Section 2

Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience

Section 2 provides data regarding the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience in the French Immersion Program.

It is necessary that the immersion setting values and encourages students' experience by focusing on their pathway to becoming plurilingual. To build confidence, students need to strengthen their language proficiency in French through social, academic and cultural contexts, thus validating their linguistic experience.

Students therefore require multiple opportunities to use and reuse their language skills in a variety of different contexts in order to:

- develop their language competencies
- develop confidence
- become engaged learners
- validate their experience of language learning

While completing Section 2, schools and school divisions were asked to provide examples of opportunities inside and outside the classroom, enriching the French environment and academic learning for students.

Focus on Language Acquisition

An Immersion language program is first and foremost a language program where a school Program is delivered through a particular language of instruction.

After 40 years of French Immersion in Manitoba, students enrolled in the Program perform academically as well as their peers in other school Programs. However, it is evident that students need to develop their linguistic competencies in French more actively through all subject areas.

Therefore, all French Immersion teachers are responsible for the development of the French linguistic competencies of students while also delivering the content of curriculum in each subject area.

The subsequent two questions were included to ascertain if teachers are aware of and follow through on the dual task of teaching aspects of language, while teaching content, by focusing on strategies that strive to attain the expected outcomes in the French Immersion Program.

Charts 17 and 18 represent the schools' perspective regarding a focus on language acquisition.

Chart 17: Percentage of French Immersion schools where aspects of language are specifically taught by teachers while teaching course content
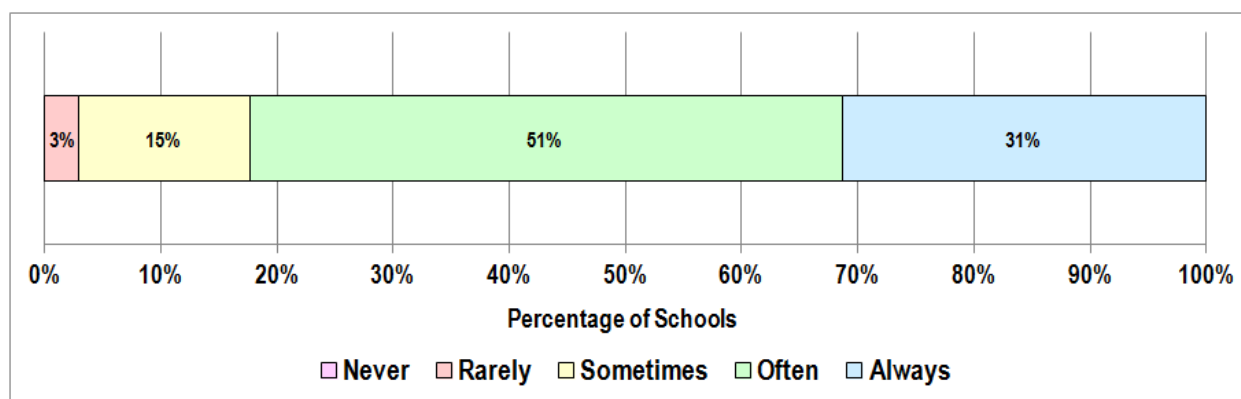

The data indicates that 82% of the 102 responding schools are *Often* or *Always* incorporating the teaching of language skills in course content while 18% indicate *Rarely* or *Never*.

At first glance, this data seems encouraging, however only 31% of schools indicated that their teachers *Always* focus on language acquisition in all subject areas. Given that the primary goal of the French Immersion Program is language development through content instruction, this should occur more consistently throughout all grade levels. Canadian research in French Immersion suggests that teachers believe they are attending to language development simply because French is the language of instruction. This idea that students are picking up all aspects of language by osmosis has proven to be false and a more systematic focus on language is necessary in order to improve students' language proficiency.

To address this need, a common understanding of pedagogical and assessment practices across the province is required. Educators from K-12 should be encouraged to participate in professional learning in relation to second language methodology and the integration of language in subject areas as well as assessment practices and tools that support this work.

Chart 18: Percentage of French Immersion schools where teachers, through the development of students' linguistic competencies, focus on attaining specific outcomes to validate students' French Immersion experience, by outcome
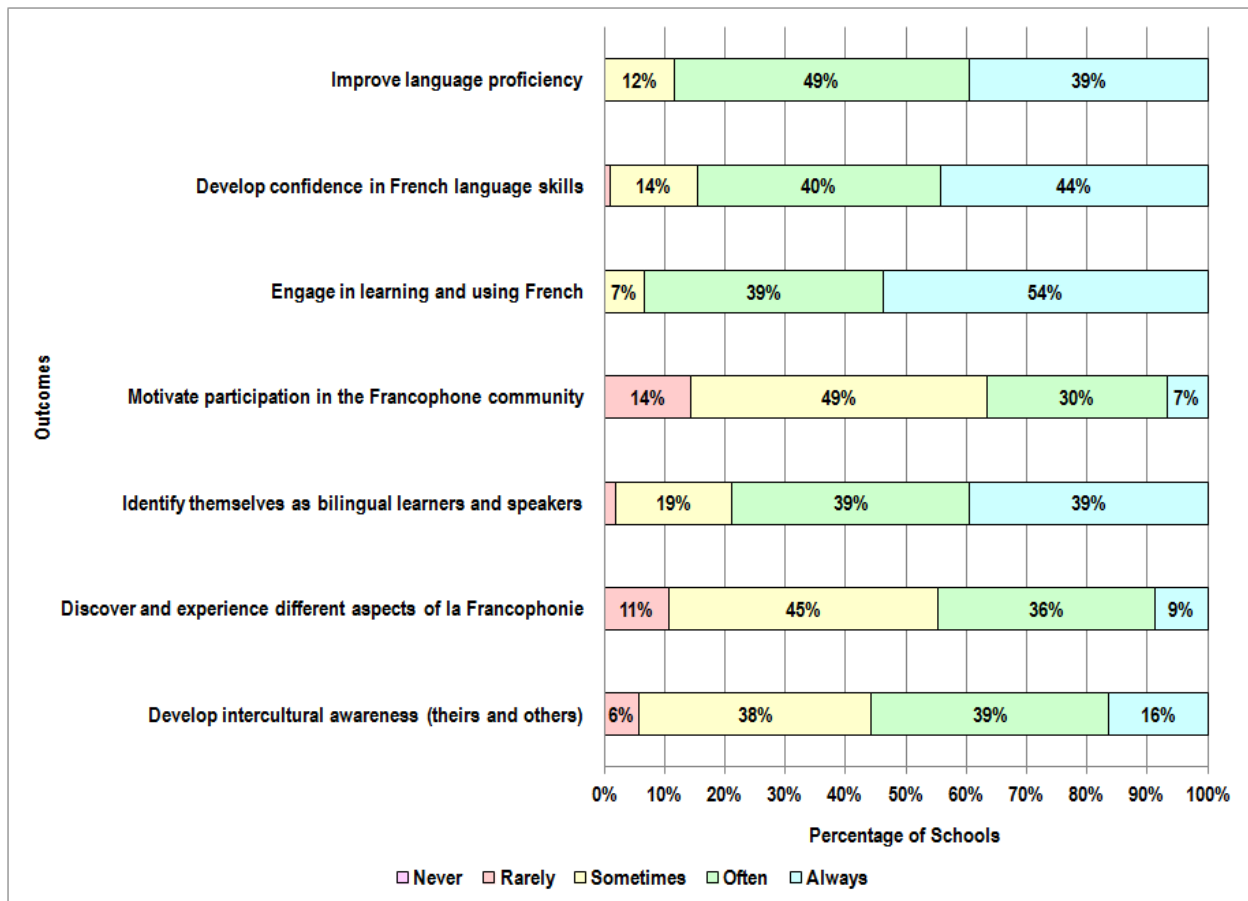
For the purpose of this analysis, the indicator of success has been identified as the sum of *Often* and *Always.* The data indicates that schools are more successful when outcomes pertain to the classroom context as the following 4 outcomes demonstrate a frequency of *Often* and *Always* greater than or equal to 75%: *Engage in learning and using French* (93%), *Improve language proficiency* (88%), *Develop confidence in French language skills* (84%), and *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers* (78%).

