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CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS



During more than 40 years of French immersion in Canada, hundreds of research studies have been conducted and some 2000 school jurisdictions have gained experience with the program. The results of this extensive research and experience provide today's central office and school level administrators with the knowledge and understanding to plan and provide high-quality French Immersion Programs.

This chapter summarizes what has been learned and presents conditions and practices for success.

French Immersion Models Found in Manitoba

Commensurate with the rest of Canada, several variations of the program exist in Manitoba offering different entry points and instructional time in French. In Manitoba, the French Immersion Program has three entry points: early, middle and late immersion.

Early French Immersion

- Begins in Kindergarten or Grade 1 and is intended to continue through Grade 12.
- Early immersion is the most common delivery model in Manitoba and across Canada. Early immersion is based on research that young children learn languages more easily than older learners.
- Early immersion provides the most diverse range of students with the greatest access and the greatest length of exposure to French. There are generally no entry requirements for early immersion and it is parents who make the decision to enroll their children, for a variety of reasons.
- Research and experience have clearly demonstrated that student proficiency in French is strongly correlated to the amount of time spent learning and using the language (see Chapter 1, and Halsall (1999), *French Immersion: The Success Story Told by Research*).
- Recognizing that many local factors determine the time allocated to instruction in the French language, the following percentages of time are required to support the goals of the French Immersion Program:

Kindergarten	100% of the time
Grades 1-6	75-80% of the time
Grades 7-12	50-80% of the time



Second language development is thought to occur readily in young children because:

- Young children are more tolerant of ambiguity and do not feel as socially awkward when they find themselves in situations they do not understand.
- Young children have fewer prejudices to interfere with second language acquisition.

Middle or Late French Immersion

- Middle immersion begins in Grade 4 and late immersion begins in Grade 7. Both entry points are intended to continue through Grade 12.
- In the 2006-2007 school year, middle immersion was offered in one school and late immersion was offered in two school divisions/districts in Manitoba.
- By its nature, middle and late immersion attract a smaller student population. Enrolment in a middle or late immersion program is usually a decision made by the student, with parental support. Some of the attributes middle or late immersion students usually possess are:
 - a predisposition for language learning, including strong English skills or knowledge of another language;
 - a strong interest to learn French;
 - maturity;
 - strong study skills and work habits;
 - a willingness to take risks and enjoy a challenge;
 - a tolerance for change and ambiguity; and
 - a good sense of humour.
- While not essential, two or three years of Basic French courses prior to entering late immersion are considered advantageous for the late immersion student.
- For optimum language development, students are exposed to a period of very intense language training in the first few months.
- Middle and late immersion students move very quickly to acquire the French skills needed to learn subject matter and often, they can be integrated with other immersion groups within a few years. Competency in French is developed not only during the French Language Arts period but also in mathematics, social studies, science, and so on. Most students become increasingly comfortable with their new language and begin to use it with greater confidence by the end of their first year in a middle or late immersion program.
- In the months and years to follow, recommended instructional time in French is the same for middle or late immersion as for the early immersion program at the same grade levels.
- Graduation requirements for middle or late French immersion students are the same as early immersion students.



Types of Schools

The success of a French Immersion Program requires a school environment that values the learning of French and incorporates the use of French as a living language. This can happen effectively in any of the three school models described below through the collaboration of all school personnel. As well, policies and practices should reflect an understanding of and commitment to the needs of the program or

programs offered in the school. (See Chapter 5.) The document *Curriculum Policy for the French Immersion Program* outlines the following three:

Immersion School

- All the students who attend a French immersion school are enrolled in the French Immersion Program 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, thus assuring that all support services are offered in French.
- The immersion school provides students with the opportunity to live in French within the context of the entire school, a factor that favours a high degree of proficiency in French.

Immersion Centre

- Students who attend a French immersion centre are enrolled in a French program but they share the building with students who attend an English Program.
- 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 all 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.

Dual Track School

- The dual track school houses 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 a challenge and requires active support and fostering of the use of French inside and outside the classroom.

In September 2006, provincial data indicated that 52.66% of French immersion students were enrolled in an immersion school or immersion centre, which represents 38.14% of the total number of French immersion school facilities in Manitoba. Provincial data also showed that 47.34% of French immersion students were enrolled in a dual track school, which accounts for 61.86% of French immersion school facilities in Manitoba.



