

***C*urriculum *P*olicy**

for the

***F*rench *I*mmersion *P*rogram**

September 1996

February 1999, 2nd Edition

July 2008, 3rd Edition

Manitoba 

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth Cataloguing in Publication Data

440.7107127 Curriculum policy for the French Immersion Program = Politique curriculaire pour le Programme d'immersion française

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-7711-1271-8

1. French language – Study and teaching – Immersion method – Government policy – Manitoba. I. Manitoba. Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. II. Title: Politique curriculaire pour le Programme d'immersion française

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
Bureau de l'éducation française Division
Winnipeg (Manitoba) Canada

Every effort has been made to acknowledge original sources and to comply with copyright law. If cases are identified where this has not been done, please notify Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Errors or omissions will be corrected in a future edition.

This resource is available on the Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth website at <<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/frenchimm/>>. Print copies of this resource can also be purchased from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (stock number 91676) at <<http://www.mtbb.mb.ca>>.

Ce document est disponible en français.

FOREWORD

This policy document sets out the legal, didactic, and administrative foundations upon which the planning and implementation of immersion are based in Manitoba. It expresses Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth's position as to conditions fostering the attainment of the goals for the French Immersion Program in Manitoba, which in turn fosters the development of linguistic competence in French and in English.

The planning, implementation, and maintenance of all French Immersion Programs will be based upon these fundamental principles. School divisions will provide and make available, within a reasonable period of time, all human and material resources to facilitate students' learning and to ensure the success of the program.

These days, communication between people and societies is more important than ever. Being able to understand the other, enter into dialogue with him/her, and connect in a way that is mutually enriching. Life is therefore enhanced by knowing other languages and broadening one's cultural horizons.

Choosing to enrol in a French Immersion Program adds a language enrichment component to the training of young people. This phenomenon will contribute to their success in today's world and the world of the future, a world marked by rapid change on the social, economic and intellectual fronts, a world dominated by information and communication technologies and the global market.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	LEGAL ASPECTS OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MANITOBA.....	1
1.2	MANDATE OF THE BUREAU DE L'ÉDUCATION FRANÇAISE DIVISION	2
2.	FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH	3
2.1	GOALS OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH.....	3
2.2	FOUNDATIONS OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH.....	4
2.2.1	French as the medium of instruction	4
2.2.2	French as the subject of instruction.....	5
2.3	IMPORTANT PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	6
2.3.1	Context and school environment.....	6
2.3.2	Language and culture.....	7
3.	TYPES OF INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION	8
3.1	INTENSITY	8
3.2	LENGTH	8
3.2.1	Early Immersion	8
3.2.2	Middle Immersion	10
3.2.3	Late Immersion	11
3.3	SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.....	12
3.3.1	Immersion School	12
3.3.2	Immersion Centre.....	12
3.3.3	Dual Track School	13
4.	IMPLEMENTATION OF A FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM	14
4.1	PLANNING	14
4.2	RESOURCES.....	14
4.3	STAFF QUALIFICATIONS	15
4.4	LANGUAGE OF ADMINISTRATION AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION	16
4.5	SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES	16
	REFERENCES	17

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 LEGAL ASPECTS OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MANITOBA

In 1967, Bill 59 recognised French as a language of instruction in Manitoba's public schools. This legislation allowed the use of the French language up to a maximum of 50% of the total instructional time. In 1970, Bill 113 confirmed the equality of French and English, the two official languages, as languages of instruction. Bill 113, being an amendment to section 258 of the Manitoba *Public Schools Act*, allows for instruction completely in French throughout the school day to the third grade inclusively. English must be taught as a subject to a maximum of 25% of the total instructional time from Grade 4 through Grade 12.

The *Statutes of Manitoba — Chapter P250 Public Schools Act* stipulate that:

- where in any school division, there are 23 or more students who may be grouped in a class and whose parents desire them to be instructed in English or French, the school division must group those students and provide for the use of English or French, as the case may be, as the language of instruction in the class (section 79 (3)).
- in a school where French is used as the language of instruction for 75% or more of the school day from Grade 1 through Grade 6 and 60% or more from Grade 7 through Grade 12, the administration and operation of the school must be carried out in the French language (section 79 (5) or see Manitoba Regulation 469/88R section 9 (2)).

These provisions of the *Public Schools Act* and the regulation pertaining thereto provide the foundation for the curriculum policy presented in this document.

1.2 MANDATE OF THE BUREAU DE L'ÉDUCATION FRANÇAISE DIVISION

In 1974, the Manitoba Department of Education established the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) Division to support French-language education for Francophones. In 1976, this Division was given the mandate to provide leadership and orientation for educational reform as it applies to French-language education in Manitoba.