However, the subsequent 3 outcomes which relate to the French cultural context, demonstrate a frequency of *Often and Always* less than or equal to 55%: *Develop intercultural awareness [theirs and others]* (55%), *Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie (45%), Motivate participation in the Francophone community* (37%).

This information suggests that teachers require additional support in the form of professional learning where strategies and resources could be shared in order to increase success in these three outcomes.

Enriched School Environment

A rich linguistic environment is vital to language acquisition. Students need to be immersed in the French language which needs to be encouraged in all aspects of school life as well as outside the school walls.

Accordingly, school and/or classroom activities provide students with the continuous opportunity to authentically and purposefully use their French language competencies in the context of everyday life. These activities should positively impact students' appreciation of languages and specifically enrich their linguistic experience; thus developing and nurturing their plurilingual identity.

The subsequent two questions were included to ascertain to what extent students are provided with academic, cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities that focus on the Program expected outcomes. Charts 19 and 20 present the frequency that schools' and school divisions' offered activities in these categories to enrich students' French Immersion experience.

Chart 19: Percentage of **schools** offering **school and/or classroom** activities that enriched the students' French Immersion experience in 2013-2014, by frequency grouping and by categories (types of activity)
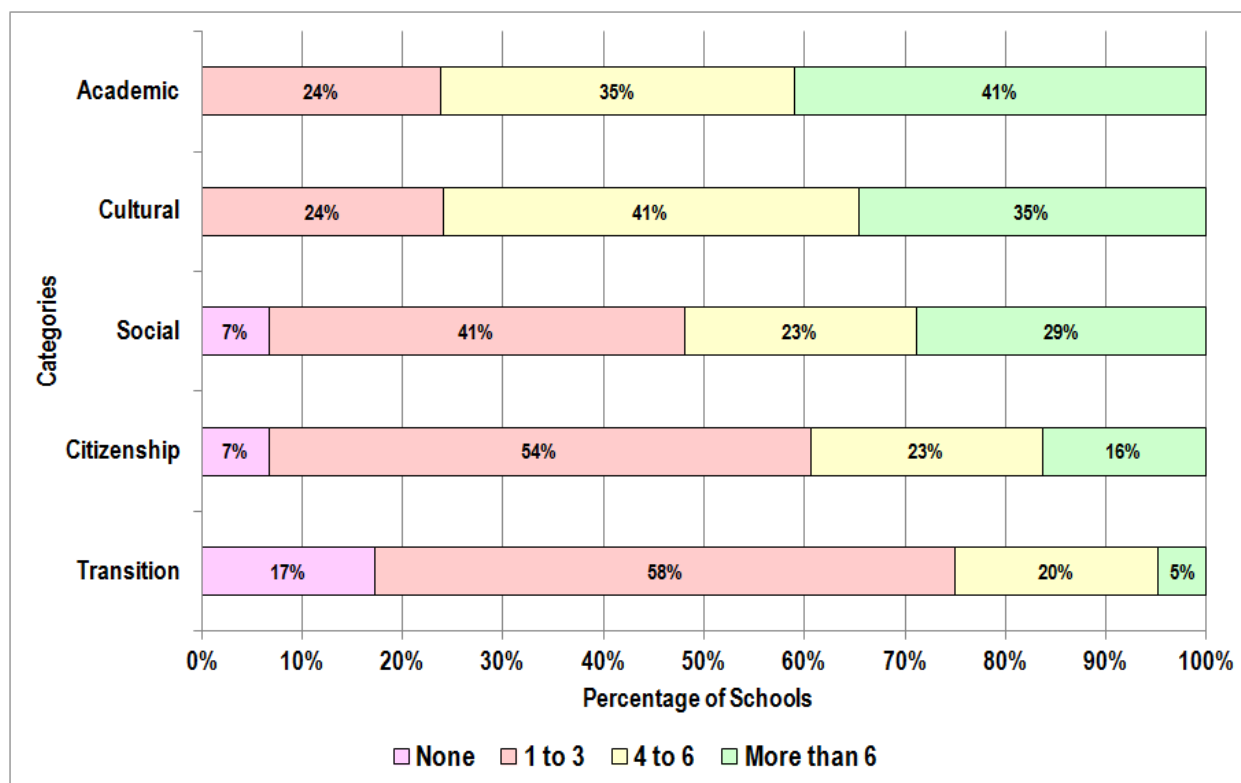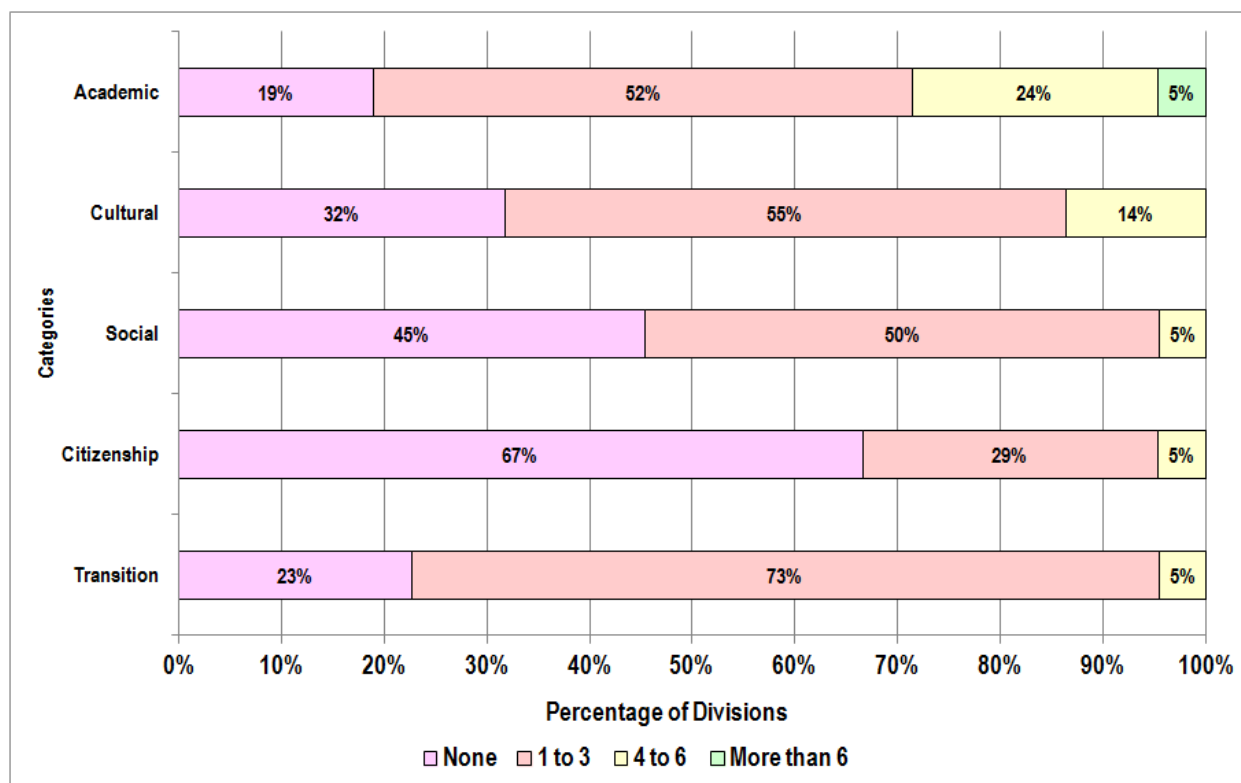

