Attrition In Late French Immersion:

Discussions With Six Students.

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Abstract

This qualitative, exploratory research examined the experiences of 6 intermediate level students from one school who began Late French Immersion (LFI) in Grade 7 but who transferred out of the program into the regular English program. The researcher examined the reasons that led the students to make the switch into the regular English program. The study also aimed to determine how the students were performing once the transfer had been made. Two semi-structured, open-ended interviews, each lasting approximately 30-45 minutes, were conducted with each of the participants. Data analysis was conducted by means of thematic content analysis and the themes and patterns that emerged were categorized into 3 macro-categories, each containing 3-4 micro-categories. The data suggested that the three primary reasons for transferring out of LFI were 1) the perception that the participants were academically inferior to many of their classmates; 2) the belief that they would be more academically successful in the regular English program; and 3) the desire to be with their friends in the regular English program. Other factors such as teacher-student relationships and shared responsibility were also discussed. In general, the participants reported being happier once the transfer had been made into the English program and were performing better academically than they had in LFI.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Overview

French Immersion (FI). The name alone evokes varied sentiments, emotions and

perspectives : "the public-private school system"- "elitist"- "a program of enrichment"- "a

necessity in this day and age"- "a privilege"- "a program that will make your child a better

student and will challenge his/her intellectual capacities"- "a program that will open many doors

for the future". Regardless of one's perception, FI, which started as a pilot project in the

Montreal suburb of St. Lambert, Quebec in 1965, has been effectively woven into the fabric of the

Canadian public education system, and since its inception has been the subject of much scrutiny,

debate and research.

Given that we live in an officially bilingual country, knowledge of a second language can

be very useful, not only in providing better opportunities for socio-economic growth but also in

helping non-francophone Canadians to better understand French people and their rich, storied,

and proud culture. Through the promotion of French Immersion and the participation of our

children in these programs, we as Canadians can go a long way in achieving our goals of

bilingualism in Canada. At the same time, although these FI programs have been proven to be

very successful over the years in many parts of Canada, we must also be mindful that there are

students who have not successfully completed the requirements of the program. This thesis

focuses on students from Late French Immersion (LFI)[1] who are not successful in these programs.

FI is an educational program for students of various ages from Grades 1-12. It is

important that we try to more fully understand this educational setting - one that is unique because of the fact that students are being educated in a language other than their mother tongue. One means we can use to help us better understand FI is by looking at theories of human development. Several theories have been proposed by researchers and theorists to help explain human development in general, and adolescent development in particular, which help us to understand and explain human action in a variety of situations. Erikson (1902-1994) focused his theory of psychosocial development on identity formation and the crisis that adolescents face between identity and role confusion. During this stage of life, the challenge for adolescents is to develop a lasting, integrated sense of self. Marcia (1980, 1991) proposed that adolescents progress through four different stages in achieving identity. However, Piaget (1896-1980) contended that humans pass through four stages of cognitive development. While there are many theories that have been used to help explain and understand adolescent life, the theory that I have found useful to help explain attrition in immersion programs at the intermediate level is Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1918-) and specifically what he refers to as perceived self-efficacy. This theory has shaped my study design and has helped to inform my data analysis.

The focus of my research is influenced largely by my experience as a classroom teacher in LFI over the last 16 years and some observations that I have made during that time. My particular interest is attrition, specifically in LFI at the intermediate level in the Eastern School District of P.E.I. (ESD). At the present time, of the 21 Intermediate level schools in the Eastern School District, LFI is offered in four of them: Birchwood, Queen Charlotte, Stonepark and East Wiltshire. These schools are located in the urban and suburban areas of Charlottetown. Halsall (1997) reported that 2,362 students (14.9% of the student population in the district) were in