The Bureau de l'éducation française Division negotiates and administers inter-governmental agreements regarding official languages programs in education. The Bureau provides services to Franco-Manitoban schools, schools offering a French Immersion Program, and to those schools offering Basic French. In addition, the Bureau maintains a liaison with the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface.

In the context of its mandate, the Division targets the following objectives:

- to develop and recommend to the Minister of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, policies and priorities in all areas affecting French-language education
- to promote, plan, administer and facilitate programs and services in all aspects of French-language education for francophone and anglophone client groups from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and, insofar as possible, at the post-secondary level
- to collaborate with the other divisions of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (and their respective branches), as well as local communities, organisations, and all other associations at either the local, national or international level
- to assist the Minister of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth to negotiate all federal assistance programs aimed at promoting the use of the official languages in education.

2. FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH

In a French Immersion Program, all or a major portion of the courses, with the exception of English LA-Immersion, are offered in French, by teachers who are proficient in French, to students who have little or no knowledge of the French language upon their entry into the program. The immersion approach allows for an active and practical acquisition of the French language through subject matter acquisition.

A French Immersion Program also offers a special educational environment where students “live” in French, French being the language of administration and communication in the program.

2.1 GOALS OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH

The French Immersion Program aims to develop, in addition to the mastery of the English language, linguistic competence in the French language. Students are thus able to communicate in both languages on a personal and professional level (Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers, 1994). In addition, the immersion approach fosters an understanding of the French peoples and their cultural diversity.

In Manitoba, the French Immersion Program has been recognised as an official program by the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth since 1995. Beyond its linguistic and cultural dimensions, the program aims to develop “the academic skills, the personal, social, and career skills, and the life management skills that future citizens will need to develop their individual potential and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural life in Manitoba” (*Renewing Education: A Foundation for Excellence*, 1995: 6).

In immersion, students acquire the French language and, at the same time, the learning outcomes which comprise essential learning as outlined in the Department's 1995 document *Renewing Education: A Foundation for Excellence*.

2.2 FOUNDATIONS OF THE FRENCH IMMERSION APPROACH

The immersion approach integrates language instruction and subject- area content instruction. In fact, in immersion, the French language is both the *medium of instruction* and *subject of instruction*.

2.2.1 French as the medium of instruction

In immersion, the language is a vehicle for acquiring knowledge from different subject areas. Language-teaching and content-teaching are integrated, and the French language is thus perceived as an informational vehicle — a medium by which thought, feelings, and actions are expressed or displayed. Furthermore, through this work, students develop a linguistic competence that enables them to use the French language as a tool for cognitive development, a construction of knowledge through observation, exploration, problem-solving and integration of newly acquired knowledge about the world and languages.

Moreover, the definition of immersion gives language development an important place in all school subjects taught in French. The curriculum is designed to provide a learning experience for the study of language itself. As a result, it is imperative that language-teaching objectives be set in all school subjects taught so that particular attention is given to the means of integrating language-teaching with subject-specific content-teaching. This emphasis on language development within the teaching practices themselves induces teachers to use the educational strategies most appropriate to language development, and plan instructional activities by systematically combining the factors referring specifically to subject matter and those referring to language.

2.2.2 French as the subject of instruction

Language is also a subject of instruction. Each subject area has its own vocabulary and particular way of using the language. The linguistic characteristics specific to different subject areas are identified by teachers and integrated into the teaching of the subject-area content.

As important as using the language in all subjects may be, it is but one necessary condition for language-learning and must be accompanied by activities providing the learner with strategies, knowledge and techniques.

Two types of language-teaching objectives are to be considered:

- *content-obligatory language objectives* (Snow, Met et Genesee, 1989): these specify the language skills required for students to understand a given area of content, talk about it, make it his/her own, and master it. These obligatory content-specific language skills are both structural (vocabulary, grammar, and textual) and functional (for informative, persuasive, expressive, and aesthetic purposes)
- *content-compatible language objectives* (Snow, Met et Genesee, 1989): these specify other language skills taught and acquired within the context of a given area of content, but not required for successful content mastery, since the learning context generates new vocabulary, and new grammatical and language structures. These objectives also use communicative strategies.

In immersion, the integration of the language-teaching (the content-compatible language skills and the content-obligatory skills) with the content-teaching provides increased opportunities for students to maximise language development (Snow, Met et Genesee, 1989).

2.3 IMPORTANT PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Two main thrusts have evolved from the immersion approach, each one of a different nature and applicable at different levels.

2.3.1 Context and school environment

Students learn the language mainly through practice in three means of communication: oral, written, and viewing. In short, students learn the language by interacting with their environment. It is, therefore, in a rich linguistic environment, where communication is meaningful and centred on a variety of authentic tasks, that students will make use of the language and meet their educational, personal, and social needs.