The data demonstrates that 76% of schools offer academic and cultural activities between *4 to more than 6* times per year. However, social, citizenship, and transition activities are less frequently offered and schools tend to provide such activities between *0* and *3 times* per year. Activities in these three categories are crucial in validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Notably, social activities play an important part in second language acquisition by establishing an authentic context in which students practice and purposefully use their linguistic competencies to communicate. Citizenship activities also enable students to connect with the surrounding community and offer them an opportunity to develop their identity as plurilingual members of society. Furthermore, transition activities invite students to reflect upon continuing their education in French,

thus encouraging them to embrace the next steps on their pathway of language acquisition and global citizenship. Yet, 49% to 75% of schools seldom offer these types of activities throughout the year.

A greater awareness of the importance of having a balance amid the 5 categories is necessary. It is through Professional Learning Communities, staff meetings, and other similar contexts that such dialogues can occur in order to create a common understanding among educators.

Chart 20: Percentage of **school divisions** offering activities that enriched the students' French Immersion experience in 2013-2014 by frequency grouping and by categories (types of activity)

The data demonstrates that school divisions offer academic (81%), transition (78%), cultural (69%) and social (55%) activities between *1* to *6* times per year; whereas 33% offer citizenship activities at the same frequency. It is understandable that school divisions offer fewer activities, and the data suggests that they have kept a balance regarding the types of activities provided to students by mainly offering 1 to 3 activities per category per year.

Nevertheless, citizenship and social activities are seldom offered to students. Opportunities such as these at the divisional level would enable students to use their skills and be validated in other contexts thus enriching their experience.

Impact on Student Learning

Respondents were asked to consider the impact that the activities in each of the aforementioned categories: **Academic, Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition** had on validating students' linguistic experience. The following information entails 2 questions specific to the 5 categories stated above: one in relation to the academic learning and the other in reference to the remaining four categories, cultural, social, citizenship, and transition.

The Divisional Questionnaire had a third question pertaining to the impact of enrichment activities on the seven student Program outcomes.

Charts 21, 22 and 23 present the **academic** activities offered to students at the **school level.** Schools identified a particular academic activity which, according to them, contributed the most to achieving the targeted outcome and were not necessarily expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in the charts has been sorted into three grade groupings; Early Years (EY), Middle Years (MY), and Senior Years (SY). It portrays information corresponding to the frequency of activities offered in subject areas as well as the type of activities/practices used to achieve the outcomes.

Chart 24 presents the **cultural**, **social**, **citizenship**, and **transition** activities offered at the **school level**.

Chart 25 presents enrichment activities offered at the **divisional level** to support the seven Program outcomes.

Chart 21: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Early Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	35	1	1		2		3	42	30	4	3	1			1		3
Develop confidence in French Language skills	31	1	1	1			3	37	19	7	1	7	1				2
Engage in learning and using French	27		2	1	5	1	3	39	5	5	6	4	4	8			7
Motivate participation in the francophone community	24			12	2	1	2	41			6			1	31		3
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	21	1	1	2	5		12	42	15	4	1	5		2	3	11	1
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	20			8	4		4	36			10		1		19		6
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	8			14	7	1	4	34		1	4		3	14	4	7	1
Total	166	3	5	38	25	3	31	271	69	21	31	17	9	25	58	18	23

The data, as per the Early Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (166 of 271 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (38) and *Éducation artistique* (25).

Chart 21 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that three of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Early Years: *Improve language proficiency*, *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers*, and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*. Furthermore, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness* had the fewest number of activities reported and was mainly achieved in the *Sciences humaines* course.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking* and *Field trips/exchanges* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Early Years students and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency* and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*.

Chart 22: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Middle Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	48	1	1		3		2	55	44	5	3	1					2
Develop confidence in French Language skills	48	1	2	4			2	57	41	5		6	3	1			1
Engage in learning and using French	32		3	3	6	2	4	50	9	5	4	4	4	9	5		10
Motivate participation in the francophone community	25			13	1	1	8	48			4			1	39		4
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	30		1	2	7		9	49	21	4	1	5		3	4	11	
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	23		1	11	5		6	46			8		1	4	30		3
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	9			15	5		7	36	1	1	4		3	14	8	5	
Total	215	2	8	48	27	3	38	341	116	20	24	16	11	32	86	16	20

The data, as per the Middle Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (215 of 341 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (48) and *Éducation artistique* (27).