Programming

A successful French Immersion Program reflects current research and the best practices in both the fields of education and French immersion, from its entry point through Grade 12, including:

- ongoing development of all French language skills – listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing – throughout all grade levels;
- development of French language skills across all subject areas;
- written expectations for the development of French language skills at each grade level;
- lists of multi-media resources appropriate to the age, interests and language skills of students;
- the availability of authentic French linguistic and cultural experiences;
- a wide range of courses offered in French, both compulsory and optional;
- continuous assessment and evaluation of student achievement and progress; and
- continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program.

A Foundation for Excellence is the base for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum documents in Manitoba. In all common subject areas Learning Outcomes are the same in the French Immersion Program and the English Program.

Teachers follow curriculum documents developed by the Bureau de l'éducation française Division (BEF). Within the various subject areas, the following types of curriculum documents are being developed and updated, as required:

- Curriculum Framework of Outcomes documents
- A Foundation for Implementation documents
- Support documents and Supplements to Foundation for Implementation documents

For more information on these types of curriculum documents, please consult the Department's Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/types.html> and see Chapter 3, Section B.

Although the majority of curricula are published in print form, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is moving increasingly toward electronic publication of documents.

Leadership

A successful French Immersion Program requires national, provincial and local school leaders who:

- value French language learning as an integral part of a global education;
- believe in French immersion as an effective means of learning French;
- acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to offer, support and maintain a high-quality program; and
- advocate for the program, its accessibility and sustainability.



Teaching

Teaching in the French Immersion Program requires attention to the initial and continuous development of the students' ability to communicate fluently in French, and to the development of the students' understanding and appreciation of the culture, common attitudes, and values of French-speaking communities in Manitoba, Canada and around the world. Teachers follow curriculum documents developed by the BEF.

Teaching strategies in all grades should be based on the latest immersion pedagogy, including:

- activities that are meaningful and contextualized;
- the development of all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing;
- the integration of language and content, where all teachers share the responsibility for the students' overall French language development;
- the integration of culture in content;
- opportunities for and the encouragement of spontaneous and frequent use of the language by students through student-teacher and student-student interaction;
- the use of multi-media resources;
- opportunities for interaction with French speakers both inside and outside the classroom; and
- continual assessment and evaluation of the students' language development and continuous adaptation to ensure appropriate language development.

As well as being qualified to teach at the appropriate grade level(s) and subject area(s), French immersion teachers must have:

- fluency in both oral and written French;
- a good understanding of immersion methodology (pre-service and/or in-service);



A 2006 survey of 1305 French Second Language (FSL) teachers (328 from French Immersion) conducted by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, identified the following areas of need for French immersion teachers professional development (PD), in order of priority:

- local workshops, such as school or board organized, subject-specific PD days (22.2%);
- provincial or national conferences, such as Ministry organized, subject-specific, PD days or provincial language association conferences (16.8%);

continued on next page

- an understanding of French culture and its relationship to language; and
- the ability to communicate in English.



Professional Development

Administrators and teachers must remain abreast of research, issues and innovations related to their respective roles and responsibilities for the French Immersion Program.

School superintendents and school administrators require:

- an understanding of language learning and the nature and goals of the French Immersion Program;
- an understanding and appreciation of immersion methodology;
- knowledge and insights regarding administrative issues specific to the French Immersion Program;
- access to current research and developments in immersion methodology; and
- opportunities to network and engage in problem-solving with their colleagues, both within and outside the school division/district, with respect to French immersion issues.

French immersion teachers require:

- opportunities to meet, network, plan activities and engage in professional dialogue with colleagues, both within and outside their programs, schools and divisions/districts;
- opportunities to attend workshops and conferences in French on immersion-related topics (see Chapter 5);
- access to current research and developments in teaching practices; and
- opportunities to maintain and improve their French language skills and cultural awareness.

- discussion and/or collaboration with colleagues (16.4%);
- reading articles concerning the teaching of FSL (12.1%);
- upgrading French language skills (11.9%);
- PD via electronic media (11.6%);
- university courses in FSL methodology (8.1%); and
- none of the above (0.7%).

CASLT/ACPLS CTF/FCE
CAIT/ACPI, 2006, 25-29.