immersion, at all levels. Canadian Parents for French reported that from 1999-2002, the percentage of eligible students for all of P.E.I. who were enrolled in FI programs rose from 16.2 % to 16.4% . For the 2003-2004 school year, there were 2,745 students (18.5%) enrolled in immersion programs in the district at all levels. Halsall (1997) reported that for the 1997-98 school year, there were 427 students (18.1% of the total immersion population in the ESD) enrolled in LFI in the ESD. For the 2003-2004 school year, there were 743 students enrolled in the LFI program in the ESD, comprising 27.1% percent of the total immersion population, and 5% of the total student population in the ESD. Clearly, this increase in enrollment demonstrates that FI programs, and in particular LFI programs, are a popular choice for students in the ESD. For the 2002-03 school year 14, 814 students were enrolled in the ESD at all levels.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will explain the rationale for my study. At the same time, I will also provide a historical look at FI programs on Prince Edward Island and the process of selection of students for participation in LFI. This chapter will conclude with some discussion on the collection and interpretation of data on attrition in FI programs.

The second chapter of my thesis will provide a review of the relevant literature on attrition. This review will focus on studies done on attrition at the elementary and secondary levels and it will examine the question of whether or not students experiencing difficulties in immersion should be removed from the program. The theoretical framework for my thesis, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), will also be explained. This will provide an explanation of how this particular theory of human development is especially pertinent to my study on attrition in LFI.

Chapter Three will be used to outline the methodology for my study. I will describe the

participants, the methods for data collection and data analysis, and the timelines for my study. Following this, I will discuss the findings of my research in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will provide a discussion of these results, some limitations to my study, some implications for education, recommendations for LFI programming in the future, and it will conclude with the researcher's reflection.

Rationale for the Study

Over the last few years of my career as a Grade 9 teacher in the LFI program, I have noticed an increase in the number of students who had switched, or were desiring to switch, out of LFI. When compared to previous students who had been in my classes, it seemed to me that students who had recently enrolled in LFI at my school were less committed to the program- specifically with regards to their willingness to speak French in the classroom and to put in the extra effort required in their school work and their studies that comes with being an immersion student. This caused me to wonder why this was happening. Possibly the students were less committed or motivated than previous students who had enrolled in the program. Perhaps the parents were playing a role in the decisions to seek a transfer out of the program, or maybe it was solely the decision of the student. Could it be a question of difficulty with the LFI curriculum, or was it personal unsuitability in that the program proved to be too difficult for the student to manage? Maybe it was a question of teacher incompatibility with the student and/or parent(s), or of teacher ineffectiveness? Perhaps the program was no longer meeting the student's needs / expectations, or the students felt that they knew enough about the language to allow them to function capably in a French environment? What I was seeing in my school caused me to wonder if this was happening elsewhere in the district or if it was just a local issue? I was also

interested to see if there has been any difference in the attrition rates since the inception of an "open door"[2] policy for admission to LFI.

In this study I chose to focus on the following two questions which guided me in my qualitative and exploratory research: 1) What were the students' and/or parents' reasons for making the switch when the decision was made to move out of the program? 2) How are the students who transferred out of LFI doing, now that they are enrolled in the regular English program? My study focused on LFI students in grades 7-9 at one Intermediate School during the 2002-03 school year. This qualitative and exploratory study was limited to those students who were enrolled in grades 7,8, and 9 who had transferred out of the LFI program, including a cross-section of students from the different intermediate grades. All the participants had completed at least one full year of LFI.

In my readings I have come across various authors of studies focusing on attrition in FI: Adiv, Bruck, Lapkin, Swain, Hart, and Halsall, to name a few. Halsall has distinguished herself in this aspect of FI research, having conducted extensive research for the Carleton Board of Education (1989,1994) and for the ESD (1997). She and other authors will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two. Research in the area of attrition in FI programs is not extensive, and research in attrition in LFI at the intermediate level is especially limited. The bulk of this research has been focused on the elementary and secondary levels in EFI, and the majority of the existing studies have been carried out in large, urban centres and in large school districts. My study will provide some insight into the realities of LFI in a much smaller school board at the intermediate level.