Chart 22 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that two of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Middle Years: *Improve language proficiency*, and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. Furthermore, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness* had the fewest number of activities reported and was mainly achieved in the *Sciences humaines* course.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking* and *Field trips/exchanges* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Middle Years students and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency, Develop confidence in French language skills* and *Motivate participation in the Francophone community*.

Chart 23: Frequency of academic activity by subject area and type of activity/practice by outcome - **Senior Years**

Outcome	Subject Area								Type of Activity/Practice								
	Français	Maths	Sc. de la nature	Sc. humaines	Éd. artistique	Éd. physique	Other	Total	Oral communication / public speaking	Reading / Writing	Presenters / facilitators	Leadership	Multi-media	Projects	Field trips / exchanges	School wide activities	Varied examples
Improve language proficiency	18			1				19	16	2							1
Develop confidence in French Language skills	14		1	1	4		2	22	18			1		2	1		
Engage in learning and using French	14	1	1	3	3		4	26	9		2	2		4	6		3
Motivate participation in the francophone community	9			1	1		6	17			4		1	1	9		2
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	10			1			6	17	8	2		1		4	1	1	
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	9			4	3		4	20			1		2	5	10		2
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)	9			8	1		3	21			2			12	5		2
Total	83	1	2	19	12	0	25	142	51	4	9	4	3	28	32	1	10

The data, as per the Senior Years **subject areas**, reveals that most activities occurred in the *Français* course (83 of 142 activities) while few were highlighted in other subject areas with the exception of *Sciences humaines* (19) and *Éducation artistique* (12).

Chart 23 further indicates that most of the **outcomes** were mainly achieved through activities in the *Français* course, and that two of the seven outcomes tend to be addressed most frequently in Senior Years: *Engage in learning and using French* and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. Furthermore, the outcomes *Motivating participation in the francophone community* and *Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers* had the fewest number of activities reported.

The **activities and practices** of *Oral communication/public speaking*, *Field trips/exchanges* and *Projects* occurred most frequently in order to achieve all outcomes for Senior Years students, and primarily addressed the outcomes *Improve language proficiency, Developing confidence in French Language skills, Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie, and Develop intercultural awareness*. Upon compilation of the data, it has been noted that a limited variety of activities are being offered at the Senior Years in order to achieve Program outcomes.

While the previous three charts have provided a portrait of Early, Middle, and Senior Years, the data has been further analyzed including all grade groupings from K-12.

The data reveals that, at all grade levels (K-12), *Improving language proficiency*, *Developing confidence in French language skills* and *Identifying themselves as bilingual language learners and speakers* are mainly met through *Concours d'art oratoire*. Although this is a relevant and valuable activity, it is offered once a year and does not address the continuous development of language as well as the constant need to build confidence in students. Hence, a variety of activities should be offered to students in order to foster their development as second language learners throughout the school year.

The activity Festival du Voyageur has also been commonly identified in Grades K-12 as a means to *Motivate participation in the francophone community* and *Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie.* In addition, the outcome *Developing intercultural awareness (theirs and others)* was achieved through various activities that mainly related to Aboriginal culture, and *Engaged in learning and using French* was targeted through a range of activities*.*

Offering an equal distribution and variety amongst the 7 outcomes and in all subject areas is crucial in providing students with an enriched school environment. A common understanding between educators regarding the outcomes, their impact on student validation, and the means in which they can be addressed could be achieved through professional learning.

Chart 24 presents **Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition** activities offered to students at the **school level** which contributed, according to them, the most to achieving the targeted outcome. Schools identified a particular activity in these categories and were not expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in the chart below provides information with respect to the frequency of activities offered in each category in relation to the 7 outcomes and has been sorted into three areas: classroom based, school based, and community based.

Chart 24: Frequency of Cultural, Social, Citizenship, and Transition activities by outcome, at the school level

Category	Area	Outcomes							Total per area within category	
		Improve language proficiency	Develop confidence in French language skills	Engage in learning and using French	Motivate participation in the francophone community	Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers	Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie	Develop intercultural awareness (theirs and others)		
Cultural	Classroom based: (eg. French music, theatre, literature, authors, etc.)	10	2	12	3	6	19	16	68	347
	School based: (eg. Festival Théâtre Jeunesse, radio scolaire, semaine de la Francophonie, etc.)	13	13	18	6	4	6	12	72	
	Community based: (eg. Guest speakers/ performers, field trips within the French community, etc.)	17	6	16	67	19	61	21	207	
Social	Classroom based: (eg. Cross-grade partnerships, French Language Monitor, French pen pals, etc.)	8	10	13	2	9		1	43	136
	School based: (eg. Student-led assemblies, clubs, ralliments, etc.)	13	22	17	1	25	2	5	85	
	Community based: (eg. Journée par Excellence, Élan, etc.)	1		2	1	1	1	2	8	
Citizenship	Classroom based: (eg.cultural awareness/social justice projects, motivational system for speaking French, etc.)	2					1		3	85
	School based: (eg. Trips/student exchange, peer tutoring, Conseil Jeunesse Provincial, etc.)	7	9	14	15	5	8	17	75	
	Community based: (eg. Volunteering within the French community, etc.)	2	1		4				7	
Transition	Partnerships/collaborations (eg. Transition visits, Excel workshops, Semaine par Excellence – USB, etc.)	2		7		6	1		16	32
	Presentations/conversations (eg. French for Life presentation – CPF, etc.)		1		1	10	3		15	
	Courses / Workshops (eg. Career course, etc.)					1			1	
Total per outcome		75	64	100	100	86	102	74		

The data reveals that the majority of activities offered to students are found in the **category** of cultural activities, and are most often community-based. The categories of *Transition* and *Citizenship* have very few activities and may not be fully addressed in schools at this time.

The data also indicates that most **outcomes** are being addressed through a variety of activities (74 to 102 activities), with the exception of *Develop confidence in French language skills*. This lack of activities that support student confidence with regards to their French competencies needs to be addressed as it is an integral part of the vision as well as one of the main student expected outcomes identified in the French Immersion Program.

Further analysis of the **types of activities** shows that a variety of activities are offered to students in order to achieve the outcomes. Nonetheless, it is important to examine the validity and frequency of these activities to determine whether or not they are truly supporting student achievement and development. In addition, when reviewing the frequency of activities in all the categories, fewer are taking place in the classroom while school-based activities occur more frequently in most categories. Similarly, limited activities in the categories of *Citizenship* and *Transition* have been identified; this may be due to a lack of understanding regarding the integration of such activities and their impact on validating students' bilingual experience.

It is apparent that more work is required in this area so as to offer a variety of activities with an equal distribution amongst the 5 categories in order to achieve the 7 outcomes. Schools should work towards a better understanding of each category, and reflect on the type of activities offered that directly target the outcomes in order to guide students on their pathway of becoming proud, engaged, confident, plurilingual global citizens.