Resources

Planning and budgeting at all levels must provide for:

- adequate, authentic and age-appropriate French resources from the entry grade through Grade 12 that support the learning outcomes of the different courses as well as general classroom instruction and activities;
- the establishment of high-quality French language multi-media library collections; and
- authentic French language experiences such as visiting artists, guest speakers, group performances, field trips, and student exchanges.

Support Services



The success of the French Immersion Program requires that school divisions/districts and schools provide adequate support services from the program entry grade through Grade 12, including:

- central office staff who provide direction and support to school-based administrators and teachers;
- a pool of French-speaking substitute teachers qualified to teach immersion;
- French-speaking teacher assistants;
- access to appropriate diagnostic services for French immersion students experiencing learning difficulties;
- access to appropriate resource support and learning assistance for French immersion students; and
- guidance counselors and resource teachers able to meet the needs of French immersion students.

English Instruction in an Early French Immersion Program



As well as gaining functional fluency in French, immersion students must acquire English language skills equivalent to those of their English Program peers. This is one of the biggest concerns of many immersion parents and parents considering immersion for their young children. There would be little value in children learning a second language, if their first language skills were to suffer.

An examination of the research and an understanding of the typical immersion student's milieu indicate no cause for concern.

- Quantitative and qualitative research findings into the English skills of immersion students are clear and consistent. After an initial lag lasting until a year or two after English language arts is introduced, early French immersion students perform as well in English as their English Program counterparts. There is further evidence that from late elementary on, early immersion students may out-perform their English Program counterparts in some English skills. (e.g. the figurative and metaphoric use of language).
- Many immersion students arrive at school having learned English at home as their first language. The introduction of French programming has no negative effects on their English language competency. On the contrary, learning a second language can enhance first language abilities:

The effect of learning a second language (e.g. French) on first language skills has been virtually positive in all studies. Although most studies on the effect of second language learning on first language literacy have been done in the area

of French immersion education, one can also apply the findings to Core French [Basic French] and intensive French programmes.

The loss of instructional time in English in favour of the second language has never been shown to have negative effects on the achievement of the first language [...] One can confidently assume that cognitive abilities acquired in the learning of one language can be put to use in the acquisition and proficiency of the other language. In many studies first language skills were shown to be enhanced, even if instruction time in L1 was reduced in favour of L2 instruction. (Bournot-Trites and Tallowitz, 2002, p. 3)

“We also know from extensive research that late immersion students do not experience any lags in or detriment to English skills at any point in the late immersion program.” (Halsall, 1998, p. 2)

While the early immersion model is based on an initial intense exposure to French, researchers have not yet provided a definitive answer on the optimum time to introduce English.

Over the past three decades, several variations on the early French immersion model have been tried, from the “bilingual” or “partial immersion” approach, in which as much as half the time is spent in English and half in French, to “total immersion,” in which all of the time for the first few years is spent in French.

Today, early immersion is the most common approach used across the country and in Manitoba because of student success in attaining high levels of French achievement.

In the 1996 document *Introducing English Language Arts in the Early French Immersion Program*, Halsall and O’Reilly conclude that more studies are needed with respect to the sequencing of reading in French immersion programs. According to the authors, decisions with respect to the introduction of English Language Arts must be balanced with the importance of creating a linguistically rich environment in French.

They go on to advise:

Importantly, in the decision-making process, the creation of the immersion environment cannot be overlooked for its contribution to motivating young students to communicate in French, which is the primary goal of the FI program. Therefore, the number of hours of instruction in French and the amount of English impinging on the program need to be weighed carefully. (p. 13).

Ewart and Straw (2001) conclude that there is no simple answer to the question of the language of initial literacy instruction just as there is no simple test to compare the language competency of children exposed to English in Grade 1 compared to those not exposed to English in Grade 1. The teacher’s definition of language acquisition and his or her teaching strategies are crucial factors which contribute to the complexity of the issue. Not only is the teacher seen as a key player in the sequencing of reading and writing, Ewart and Straw also point to research that underlines the role of reading and writing in the development of oracy. Oracy need not be taught to the exclusion of print-based competency and in fact, instruction in print-based competency can enhance oral competency.