French Immersion in P.E.I.: A historical perspective

In 1975 Ron Elliot, then Superintendent of the Unit Three School Board[3], contacted Clair Smitheram, a Core French teacher at the time, to research other French Immersion programs for the purpose of developing one for the students of Unit 3. Through her observations made during visits to St. Lambert, the Protestant School Boards of Greater Montreal, and the public school boards in Ottawa, Smitheram formulated her ideas into a proposal for FI programming here on P.E.I. In June, 1975, the Unit Three School Board approved Smitheram's plan and 100 students were chosen to start Grade One Early French Immersion (EFI) at Spring Park and Sherwood schools. Early Immersion was first implemented on P.E.I. as a three year pilot program (Doyle, 2002).

During the 1975-76 school year, in response to many parents whose children were enrolled in the English program, a proposal was made to the former Unit 3 School Board to begin an immersion program at the junior high level. In the fall of 1976, a local pilot for French Immersion in the junior high schools was implemented, with the purpose of providing an alternative entry point for FI. Originally, two grade 7 classes were established, one at Birchwood and the other at Queen Charlotte. Shortly thereafter in 1978, Stonepark received an official designation as an Immersion school, along with Queen Charlotte and East Wiltshire. It was decided at that time to phase out the Immersion program at Birchwood.

Since its inception, LFI has been offered intermittently at these four schools. There was a period of time in the 1980's when the program was only offered at Birchwood and East Wiltshire. Students who did not live in the areas served by those family of schools who wished to take LFI had to be bussed in. In the late 80's, the program was re-instated at Queen Charlotte and in 1996

LFI was offered for the first time to intermediate students at Stonepark. Currently, LFI programs exist in all four Intermediate schools in the Charlottetown area: Stonepark, Birchwood, Queen Charlotte, and East Wiltshire. Halsall (1997) recommended that the Eastern School District make efforts to establish FI programs in the Morell and Souris areas, a LFI program in Montague, and investigate the re-establishment of an EFI program at Glen Stewart. September, 2002, marked the return of the EFI program to Glen Stewart. However, despite the efforts made by ESD officials to do so, they have not yet been able to establish FI programs in Morell, Souris nor a LFI program in Montague.

Following its first full year of operations in 1976-77, the junior high immersion program was subjected to an internal investigation by Dr. Parnell Garland. The major focus of his study centred on the Grade 7 curriculum and, to a lesser extent, on student outcomes, implementation strategies, and administrative concerns. Although he was for the most part quite positive in his comments, Garland cited problems with the reading difficulty of the textbooks and classroom resources at the Grade 7 level and a lack of clearly stated objectives, instructional guides, and evaluation procedures. Garland made seven recommendations for improving LFI programming. These recommendations focused on the allocation of funds and resources by the Department of Education or the Department of the Secretary of State which targeted the development and elaboration of curriculum materials and objectives appropriate for LFI. It was also recommended that Late French Immersion Centres be established at Queen Charlotte for the Colonel Gray family of schools, and at Stonepark for the Charlottetown Rural family of schools. Extraordinary bussing would be phased out for incoming students and it was recommended that a quota be established at each centre and that programs be offered only if there were at least 30 students

available. Finally, it was recommended that the LFI program be limited to two schools until such time as it was evident that there was an adequate supply of teachers to staff the program (MacDonald, 1980).

Selection of students for LFI

Prior to the *Report To The Superintendent Regarding The Review Of The Organization Of French Immersion Programs In The Eastern School District* (Halsall, 1997), students were screened for admission to LFI. Admission into the LFI program was based on the recommendation of Grade 6 teachers who filled out a checklist of student characteristics such as academic performance, work and study skills, and attitude and motivation towards their schoolwork. Students' scores on the math and reading sub-tests of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) were also considered. On the basis of these measures, students were ranked and 33 students were admitted to a designated class. Halsall found that the practice for screening students was often left to individual schools, which resulted in inconsistent practices. As well, she contended that the screening mechanism was questionable in terms of predicting success in LFI. There were few items on the student questionnaire that were directly related to the capacity of a student to learn French, and there were no fixed scores on the instruments, therefore, the abilities of students admitted varied from one year to the next.