The environment that is created for the acquisition of the French language is in itself a very significant factor and the immersion school and the immersion centre (see section 3.3) offer a special educational environment where students live in French. Since most of the immersion students in Manitoba have little or no contact with the French language outside of the school environment, situations requiring communication in French are of utmost importance and should be maximised in the school setting. Students enrolled in such a learning environment will have the opportunity to hear French and speak it with a number of people (staff members, school administration, etc.) in a variety of natural and authentic situations.

Graduates are responsible for maintaining and further developing their bilingualism once their academic education is complete. The linguistic competence is not a permanent acquisition and will vary, depending on how frequently the individual uses the French language, the richness of his/her language experiences, and the attitudes he/she has towards bilingualism.

2.3.2 Language and culture

Immersion students, by being exposed to the facets of the francophone cultural life, become more aware of their own cultural identity. The cultural dimension of their experiences in the family environment and social network, and of the English LA-Immersion course, acquires a heightened sense of cultural awareness.

In the French Immersion Program, the learning outcomes of the immersion curriculum frameworks are congruent with those of the English Program. Some of the teaching strategies of the French Immersion Program may differ from those of the English Program, but students still acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes similar to those of their counterparts, while simultaneously developing a command of the French language and an awareness of the francophone cultural life.

It is very difficult to separate language from its cultural component. Students in the immersion program are introduced to francophone cultural life, as found here in Manitoba and elsewhere, and to the cultural practices found in the French-speaking world. The acquisition of a second, a third, or a fourth language is considered as a linguistic, personal, and social advantage. It is therefore important to go beyond strictly practical aspects of the learning of these languages by ensuring that the acquisition of another language, is viewed as a way of broadening one's cultural perspectives, as a form of personal enrichment, and as a means of better understanding oneself and others.

3. TYPES OF INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

French Immersion programs vary according to three criteria: intensity (the time allotted for teaching in the French language and in the English language), length (the entry point into the program), and the school environment in which the program is offered.

3.1 INTENSITY

The percentage of instruction (or minimum number of Senior Years credits) in the French language is apportioned as follows:

Early and Middle Years

- Kindergarten — 100% of the time
- Grades 1 to 6 — 75% to 80% of the time
- Grades 7 and 8 — 50% to 80% of the time

Senior Years

- Grades 9 to 12 — a minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French are necessary to answer to the requirements of the French Immersion Program

These parameters apply to three entry points: Early Immersion, Middle Immersion, and Late Immersion.

3.2 LENGTH

The French Immersion Program has three entry points: early, middle, and late immersion.

3.2.1 Early Immersion

In early immersion, the program starts in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and goes through to Grade 12. The time allotted for French-language instruction is as follows:

- in *Kindergarten*, the child's instruction is entirely in French; however, in the event of a traumatic situation, an accident, or any disruption of the child's normal activities, the teacher will take the child aside and talk to him/her in English or his/her own language, since the emotional well-being of the child takes precedence in these circumstances

-
- at each and every grade level, *from Grade 1 through Grade 6*, all subjects are taught in French except for English LA-Immersion
 - at each and every grade level, *from Grade 7 through Grade 12*, all subjects are taught in French except for English LA-Immersion

OR

in *Grades 7 and 8*, some courses are taught in French for a minimum of 50% of the total teaching time. From *Grades 9 to 12*, a minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French are necessary to answer to the requirements. These 14 credits must be distributed as such:

- in Grade 9, a minimum of four Grade 9 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 10, a minimum of four Grade 10 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 11, a minimum of three Grade 11 credits from courses taught in French;
- and
- in Grade 12, a minimum of three Grade 12 credits from courses taught in French.

NOTE: The Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth notes that at the time of printing this document, early immersion is the most common point of entry for the program in the province.

3.2.2 Middle Immersion

In middle immersion, the program goes from Grade 4 through Grade 12. The time allotted for French-language instruction is as follows:

- at each and every grade level, *from Grade 4 through Grade 6*, all subjects are taught in French except for English LA-Immersion
- at each and every grade level, *from Grade 7 through Grade 12*, all subjects are taught in French except for English LA-Immersion

OR

in *Grades 7 and 8*, some courses are taught in French for a minimum of 50% of the total teaching time. From *Grades 9 to 12*, a minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French are necessary to answer to the requirements. These 14 credits must be distributed as such:

- in Grade 9, a minimum of four Grade 9 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 10, a minimum of four Grade 10 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 11, a minimum of three Grade 11 credits from courses taught in French;
- and
- in Grade 12, a minimum of three Grade 12 credits from courses taught in French.