French immersion Kindergarten in Manitoba is described as “total” or “100%” French. The teacher speaks only French, unless there is an emergency or a significant need for emotional support. Throughout the students Kindergarten in French immersion, development of oral skills are enhanced through their exposure to written texts and group writing activities. The emphasis on the development of oral language in French continues throughout the early years with the addition of new outcomes related to all aspects of language learning. Children become independent readers at different times. The language of instruction and the pedagogical practices of the teacher are both factors which impact on the development of their print literacy. Generally in Manitoba, English Language Arts is introduced in Grade 1. The common practice in French immersion across Canada is for English Language Arts to be introduced in later grades.

Who Teaches the English Portion of Time?

In his book *Learning Through Two Languages*, Fred Genesee (1987) considers “the use of monolingual language models” to be a distinctive and recommended feature of the early immersion programs in Canada. By this he means the French teacher speaks only French with the students, leaving instruction in English Language Arts and other subjects taught in English to English-speaking teachers. This is important, he advises, to encourage the use of French among immersion students, whose tendency would otherwise be to use English. A disadvantage to this model is that the English itinerant teacher does not have the same opportunities as the classroom teacher to integrate the curriculum.

Regardless of the model chosen, that is, either the classroom teacher teaching English Language Arts or an itinerant teacher teaching English Language Arts, it is essential that the teacher be an effective model in the language of instruction. If the classroom teacher assumes the responsibility of teaching English Language Arts, he or she must be vigilant to limit the use of English to the classroom time allotted to English Language Arts. Effective language modelling by teachers with fluency in the language of instruction (be it the French or English portion of classroom time) is an important aspect of the immersion approach, given the emphasis on second language learning and the importance of full development of English language skills.

Teachers who instruct immersion students in English Language Arts and other subjects in English require:

- a command of both spoken and written English;
- an understanding of the language learning process, including how students make transfers between languages and what aspects of one language may interfere with or support the acquisition of the other; and
- an understanding of how to maximize the complementary aspects of English and French instruction.



The Role of Kindergarten in Early French Immersion

Although enrolment in Kindergarten is optional in Manitoba, most children begin school in Kindergarten and this is where most students begin their French Second Language education.

French immersion Kindergarten has the same general goals as an English Kindergarten – the balanced development of multiple dimensions, such as the cultural, intellectual, emotional, physical, social and aesthetic – with the added goal of introducing children to the French language in a “gentle” or natural way.

Janette Pelletier (1998) conducted the study *A Comparison of Children’s Understanding of School in Regular English Language and French Immersion Kindergartens*. Her findings indicate that similarities between French immersion and English Kindergarten students were greater than the differences. She concluded that:

Children’s responses to interview questions suggest that children in French immersion and regular English language kindergartens enjoy and dislike the same things about school. Children in both programs place great importance on play and friendships in kindergarten and less importance on academic work and teacher control. (p. 9).

However, she discovered significant differences between the two groups. Children in French immersion Kindergarten demonstrated keener awareness of the teacher’s role in teaching as well as the importance of learning as the reason for being in school. She also emphasized the following:

Children in second language classes are more apt to pay closer attention to paralinguistic aspects of teacher behaviour in order to figure out what is being said. In addition, children in FI may be more attuned to learning, since an explicit awareness of not understanding versus understanding is an ongoing process in L2 [second language] programs. (p. 254).

In French immersion Kindergarten, the introduction to French is an important step in the process of developing a level of comprehension sufficient for the immersion student to develop literacy in French and to use French to construct his or her knowledge in a variety of subject areas.

The following are characteristics of an effective French immersion Kindergarten classroom:

- linguistically rich decor with French vocabulary supported by pictures and objects covering the walls;
- easy accessibility to assorted French books, videos, music, and games;
- the teacher speaking French at all times (except if the students’ emotional well-being or security is at risk) and using gestures, mime, intonation, pictures, and objects to convey meaning;

- the teacher encouraging students to experiment in French through the use of routine activities, rhyme and songs;
- an emphasis on oral skills to stimulate language acquisition;
- students speaking English to the teacher and among themselves, gradually interspersing their English with French words;
- the incorporation of French culture through authentic activities and materials, visits with Francophones and field trips; and
- parents involved in such activities as helping with snacks, preparing materials and displays, helping children with their clothing, and organizing the classroom library – parents are encouraged to learn French songs and vocabulary along with their child.