While Halsall was recommending the removal of the screening process, results from the questionnaire filled out by parents of immersion students and by LFI teachers revealed some interesting information. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire believed that the screening process was fair. Halsall reported that some teachers who responded to the questionnaire felt that the program was so demanding, and the curriculum that they

covered moved so quickly from one area to the next, that the teachers had to be assured of having capable students. Other teachers felt that the LFI clientele had already changed, since enrollment had already increased, therefore, students of varying academic abilities had enrolled in the program. Halsall reported that the number of students who had not been admitted to LFI in the recent years had been low, therefore, she felt that the results from the whole screening process did not warrant the time required by Grade 6 personnel to complete it. As a result, Halsall recommended that the practice be abolished and since the Spring of 1998, the screening process has been eliminated. It was believed that through open consultation and explanation among school staff, parents and students, that the decision to enroll a child in FI could best be made on an individualized basis.

Mannavarayan (2001) supports Halsall's recommendation to eliminate the screening process. Mannavarayan argues that a suitable screening instrument does not exist that can predict success for a child in FI. She refers to Carroll (1976), the author of the *Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)*, who argues that prediction for future success in EFI is extremely difficult because children change so much at this young age. She does add, however, that levels of linguistic proficiency and accuracy could be used as predictors for success in immersion programs later, in either Middle French Immersion (MFI) or LFI. Mannavaryan also cites Trites and Moretti (1986), who believe that teachers are in no better position than any prescribed screening instrument to predict student success in future grades. In their study of drop-out and successful children in EFI, they found that the teachers' ratings of their students' readiness for the following grade did not provide an accurate prediction of success in FI programs.

Collection and Interpretation of data on attrition

Doing research in the area of attrition in FI can be particularly challenging because of the difficulty that lies in collecting and interpreting data. First, school boards do not tend to keep official records and track students who leave immersion programs. Second, when a student transfers out of immersion, there is generally no distinction made between those who left for family mobility reasons and those who transferred to the regular English program. Third, most studies on attrition have been done in large school boards and, as a result, may not necessarily reflect the circumstances in a small school board. Fourth, factors that affected attrition rates may well have been related to unique characteristics of the school boards. Finally, the significant studies that were done in the late 1970's (Adiv, 1979; Morrison, Pawley & Bonyan, 1979) reflected the early years of the immersion program and, therefore, may not be applicable in today's school climate (Halsall, 1994b).

In the ESD, no specific records of attrition in FI are kept. Therefore, in 1997, Halsall attempted to collect some data in order to describe the enrollment picture in the ESD. Halsall (1997) reported that between the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, departure rates from immersion were highest in Early French Immersion (EFI) with 8% of students in grades 1-5 leaving before entering grades 2-6. Middle French Immersion (MFI) had an attrition rate of 6.4% and the rate in LFI was reported to be 2.6%. There was no change in enrollment in continuing immersion programs between grades 6 and 7, a typical point of departure in jurisdictions outside P.E.I., and between grades 9 and 10. Based on the data gathered for this study, Halsall concluded that attrition in EFI was probably no worse in the ESD than elsewhere in Canada, and attrition in LFI was found to be low and very low in high school. [4]