Chart 25 presents **enrichment** activities offered to students at the **school division level**. School divisions identified a particular activity which, according to them, contributed the most to achieving the targeted outcome and were not expected to identify an activity for all 7 outcomes. The data in Chart 25 provides information with respect to the frequency of activities offered and has been sorted by outcomes, type of activity as well as into the three grade groupings; Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years. It should be noted that 8 of the 22 school divisions did not respond. This may suggest that these school divisions have not offered enrichment activities to students.

Chart 25: Divisional activities for students by outcome and grade groupings

Outcomes	Divisional activities for students		EY	MY	SY
Improve language proficiency (13/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (5)	x	x	x
		Divisional debates (2)		x	x
		Improvisation (1)		x	
	Workshops/presentations/ trips for students	Excel workshops (2)		x	x
		Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)		x	x
	Support for teachers/schools	Touchstones training and implementation (1)		x	
	Assessment	Oral language assessments (DELF) (1)		x	x
Develop confidence in French language skills (14/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'arts oratoire (4)	x	x	x
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Post secondary presentations (1)			x
		Beyond Grade 12 (1)			x
		Participation in EXCELS (1)			x
		Semaine par excellence (3)			x
	Support for students	Odyssey Program - French Language Monitor (1)	x	x	
	Assessment	ACPI student self-assessments, follow up after assessments, in-servicing with teachers (1)		x	x
Engage in learning and using French (14/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (3)	x	x	x
		Divisional debates (2)	x	x	x
		Arts in the Park (Bi-Annual Event) (1)	x	x	x
		Arts Camp (1)		x	
		The Integrated Arts Program (French Artists in classrooms hosted by division) (1)	x	x	
		cultural overnight org by school for all FI students (1)	x	x	
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Semaine par excellence (3)		x	x
	Support for students	French language assistant (1)	x	x	
		Kindergarten bags (1)	x		
	Assessment	DELF (1)			x
Motivate participation in the francophone community (12/22 divisions responded)	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)			x
		Support SEVEC, travel to Quebec (1)		x	x
		Semaine par excellence (1)			x
Identify themselves as bilingual learners and speakers (9/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	Concours d'art oratoire (1)		x	
		Divisional debates (1)		x	x
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Semaine par excellence (2)			x
		Beyond Grade 12 Now (1)			x
Discover and experience different aspects of la Francophonie (12/22 divisions responded)	Divisional events	French Immersion celebration day (1)	x	x	
	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Voyages échanges (2)		x	x
Develop intercultural awareness (theirs/others) (9/22 divisions responded)	Workshops/presentations/ exchanges	Voyages/exchanges (2)			x
		AAA content and activities (1)	x	x	x
		Hosted sessions on digital learning projects for students to connect with others from around the world using technology (1)		x	x

Overall, there are few activities offered to students by the 14 responding school divisions.

Data pertaining to the outcomes and types of activities indicates that C*oncours d'art oratoire* is the main activity offered in order to address the following outcomes: *Engage in learning and using French*, *Improve language proficiency*, and *Develop confidence in French language skills*. From the examples reported, some school divisions are attempting to provide activities in innovative ways to help support student development.

The overall data reveals that activities mainly target Middle and Senior Years. At the Early Years, the limited number of activities offered mostly targets the outcome *Engage in learning and using French*.

Valuing and Encouraging the Learning of Languages

The learning of languages is valuable for today's global citizen and the French Immersion Program provides students with the opportunity to learn and grow in both official languages, thus becoming plurilingual.

To build confidence in French and take responsibility for learning and living in both languages, students need to be engaged in their language learning experience. It is important for them to have a personal connection to these languages and to see these languages as being relevant to their lives.

For this to happen, students need to become conscious of their choices when speaking and living in two or more languages. This language learning experience needs to be validated and nurtured by family, peers, and the school community. Students' personal growth as language learners also needs to be recognized and celebrated by everyone in their immediate environment in order for them to feel validated for having chosen this path.

The first question in this section was included to ascertain the strategies schools use to guide students to develop their language competencies in order to identify themselves as plurilingual learners and live as plurilingual members of society, today and in the future. As parents play a crucial role in validating their children's language experience, the second question was included to determine the extent to which schools guide and support parents in their role.

Chart 26 examines the strategies used by schools to guide students in developing their language competencies, while Chart 27 explores the support given to parents in validating their children's linguistic experience.

Chart 26: Strategies by which schools guide **students** to develop their language competencies in order to identify themselves as plurilingual learners, by percentage of schools
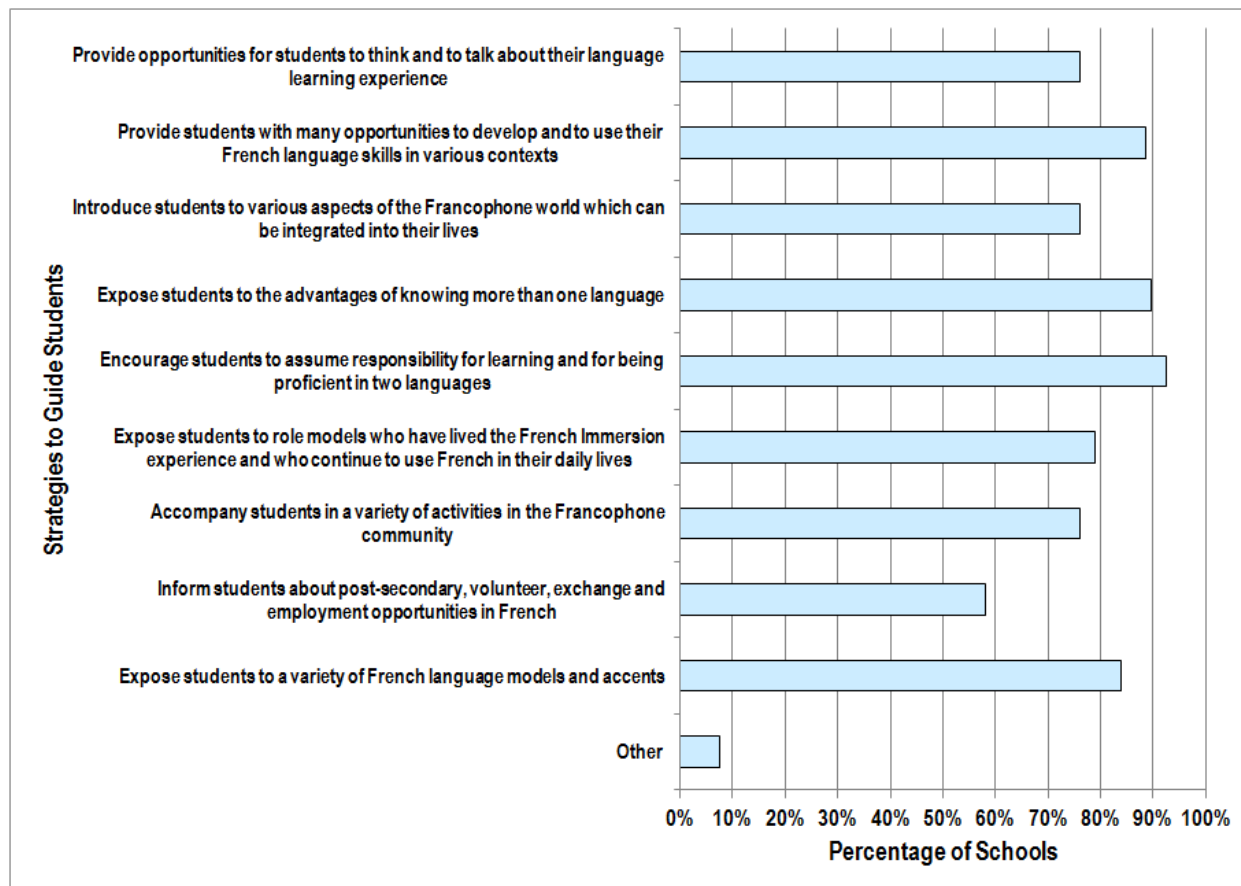
The data shows that 70% to 85% of schools guided students through 8 of the 9 strategies, while only 58% of schools informed students about post-secondary, volunteer, exchange and employment opportunities in French.