Parents are often concerned about their roles as immersion parents and their ability to support their children or be involved in the Kindergarten classroom if they speak little or no French. They are often also concerned about how their children will cope with the all-French classroom environment. They require reassurance, information and opportunities to see for themselves that there is no cause for concern.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth has two publications for immersion parents:

- Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Bureau de l'éducation française Division. (2002). *French immersion in Manitoba*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Bureau de l'éducation française Division (BEF). Access: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/french_imm/fr_imm_mb.html
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Bureau de l'éducation française Division. (2004). *What do I want for my child?/Qu'est-ce que je veux pour mon enfant?* [Brochure]. Winnipeg: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Bureau de l'éducation française Division. Access: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/parents/fr_programs/

French Immersion in Senior Years

The aim of French immersion in Senior Years is to further the students' French language competencies in keeping with their intellectual, social, and emotional development. The French Immersion Program in the Senior Years should offer:

- at least 50 percent instructional time in French;
- in a semestered environment, some courses taught in French in each semester, so that students are exposed to and use French continually;
- in addition to French Language Arts, a variety of courses taught in French; and
- a good supply of age-appropriate, subject-oriented reference materials in a variety of media, as well as suitable materials for leisure reading.



Graduation Credit Requirements

Due to the addition of Physical Education/Health Education as a required course in Grade 11 and Grade 12, there will be changes to graduation requirements between 2008-2010. Below is an outline of the changes for the requirements:

- 2007-2008 school year (minimum 28 credits)
- 2008-2009 school year (minimum 29 credits)
- 2009-2010 school year (minimum 30 credits)

For Graduation in 2007-2008

To meet the graduation requirements of the French Immersion Program in 2007-2008, students must complete **28** credits from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Of the 28 credits, a **minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French** (50%) is required to obtain the provincial diploma in French immersion.

- In Grade 9, a minimum of 4 credits at the Grade 9 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 10, a minimum of 4 credits at the Grade 10 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 11, a minimum of 3 credits at the Grade 11 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 12, a minimum of 3 credits at the Grade 12 level is taught in French.

Students must complete **19 compulsory credits** from Grade 9 to Grade 12. These are:

- Français langue seconde—immersion – 4 credits
- English Language Arts—Immersion – 4 credits
- Mathématiques (Mathematics) – 4 credits
- Sciences humaines (Social Studies) – 3 credits
- Sciences de la nature (Science) – 2 credits
- Éducation physique et Éducation à la santé (Physical Education/Health Education) – 2 credits

Students must complete **9 optional credits** from Grade 9 to Grade 12. At least one optional credit must be at the Grade 11 level and at least one optional credit must be at the Grade 12 level. Optional credits can include:

- courses based on department curricula
- School-Initiated Courses (SICs)
- Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs)
- Community Service or Cultural Exploration SIPs
- dual credits (university and college courses taken during the Senior Years)
- Special Language Credit Option
- Private Music or Royal Winnipeg Ballet Options

For Graduation in 2008-2009

To meet the graduation requirements of the French Immersion Program in 2008-2009, students must complete **29** credits from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Of the 29 credits, a **minimum of 14 credits from courses taught in French** is required to obtain the provincial diploma in French immersion.

- In Grade 9, a minimum of 4 credits at the Grade 9 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 10, a minimum of 4 credits at the Grade 10 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 11, a minimum of 3 credits at the Grade 11 level is taught in French.
- In Grade 12, a minimum of 3 credits at the Grade 12 level is taught in French.

Students must complete **20 compulsory credits** from Grade 9 to Grade 12. These are:

- Français langue seconde—immersion – 4 credits
- English Language Arts—Immersion – 4 credits
- Mathématiques (Mathematics) – 4 credits
- Sciences humaines (Social Studies) – 3 credits
- Sciences de la nature (Science) – 2 credits
- Éducation physique et Éducation à la santé (Physical Education/Health Education) – 3 credits

Students must complete **9 optional credits** from Grade 9 to Grade 12. At least one optional credit must be at the Grade 11 level and at least one optional credit must be at the Grade 12 level. Optional credits can include:

- courses based on department curricula
- School-Initiated Courses (SICs)
- Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs)
- Community Service or Cultural Exploration SIPs
- dual credits (university and college courses taken during the Senior Years)
- Special Language Credit Option
- Private Music or Royal Winnipeg Ballet Options

For Graduation in 2009-2010 and Beyond

In 2009-2010, the minimum credit requirements are **30** credits: **21 compulsory credits** and **9 optional credits**. Further information and details related to the French Immersion Program will be provided when it becomes available.