However, as I mentioned earlier, I have noticed that there has been an increase in the number of students who have, or are seeking to be, transferred out of the LFI program at my school. My preliminary explorations done in February, 2003, indicated that, among the students currently enrolled in LFI (grades 7-9) in the Eastern School District, the attrition rate clearly was on the rise since Halsall's work. At East Wiltshire, 12 students (6.9%) had transferred from the LFI program to the regular English program; 17 (7.4%) at Stonepark, and 6 (4%) at Queen Charlotte. It was at Birchwood where the largest rate of transfer took place; 24 students (12.7%) dropped out of the LFI program and switched into the regular English program. The overall average attrition rate of students in LFI in the four schools was 7.9%. This represents a relatively large increase from the 2.6% attrition rate reported by Halsall for 1997-98, the same school year in which it was recommended that the District abolish the aforementioned screening process for admission into LFI. Is it just a coincidence that the attrition rate was this much higher? Was this particular group of LFI students in these four schools an exceptional case because of their high attrition rates ? Or is this representative of future trends in the LFI program? These are not easily answered questions. My study will provide insight into the realities of six students who experienced difficulty in LFI. The story they have to tell will allow us to better understand the lived experiences of students who find LFI to be challenging to manage, and a program in which some students find it difficult to find success. There can be little argument that LFI has proven itself to be a successful program in the ESD, however, there is one other aspect that needs to be studied. Through this exploratory research, it is my hope that the stakeholders (i.e. the ESD and the provincial Department of Education) can develop a greater understanding of this program as it pertains to the segment of LFI students who are not succeeding.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

My literature review will focus specifically on four areas: 1) Whether or not students experiencing difficulties should be removed from immersion; 2) Discussion of studies done on attrition from FI at the elementary level; 3) Discussion of studies done on FI attrition at the secondary level; and 4) A review of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). SCT provides the theoretical framework that guided my study in terms of how it relates to adolescents and how it helps to explain attrition in LFI at the Intermediate level.

Should students experiencing difficulties be removed from Immersion?

Trites and Price (1976) firmly believe that the answer to this question is yes. Trites and Price conducted a study at the Neuropsychology Laboratory at the Royal Ottawa Hospital in which they compared thirty-two children who were having difficulty in primary FI (experimental group) to seven other groups of children, matched for age and sex on a wide variety of tests. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was anything unique in the profile of the students in the difficulty group. Follow up testing was then conducted by comparing 24 children who were having difficulty in primary FI ("difficulty group") to seven children who were doing well in FI ("success group") for the purpose of monitoring their progress on academic achievement and language tests over time. Based on the results of their study, Trites and Price contend that because there are some children who have a "maturational lag" in the temporal lobe regions of the brain which inhibits their ability to progress satisfactorily in the FI program, they should be removed from the program. Trites and Price believe that once these children are removed from their difficulties in the FI program and enrolled in an English language program, acceleration in

their language arts skills in English occurs. According to Trites and Price, once a student has been identified with a difficulty in FI, a switch to the English program should be made without delay.

Cummins (1979) refutes the Trites and Price findings and offers the following criticisms of their research: First, Cummins states that Trites and Price failed to interpret non-significant statistical differences as non-significant. Second, they failed to point out that many of the students who transferred out of FI had repeated or dropped back a grade, thereby affecting the interpretation of the data. Third, there was an inappropriate use of statistical percentile scores to illustrate the "gains" made by the transfer group, and that the differences in reading gains made by the transfer group were not as substantial as they appeared to be. Cummins felt that the groups should have been compared in terms of the same expected grade norms, and if that had been done, the drop-out groups would have indeed made *less* progress than those who remained in immersion. Essentially, the transfer group performed adequately in comparison to the grade level to which they had dropped back, but their reading scores fell further behind the expected norms for their age. On the other hand, those students who did remain in immersion did not fall further behind those who transferred to the English program (Cummins, 1979). Cummins, therefore, contends that the problems that a student experiences in an immersion program should not be blamed on the program itself, rather, other factors must also be considered in trying to come up with an appropriate answer or a reason to explain the student's difficulties. Wiss (1989) contends that there needs to be a re-defining of "maturational lag" and that there is the possible existence of a subgroup of developmentally immature children for whom EFI may not be a suitable program. Rousseau (1999) reported that programs such as the French Immersion Learning

Disabilities Program were effective in helping children to improve their academic achievement and self-concept while at the same time better managing their learning difficulties..