Overall, the information presented in the chart suggests that schools are mainly guiding students in relation to what students are experiencing at the moment. Opportunities in French that go beyond the classroom as well as Grade 12 need to be shared on a continual basis with students in order for them to see the relevance of learning and living in French today, and in the future.

Chart 27: Strategies by which schools guide **parents** to support and to validate their children's linguistic experiences, by frequency of response
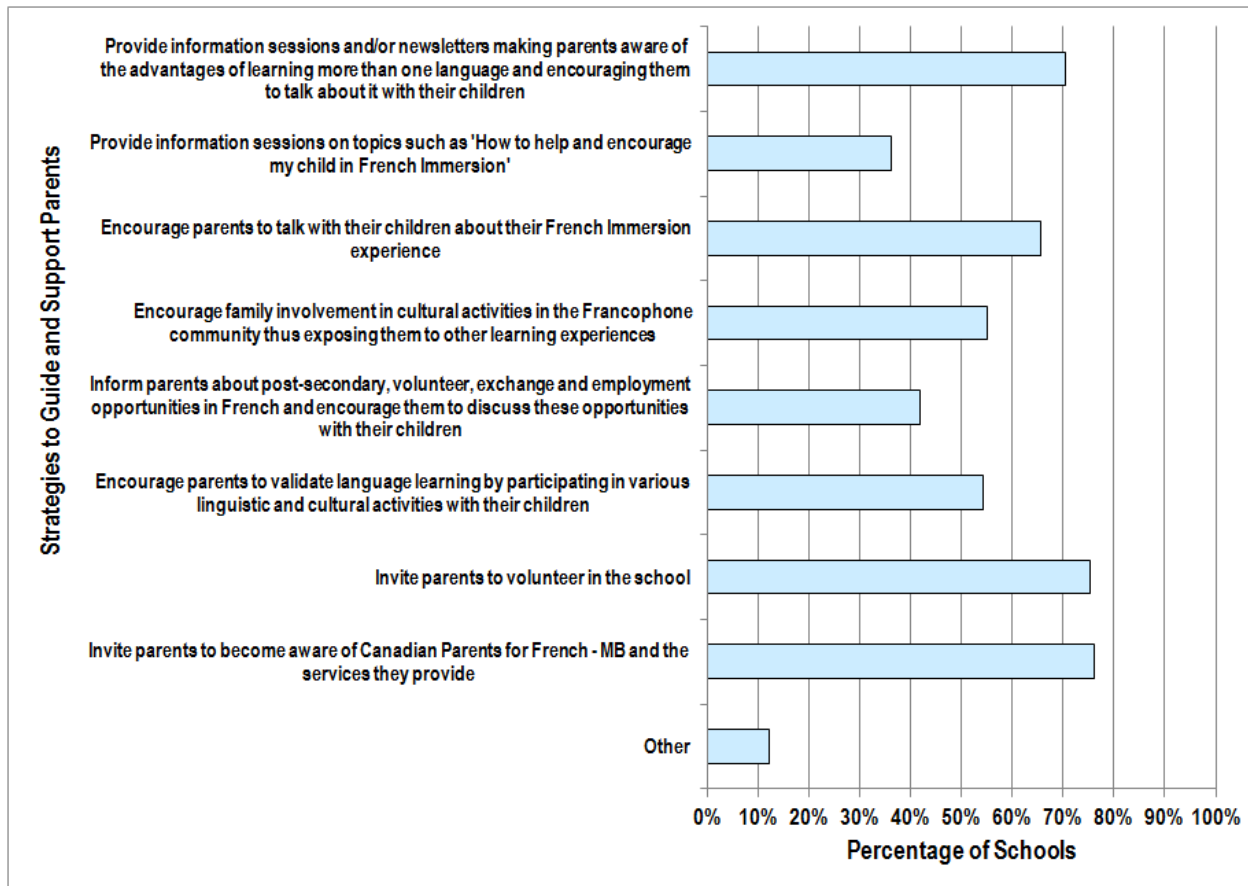
The data reveals that fewer schools provide guidance and support to parents in comparison to students as seen in Chart 26. In fact, the two strategies that were the least present were *Informing parents about post-secondary, volunteer, exchange and employment opportunities in French* (42%) and *Providing information sessions* (36%). Notably, such sessions are vital in order to bring parents together and address some concerns or issues related to the French Immersion Program. Parents must remain valued partners in education, and schools need to nurture this partnership for the benefit of students and the school community.

Parental involvement is a crucial piece in student validation and the development of a personal connection to languages. Furthermore, support given to parents has a strong impact on students' linguistic experience beyond their school years as well as their retention in the French Immersion Program.

Reflection on the Validation of Students' Linguistic and Educational Experience

Upon completion of Section 2 of the questionnaire, schools were asked to reflect on the extent to which they successfully validated students' linguistic and educational experience in order to:

- support students in the development of their linguistic competencies
- build students' confidence in their French language skills
- validate students' French Immersion experience
- encourage students to become plurilingual members of society

This reflection included identifying successes achieved and challenges encountered in the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience in their school and are subsequently presented in Charts 28 and 29.

