queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Dean of the Faculty of
Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca

Sincerely,

Jordana Garbati
APPENDIX I: LETTER OF CONSENT: PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

LETTER OF CONSENT (Principal and Teachers)

I agree to participate in the study entitled *Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French*, conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.

I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

I understand that the researchers intend to publish the findings of the study.

I understand that participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher, Jordana Garbatii, at (613) 532-0013 or 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers, at (613) 533-3032 or myersmj@educ.queensu.ca, if I have any questions about this project, and I am aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Name (Please Print): ____________________________________________

Signature: ____________________________________________________

Date ________________  Telephone number: ________________
APPENDIX J: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM: PARENT

LETTER OF INFORMATION (Parent)
Title: Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French

I am writing to request your child’s participation in research aimed at shedding light on French education programs. The ultimate goal of this research is to understand the experiences of language-minority learners in core French. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University. This research has been cleared by the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, and also by the __________ School Board.

In this part of the research, I wish to document the experiences of two language-minority learners enrolled in an intermediate core French program. Your child will be one of these learners. To do this, I am planning to conduct three one-hour individual interviews with each learner. I am also planning to conduct one interview with each of the following people: their homeroom teacher, their French teacher, their principal, and their parents to learn about the experiences and regulations of FSL for ESL students. These people will be interviewed individually. I am inviting your child to participate in this research study and I am inviting you to participate in an interview.

The individual interviews with your child will take place at his/her school at a convenient time. If you consent to participate in an interview, the interview will be conducted at a time that is convenient to you. The individual interviews will be for approximately one hour each and all interviews will be audio taped. In addition, the interviewer may take notes to make a written record of the sequence of questions and answers. These notes will be written up and maintained as a computer file. The taped interview will be transcribed, and then the tape will be destroyed. None of the data will contain any name, or the identity of your school. The school will be identified using general terms only. Data will be secured in a locked office and confidentiality is guaranteed to the extent possible.

In this part of the research, I also wish to observe each language-minority student during French class. The purpose of the observation is to explore how and when the student participates and in what capacity. The in-class observations will also inform the researcher as to what languages and learning strategies the students use in French class. During each of the two observation periods, the researcher will aim to sit unobtrusively in the class and as per the French teacher’s request. Copies of hand-outs and students’ notes will be collected during these observations to help create a full description of your child’s experiences in the core French program.

I do not foresee risks in your or your child’s participation in this research. Your participation and your child’s participation are entirely voluntary. You or your child are not obliged to answer any questions you find objectionable, and you are assured that no information collected will be reported to anyone who is in authority over you. You or your child are free to withdraw from the study without reasons at any point, and you may request removal of all or part of your data.
This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials for schools. Real names will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide, and your name or the identity of your school will not appear in any publication created as a result of this research. A pseudonym will replace all names on all data that you or your child provides to protect your identities. If the data are made available to other researchers for secondary analysis, your identity will never be disclosed.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jordana Garbati at (613) 532-0013, email 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca. The thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers can be reached at (613) 533-3032, email myersmj@educ.queensu.ca. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca

Sincerely,

Jordana Garbati
LETTER OF CONSENT (Parent)

I agree to participate and to allow my child ________________ (insert child’s name) to participate in the study entitled *Understanding the experiences of language-minority learners in core French*, conducted through the Faculty of Education at Queen's University.

I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information and the purpose of the study is explained to my satisfaction.

I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

I understand that the researchers intend to publish the findings of the study.

I understand that participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my child or myself from this study at any time without negative consequences.

I am aware that I can contact the researcher, Jordana Garbati, at (613) 532-0013 or 4jfg@qlink.queensu.ca or the thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Myers, at (613) 533-3032 or myersmj@educ.queensu.ca, if I have any questions about this project, and I am aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré, (613) 533-6210, or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, (613) 533-6081, email stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORM AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Name (Please Print): ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________  Telephone number: ________________
APPENDIX K: FIELD NOTE SAMPLES

Handwritten Field Notes

9h23: les creux, le papier, le ciseaux - T. speaks Fr.
student are moving around the class to find the ones they want to make.

9h24: LML stands at one desk to read instructions, then moves to another.
other students are talking (play task).

LML moves to a group of boys, shows them the page, they all laugh.

Boy asks LML a question “LML, Spind?”
9h25: i class are now working at a group desk.
LML asks teacher a question. “Smiling? I can’t see from here.”

LML looks at another instruction page (4th one?
he takes the page to his desk.
LML talks to group of people.
Instruction page is in English.

9h30: LML at front - looking for construction paper.
LML holding construction paper - writing alone.
reads an instruction & draws a picture on his paper.
T. has been circulating around the class.
contains, he hasn’t spoken to LML yet.
LML writes independently, now cutting out smiling.

Boy talks to LML.
students were given permission to put change in their seat. But LML is in his regular seat.
LML makes his cutout piece to show. other student

9h32: walks a director’s stand drawing again, then cuts.

9h32: i can’t see the T. when she left the room.
all students seem to be on task, T. comes back into the room.)
9h20: FT handing out instruction pages. Students are talking amongst one another.
FT: “Une chose a se souvenir. One thing to remember.” FT says to not worry about the words today. She’s going to bring examples of poems & words tomorrow that they can use in their cards.

9h21: LML laughs with friend. FT: “Allez chercher lesquels vous voulez.” FT speaks French and then English.

9h23: “les ciseaux, le papier, la colle” FT speaks words in French. [Not a full sentence in this case.]

Students are moving around the class to find the type of card that they want to make. LML reads & stops at one desk to read instructions, then moves to another. Other students are talking off task. [Students have choice in the activity they do. They moved around the room to find which pop-up card they wanted to make.]

9h24: LML moves to a group of boys, shows them the instruction page, and they all laugh. LML moves back to read the instructions at one table group.

Boy asks LML a question: “LML, Spider?” [verbal interaction – English]

2/3 of the class are now working at a desk [LML is one of the last students to choose an activity. Why?]

LML asks teacher a question – about a bottle of liquid at the side counter? [I can’t be sure from where I am sitting.]

LML looks at another instruction page (4th one) he takes this page to his desk LML talking to a group of people [English social interaction]

Instruction page for this activity is in English. [Could French be used with assistance of pictures so students would understand?]

9h30: LML is at front of the class now looking for construction paper. He is one of the last students to get organized for this activity.

LML is back at his desk, folds his paper, reads and instruction and draws something. He is working independently. [Is this task a challenge to him in any way?]

FT has been circulating around the class constantly. Looking at what the students are doing, providing further instruction, etc. [Does she ever interact with LML?]

LML working independently, he has now moved onto another step and is cutting out something.
Boy talks to LML.

Students were given permission to change their seats but LML is working at his regular desk.

LML raises his cutout piece to show the other students.

9h32: LML reads a direction and starts drawing again, then cuts.
9h33: I can’t see the FT – has she left the room? Why? All students seem to be on task. T comes back into the room.

LML works independently, quietly, on task. Doesn’t seem to need any help with this task he hasn’t asked friends or teacher for help.

9h35: LML turns around to talk to other boys. Shows them his card design. (a crocodile). LML talks to boys behind him & shows them his crocodile. Short discussion. A girl stops at his desk and he shows her his card. Another girl stops to talk to him.