Bruck (1979) described nine case studies of students who had participated in a FI program for at least one year but, because of academic difficulties, transferred out of the FI program. This study was not done for the purpose of drawing conclusions about the feasability of switching out of FI, but so that specific hypotheses could be tested in a larger, more systematic study. Bruck considered many questions: What was the optimal time to switch out of FI? Did the transfer actually affect academic performance? Does switching have any emotional and/or social consequences? Do the students' problems increase, decrease, or disappear?

Data for each subject was obtained by means of baseline data when the child was in immersion, results from a battery of academic tests administered in June of the follow-up year, an academic history of each child, and answers to a series of questions put to each participant's teacher, who also completed the *Connors Rating Scale of Classroom Behavior* (1969). A parent of each participant was also interviewed to determine the child's academic, emotional and social standing while they were in immersion and after the switch was made to the English program. From these various sources of information, no quantitative data were analysed. Instead, nine case histories were formulated.

Bruck concluded that it is no easy task to evaluate the consequences and impact of switching out of FI. However, she states that in many cases the problems that existed while the student was in FI were still present after the switch into the English stream. There was a tendency on the part of the parents to perceive that the child was doing better in the English stream, but Bruck found this to be subjective on the parents' part. This perceived success could also be

attributed to the Hawthorne Effect[5], and that over time, previously exhibited behaviours by the student would eventually return. Bruck did note that parents often judged the switch out of FI to be successful because, with their child in the English program, they were able to help them with their homework. Finally, Bruck wondered if remedial services, that are available in the English stream, were present in the FI programs, would the students still make the switch or would they remain in the program and work on their area(s) of weakness?

Studies on attrition in French Immersion programs at the elementary level

Bruck (1985a) conducted a study designed to help identify predictors for students' transfer out of FI programs. This study was of significance for two specific reasons. First, previous studies had been *retrospective*, in that the children identified to participate were selected *after* they had left the program, and teachers and parents were asked to recall their reasons for the departure. As a result, the data collected may have reflected changes in parents' perceptions since the switch was made. By contrast, Bruck's study was *prospective,* in that the participants were chosen from a pool of students who had made the transfer *during* the particular school year when the study was conducted. Bruck argued that this gave a more accurate reflection of the reasons for the transfer. Second, previous studies lacked a control group with which to make any comparisons. Bruck's study included a control group to serve this purpose. Furthermore, Bruck's results and conclusions contradicted the previous findings by Trites (1976).

At the end of one school year, Bruck (1985a) asked teachers to identify students whom they believed would or should make the transfer to an English stream. The students who transferred because of academic abilities (30 students in the transfer group) were compared to those who chose to remain in the program despite the academic difficulties (44 students in the

control group). Through this analysis, it was believed that Bruck could identify factors that could predict student transfer out of the FI program. Information was collected from parents by means of an interview and questionnaire, and from teachers using a questionnaire only. A battery of tests was administered to the students to assess cognitive skills (PIAT), academic achievement (PIAT and WRAT), French literacy skills in oral reading (adapted from Trois Tests de Lecture Orale), and reading comprehension, listening comprehension and oral production skills. The students' attitudes and motivations towards learning a second language were also assessed by means of a child attitude questionnaire. The results of the tests showed no significant differences, in terms of academic abilities, between the control group and the transfer group. However, results from the attitude survey revealed a noticeable difference between the students in the transfer group and those in the control group. These results suggested that the children in the transfer group were not happy in school, did not like learning French, nor were they comfortable using the language either outside or inside the classroom. Significantly, more transfer parents than control parents *perceived* that their child was having difficulties, whether this was the actual case or not. Bruck concluded that nonacademic, affective, attitudinal and motivational variables, moreso than cognitive variables, were the best predictors of student transfer rates.