See Manitoba, Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2007). *Focus on the future – A parent and student guide to senior years graduation requirements: French immersion program*. Winnipeg: Manitoba, Education, Citizenship and Youth. Access: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/grad_require.html

Note: It is important to note that additional graduation requirements may exist in any particular high school.

Secondary schools should also be promoting and assisting students to explore opportunities for study in French beyond Grade 12 (see Chapter 11).



The Importance of Culture in the French Immersion Program

While the amount of exposure to French is important for students' second language development, it is equally important that the exposure be relevant, authentic and varied. Language does not stand alone but is integral to the way of life of those who speak it. Language should not be separated from its cultural component.

The *Curriculum Policy for the French Immersion Program* (1999) explains the importance of language and culture as follows:

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. (p. 7)

Ensuring adequate exposure to culture in the French Immersion Program includes:

- exposing students to French through a variety of cultural practices and through a variety of language experiences, including music, art and literature;
- exposing students to a variety of French speakers, both in and outside the classroom, through such means as classroom guests (e.g. artists and practitioners and professionals from a variety of fields) videos, field trips and exchanges;
- using resources and materials that reflect authentic, modern francophone life; and
- encouraging students to explore French culture on their own by engaging in activities such as watching French TV, listening to French radio, reading in French, listening to French music, attending French theatre or francophone community festivals.

Each year, schools receive the publication *Cahier d'activités culturelles* which provides a list of various cultural activities. These suggested activities enhance French language development. This information is also available on the following Web site: <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/progcul/index.html> (in French only).

For more information

Canadian Heritage. Access: <http://www.pch.gc.ca> offers a variety of resources to promote Canadian culture.

Canadian Parents for French. Access: <http://www.cpf.ca> (national) and <http://www.cpfmb.com> (Manitoba) offers links on activities and resources for students, exchanges and excursions and resources for parents.

Culture Canada. Access: <http://www.culturecanada.gc.ca> is the Government of Canada's one-stop Web access to government Culture, Heritage and Recreation services.

La Société franco-manitobaine. Access: <http://www.sfm-mb.ca> and 233-ALLÔ <http://www.sfm-mb.ca/233Allo-html> are other sources of information about French cultural activities and resource people.

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Access: <http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca> offers information and publications on official languages.

Language Instruction in the Content Areas



When we talk about language instruction in the content areas, we are talking about language across the curriculum. Each content teacher teaches the language of their discipline. This notion of learning the language of the discipline is more than simply learning the vocabulary or syntax of a particular field of study. It involves using languages to think and solve problems as an expert in that field would do. As the students learn the language of the various disciplines, they are using language to learn “about” the disciplines. As a result, language becomes a tool of communicating and a tool for learning.

Content area courses taught in French add an important dimension to the learners' language acquisition by:

- providing French language learning experiences in contexts other than the French Language Arts class therefore increasing the time spent learning in French;
- providing students with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the French language across the disciplines;
- providing students with opportunities to use French as a tool of learning in a variety of disciplines; and
- providing students with the opportunities to communicate in French in a variety of situations.



Stability

The French Immersion Program operates most effectively when it is stable from year to year. This requires a commitment on the part of the school board and administration to long-range plans that include:

- optimal use of all available funding (see Chapter 3);
- established entry points and continuation of the program through all grade levels;
- competent staff with minimal turnover from year to year;
- sites that provide optimal access for potential students and adequate space to allow for the addition of grade levels and growth in enrolment;
- effective communication with parents to ensure adequate and stable enrolment; and
- effective communication with the community-at-large to ensure recruitment of new students.



Postsecondary Opportunities

Opportunities for further study and use of French after Grade 12 are important to high school graduates continuing their language development. Just as first language skills continue to expand and develop as a lifelong process, so do second language skills.

There are many opportunities for further study in French at the postsecondary level whether at universities, colleges, technical institutions, or non-credit continuing education courses. It is important that immersion graduates be informed of the possibilities of pursuing their studies in their second language. It is through constant use that they will be able to maintain their competency in French and improve it. (See Chapters 3 and 11.)

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