3.2.3 Late Immersion

In late immersion, the program goes from Grade 7 through Grade 12. The time allotted for French-language instruction is as follows:

- at each and every grade level, *from Grade 7 through Grade 12*, all subjects are taught in French except for English LA-Immersion

OR

in *Grades 7 and 8*, some courses are taught in French for a minimum of 50% of the total teaching time. From *Grades 9 to 12*, a minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French are necessary to answer to the requirements. These 14 credits must be distributed as such:

- in Grade 9, a minimum of four Grade 9 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 10, a minimum of four Grade 10 credits from courses taught in French;
 - in Grade 11, a minimum of three Grade 11 credits from courses taught in French;
- and
- in Grade 12, a minimum of three Grade 12 credits from courses taught in French.

3.3 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

There are three models for organising a French immersion program. These models each present differences which should be carefully considered and weighed when establishing such a program.

3.3.1 Immersion School

The immersion school is located in a building of its own where a French environment is fostered. This environment results from the use of French as the language of administration and internal communication, as well as the language of communication between teachers and students. The entire staff is fluent in French and English, thus assuring that all support services are offered in French. The immersion school provides students with the opportunity to live in French outside the classroom, a factor that favours the acquisition of a high degree of proficiency in French.

3.3.2 Immersion Centre

An immersion centre is established in the same building as an English Program when it is not possible to create an immersion school. Such a centre has its own administration and facilities and is, for all intents and purposes, an autonomous school operating under the same roof as another school. Conditions similar to those in an immersion school are maintained: French is used in administration and internal communication as well as between teachers and students. The entire staff is fluent in French and English in order to ensure that support services are available in French. The immersion centre favours the creation of a French environment that makes it possible to attain a high degree of proficiency in French.

3.3.3 Dual Track School

The dual track school has an English Program and a French Immersion Program headed by a single administration. Some members of the administrative and support staff, as well as the teaching assistants and specialists for the French Immersion Program, are fluent in French and English and ensure that services are administered in French. Creating a French environment in a dual track setting is of great importance and requires active support and fostering of the use of French inside and outside the classroom.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF A FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM

The establishment of a French Immersion Program represents a long-term commitment. Any school division making this commitment must be able to provide the necessary resources for the program as a whole from Kindergarten through Grade 12; otherwise, the objectives of the program are seriously compromised.

4.1 PLANNING

Rational planning must be undertaken, for it is important to:

- make school enrolment projections for the Immersion Program over a five-year period
- make available appropriate facilities for the grouping of students according to the instructional organisation type — intensity, length and school environment — deemed most likely to ensure the attainment of the objectives of the French Immersion Program
- provide, at each step of the Program's implementation, the number of teachers required and ensure that they have the necessary skills and expertise.

Consultation with teachers and parents within the school division will also be an important part of planning for the Program and for the pedagogical approaches necessary to its delivery.

4.2 RESOURCES

Within a reasonable time frame, the school division must provide the following resources in French:

- human resources (administrative, teaching, and support staff, teaching assistants and specialists)
- material resources (print and non-print)
- resources related to information technology, including distance education.

Judicious use of a broad variety of suitable resources, including a good library, is essential if students are to learn in French. They need to be able to read and do research in French in all subjects that are taught in French.

4.3 STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Teachers in the Immersion Program must have:

- the training and/or in-servicing necessary for the grade level and the subject areas in question
- the training and/or in-servicing in immersion teaching (or experience in this Program)
- an excellent command of the language in which they will be teaching, French or English, and a working knowledge of the other language.

Some members of the administrative staff for a French Immersion Program must be fluent in French and in English and must have training in the immersion approach (or experience in this Program). They will, therefore, be in a position to assume the leadership and the co-ordination of the pedagogical aspects of the Program.

In addition, the administrators of an immersion school, an immersion centre, or a dual track school as well as the divisional consultants or co-ordinators must encourage the teaching staff to participate in professional development activities, especially those given in French.

4.4 LANGUAGE OF ADMINISTRATION AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The type of school model chosen for the French Immersion Program must offer a special educational environment in order to allow students to acquire the highest degree of language development possible. This environment is created within a school context where the language of administration and communication for the program is French. The language used to communicate with parents, however, is English or, whenever possible, in their own language.

All activities relating to the implementation of the curriculum are the responsibility of the school division, the school, and the teachers themselves. This implementation process must be conducted in French.

4.5 SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

Special needs students are capable of learning another language. In view of this, every school offering a French Immersion program must provide the human and material resources to meet special needs requirements (remedial, counselling, and other specialised services), in the same way as schools offering the English program. These services must be available to the students in both English and French.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (1994). ***Guidelines for a Successful French Immersion Program***. Nepean, Ontario, brochure.
- Manitoba Education and Training (1993). ***Statutes of Manitoba —Chapter P250 Public Schools Act***. Government of Manitoba.
- Manitoba Education and Training (1995). ***Renewing Education: New Directions. A Foundation For Excellence***. Government of Manitoba.
- Snow, M.A., M. Met et F. Genesee (1989). *A conceptual framework for the integration of language and content in second/foreign language instruction*. ***TESOL Quarterly***, 23: 2, 201-217.