In the follow-up part of this same study including the same participants, conducted one year after the transfer to the regular English program had occurred, Bruck (1985b) attempted to find out what the consequences of the transfer were. Specifically, she focused on: the academic and cognitive consequences of the transfer; the emotional, social, and attitudinal consequences; and, the consequences on the acquisition of second language skills. The students were re-assessed using the same battery of tests used in the pre-test one year earlier. The English teachers

of the students in the transfer group and the French teachers of the students in the control groups each completed questionnaires. The parents were interviewed over the phone and asked to assess the changes in their child since the transfer had taken place. They were also asked to evaluate their decision to switch their child out of EFI.

On the academic and cognitive tests, which were conducted as pre-tests and post-tests by different teachers, the control and transfer children performed similarly. There was no significant difference in the proportion of children who improved, regressed, or stayed the same. All children were overcoming academic problems and the rate of improvement was not related to the transfer. Moreover, although the two groups showed improvement, their ratings on the post-test were still below average.

From the parents' point of view, 83% of the transfer parents and 58% of the control group felt that their child was doing better in school than the previous year and more transfer parents (33%) than control parents (16%) felt that their children's problems had disappeared since the previous year. These findings are inconsistent with the teacher and child data. Bruck attributes this to several factors. First, given the conflict that the parents felt over the decision to transfer, they may have noted more improvement than usual in order to justify it. Second, parents in the transfer group may have been more attentive to looking for and finding improvements. Third, improvements may not have been as observable to parents in the control group because no change in educational setting had occurred.

Interestingly, in the pre-test interview, transfer parents expressed their commitment to the values of bilingualism and felt that it was extremely important that their child learn French. Many were also unsure about their decision to transfer their child. By contrast in the post-test, many

expressed the belief that immersion had failed their child and they no longer emphasized the importance of learning a second language. As well, 87% of the transfer parents felt that the decision to transfer was an excellent one. These findings suggest that the parents' perceptions had changed as a consequence of transfer and that the perception of the negative effects had developed since their child had left the program.

From the teachers' point of view, although there was improvement noted in the students in the transfer group's work habits, the negative attitudes, hyperactivity and poor behaviors that were characteristic of this group prior to the transfer were still prevalent once the change had been made. Thus, there is no support for the contention that behavioral problems are a consequence of an immersion education; if this were so, then the aforementioned behaviors would have dissipated after the transfer. Instead, these personality traits persisted, regardless of the language of instruction.

These studies once again provide a strong argument for not transferring the student who is experiencing difficulties in FI into a regular English program. Results such as those found in these studies forces us to look at the bigger picture, and to take into consideration other aspects of a child's education, their personality, their behaviours, and any other related issues before making the decision to transfer the student.

In Alberta, Hayden (1988) carried out a prospective study similar to Bruck's (1985a). Hayden conducted in-depth open ended interviews, generated by leading questions which allowed for elaboration, with 34 children who had withdrawn from immersion programs in Grades 1-6 during a particular school year. As well, she interviewed 30 of the parents of the transfer children and 24 of their teachers. She was specifically trying to find out a) The factors

which led the teachers and parents to make the switch; and b) What understandings drop-out children had about their immersion experience and the reasons for their withdrawal.

The parents cited their child's difficulty with French Language Arts, parents' inability to help at home, and frustration/emotional stress as the three most common reasons for making the transfer into the regular English program. The following comments were common in many of the interviews: "If she can't do reading and writing now, she's never going to learn the other stuff [subjects]" (p.226) and "I know she'll do better when those subjects are in English. I'm sure of it." (p.227).

The teachers also noted that difficulty with language arts and emotional stress/frustration were the two major factors in the decision to withdraw from immersion. It is interesting to note that 67 % of parents cited *teacher* recommendations as a factor in the decision to transfer the child out of immersion, while on the other hand, 71% of the teachers contended that the *parents'* decision was a major factor, even though the teacher did not believe the child to be experiencing difficulties.