Schools were then asked to make an overall self-assessment with respect to the validation of students' linguistic and educational experience. Hence, Chart 30 represents the schools' perception regarding their degree of success in validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Chart 28 presents the main factors identified as successes in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 28: Successes in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, showing frequency of responses
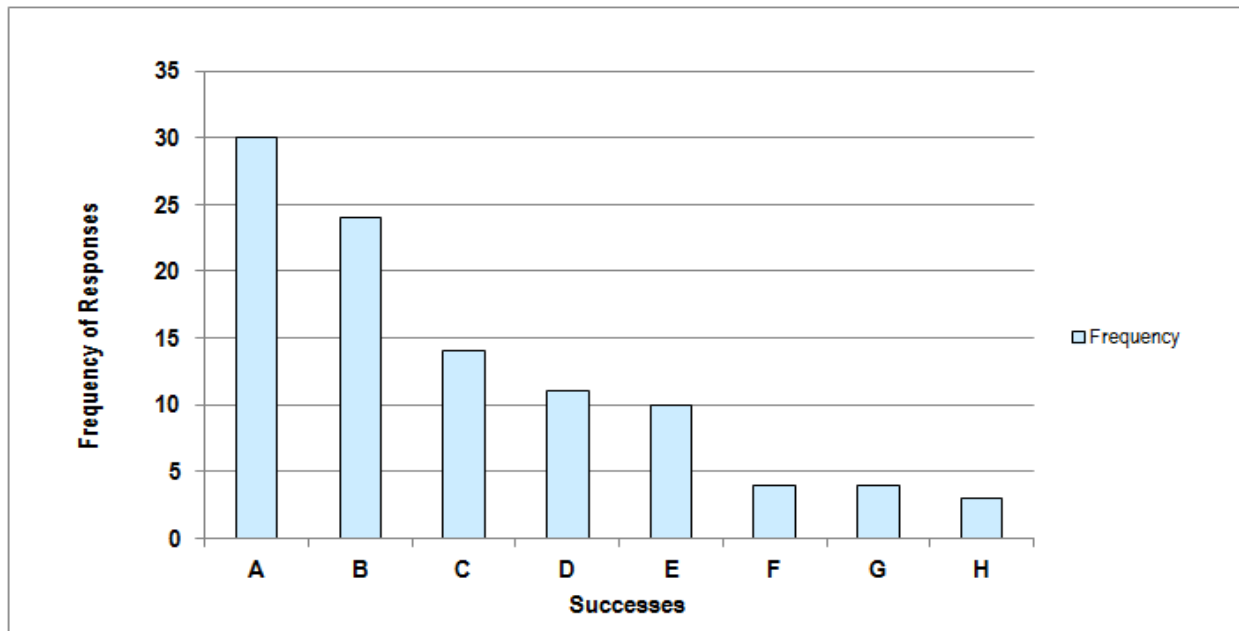
A - Students are more confident to speak French outside of school

B - Praise students by highlighting their achievements through monthly assemblies, newsletters, Province of Manitoba French Immersion Diploma, certificates, community events

C - Collaboration between students

D - Students are provided opportunities to reflect on their language proficiency (metacognition)

E - Offering a rich variety of academic activities to develop their linguistic competencies and enrich content learning

F - Students continue in Senior Years in FI, enrolment and retention is stable or growing

G - Some teachers were students in the FI Program

H - Offering a rich variety of cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities to develop their linguistic competencies

The data indicates that schools perceive their two main successes to be in the area of *Student confidence while speaking French outside of school* (A – 30 responses) as well as *Praising students by highlighting their achievements through various school activities* (B – 24 responses). The importance of highlighting student achievement in the school not only validates their language learning experience but also nourishes students' confidence in speaking French both in and outside of the school.

In addition, *Collaboration between students* (C – 14 responses), whether it be among peers or students of different grade levels, provides an authentic and purposeful context in which students communicate in French, act as mentors, develop their confidence and feel validated while using the French language. Furthermore, *Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their language proficiency* (D – 11 responses) fosters engagement in learning and using French while developing their identity as bilingual learners and speakers.

Other identified successes such as *Offering a rich variety of French academic activities* (E) as well as *Offering a rich variety cultural, social, citizenship and transition activities* (H) are essential in developing students' linguistic competencies and their identity as plurilingual members of society, today and in the future.

Chart 29 presents the main factors identified as challenges in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and demonstrates the number of responses by factor.

Chart 29: Challenges in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, showing frequency of responses and the cumulative percentages
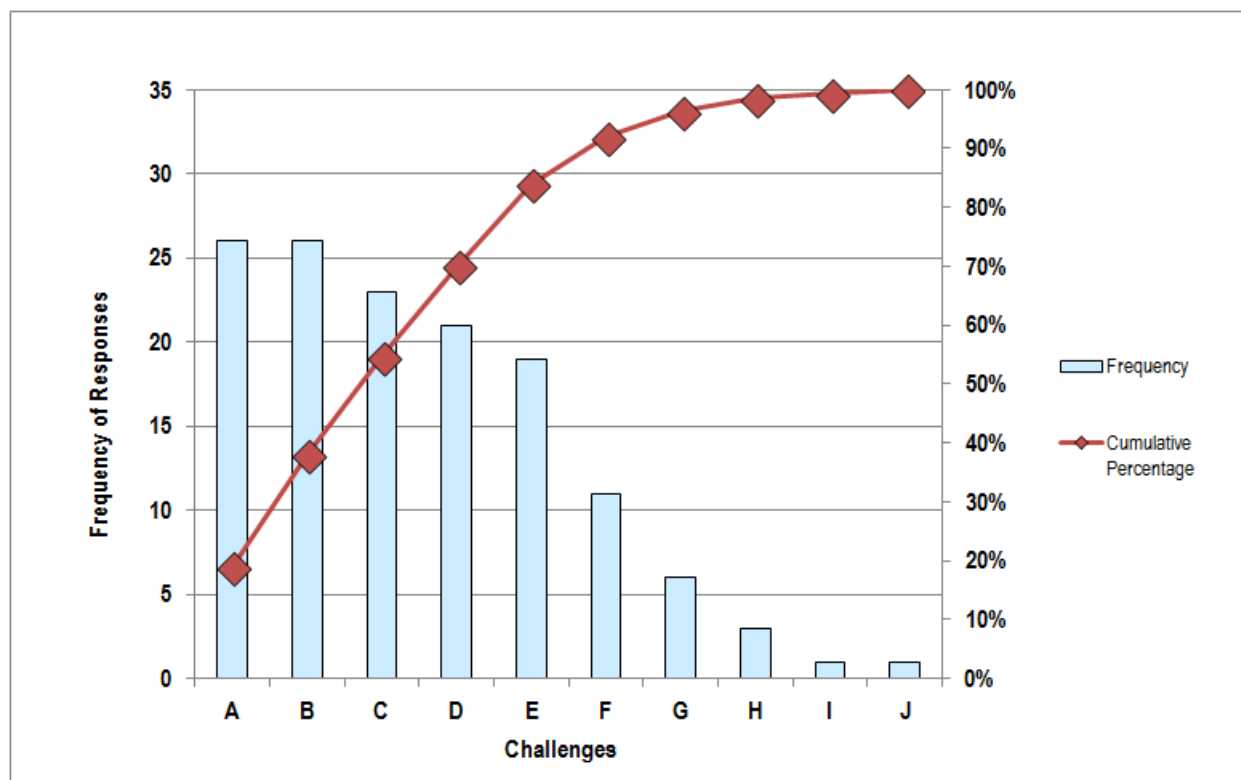
A - Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities outside the school in order to provide interactions in French

B - Dual track setting creating a predominantly English environment

C - Distance and cost limit access to French resources/activities

D - Developing student motivation, confidence and building their identity.

E - Lack of parental understanding, involvement and support

F - Finding bilingual support staff (substitute, Educational Assistant, etc.)

G - Optional courses not offered in French due to small student body

H - Limited support for struggling students

I - Lack of methodology (Language and Content) regarding the dual task of FI teachers

J - Students may be influenced by those who do not value French

The challenges identified by the schools are presented in the Pareto chart above. The Pareto Principle states that by addressing the factors that cause 80% of the challenges, strategies developed may become more focussed and resources may be allocated more effectively. As a result, most if not all of the remaining 20% of the challenges may also improve. The analysis of the data focuses on the challenges that need the most attention, those that represent a cumulative value of 80%.

The data reveals that schools perceive their main challenges to be in *Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities* (A – 26 responses) as well as the *Dual track setting* (B – 26 responses). Linked to the first mentioned challenge is the *Distance and cost limiting access to these activities* (C – 23 responses).

The factor regarding *Finding bilingual experiences and cultural activities* (A) could be addressed by initially sourcing local activities and experiences in French. If such activities are unavailable in French, schools could develop school-based activities, and could further contemplate collaborating with adjoining schools or school divisions in the attempt to offer additional activities and experiences.

Nonetheless, this challenge seems to be somewhat contradictory, given that schools provided a wealth of activities in the previous subsection Impact on Student Learning where the majority of activities lend themselves to cultural activities. There seems to be a perception in the field that cultural activities and other activities that support academic learning are only readily found in Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Although this may be true, it is essential that educators develop a common understanding regarding the integration of culture into the daily lives of students as a means of enriching the academic and linguistic learning through all subject areas as well as classroom, school, and community activities.

In addition, discussions with respect to the categories of social, citizenship and transition must also take place, as there is little evidence in the data suggesting a clear understanding of the types of activities or approaches that could be used to support student language proficiency. It is of the utmost importance that educators focus continually on the seven outcomes so that every activity offered to students, whether in an academic or a non-academic setting, directly targets specific outcomes related to student success in the program objectives.

The challenge of a *Dual track setting* (B) was also reported in Section 1 when creating a French Immersion environment as well as in Section 2 with regards to validating students' linguistic and educational experience. This reoccurrence only further reinforces that more work needs to be done in order to create a linguistically rich learning environment in dual track schools.

An effort should be made to create a common understanding of the goals of the French Immersion Program as well as the Français course (English Program) among all school personnel in order to offer students appropriate French activities that will target languages learning objectives in both Programs.

The challenge regarding *Developing student motivation, confidence and building their identity* (D – 21 responses) proves to be somewhat contradictory to what has been previously identified as a success. Student confidence has been described as being a success for some while a challenge for others. This discrepancy confirms the importance of ensuring that activities offered to students target the seven learning outcomes in the five categories (academic, cultural, social, citizenship and transition) that were addressed in the subsection Impact on Student Learning. In addition, it is important for teachers and students to identify the indicators of success for each outcome and to continually focus on achieving them.

Schools are encouraged to develop strategies that reflect the local community and school culture in order to work collaboratively with parents. The remaining challenges in the chart should be addressed by each school and school division according to their context.

The following chart indicates the extent to which schools perceived their level of success regarding validating students' linguistic and educational experience.

Chart 30: Percentage of schools indicating their level of success with respect to validating students' linguistic and educational experience
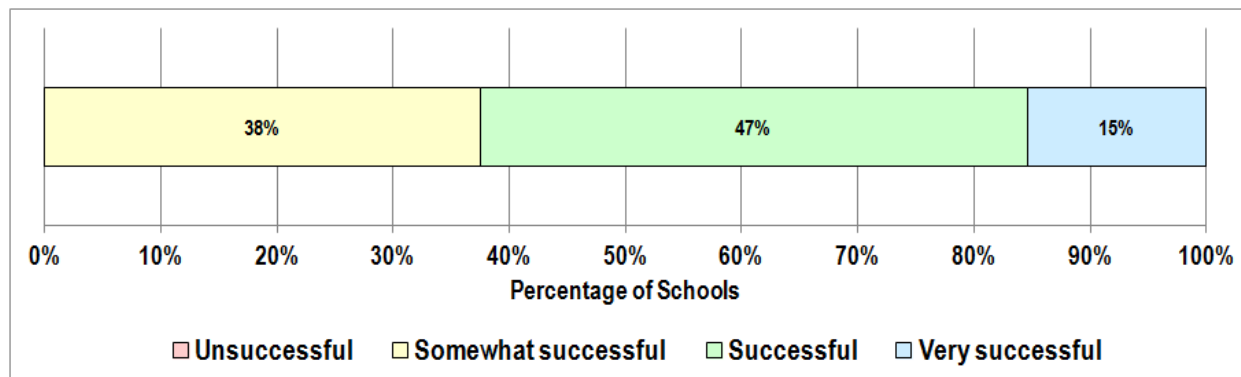
The data reveals that of the 104 responding schools, 62% perceived themselves as being *Successful* or *Very successful* in validating students' linguistic and educational experience, and 38% indicated they were *Somewhat successful*.

Although many schools feel they are validating their students' linguistic and educational experience, it is nevertheless clear that a fairly high percentage of schools do not believe they are sufficiently supporting students on their pathway to becoming plurilingual by developing confidence and language proficiency.

A focus on language acquisition and an understanding of methodology that supports the development of language proficiency in all subject areas are key factors for student success in the French Immersion Program. It is clear from the data presented in Section 2 that more emphasis should be placed on professional learning and conversations in schools and school divisions in order to appropriately validate students' linguistic and educational experience.

A clear and common understanding among educators on how to enrich academic and linguistic learning for students by means of classroom, school, and community activities is essential. It is through discussions relating to the categories of academic, cultural, social, citizenship, and transition, that educators will clearly comprehend which activities or approaches could be used in these various contexts that also support the development of student language proficiency.