For the students' part, although they were not ultimately involved in the decision making process, they did discuss the transfer with their parents prior to it actually being implemented. Again, the children again cited difficulties in French language arts as the primary reason for their transfer out of FI, followed by poor test results and their parents' wishes to enroll them in the English program. Once again, the children noted that their parents told them that they believed their marks would improve if they were in an English program.

Noel (2003) cited parents' concerns for the future of their child, the perceived quality of the EFI and regular English programs, academic concerns, and parent and child's comfort levels

with EFI as the primary reasons for deciding whether or not to keep their child in EFI. For the

parents' part, she reported a lack of parental empowerment and the challenge of doing the

homework as factors that played a part in the decision to remain in EFI or make the transfer to

the regular English program.

Studies on attrition in French Immersion programs at the secondary level

As a component of a comprehensive study of the immersion and regular programs in the

Carleton Board of Education (CBE), Halsall (1989) studied attrition in FI programs

at the secondary level. Determining the attrition rate at the secondary level in the CBE was

virtually impossible, largely because secondary students were no longer specifically identified as

immersion students. However, judging by the numbers of students receiving the secondary

school Certificate of French Immersion, the dropout rate among students in FI programs

appeared to be high. Halsall (1989) reported that in 1981, 18% of the group of students from EFI

and LFI programs who entered a secondary school FI program received the Certificate. This rose

to 43% in 1983 and then dropped back to 23% in 1988. These results clearly show that, while

there may be students in the CBE who are taking some secondary courses in FI, they are

consistently not taking the required number of courses to receive the French Immersion

Certificate upon graduation from high school. Information was gathered by several means in this

study: interviews with trustees, staff, and parents, a questionnaire to measure the perceptions of

staff, case studies, data collection forms, a telephone survey, meetings with a consultative

committee, visits to other school boards, and presentations regarding immersion programs.

Following interviews with trustees, superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents,

which were undertaken to clarify issues of concern in the Board, Halsall formulated the

following five research questions for the study:

1) What are the problems and concerns which initiated the study?;

2) What situation is created by the partitioning of the school population into a variety of programs?;

3) What guidance for decision-making can be found in the research and professional opinion literature?;

4) What would the effects of various entry points to immersion be on the CBE students and CBE school system?;

5) What recommendations and possible courses of action follow from the study?;

During the initial interviews, participants frequently reported that dividing the student population for program delivery resulted in a subsequent streaming of students by academic ability. This was confirmed in a Perception Questionnaire (PQ), administered to staff in order to survey their opinions and attitudes regarding the various programs and the effect of one program on the other. 80% of the respondents agreed that FI had created streaming by ability. Moreover, results from the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT) revealed that the percentage of the English program students in the 76-90 and 91-99 percentile ranges were significantly lower than students in EFI and LFI programs. Furthermore, the percentage of students from the English program in the 1-10, 11-25, and 26-50 percentile were considerably higher than those in the immersion programs. Although only two schools were used in this analysis, Halsall concluded that streaming of students was occurring, and that it was most pronounced in LFI.

Respondents to the PQ were also asked how their current LFI students compared to their LFI students from the past. While 34 % gave no opinion, 50% indicated that they believed that

their present students were more homogenous in terms of their acacemic abilities than previous students. The data from the tests in this study reinforced the belief that there was a wide range of ability and achievement in the students in the LFI program.

70% of the respondents on the Perception Questionnaire reported that criteria for moving students out of immersion were not clear and the teachers did not feel comfortable making the decision to make the move of the student into the English program. Halsall (1989) recommended that consistent and clear practices be established with regards to transfer procedures for students leaving immersion programs.

Halsall reported stress as a factor for students in their decision to drop out of the FI program. The stress was especially noted in the LFI and MFI programs. No specific breakdown was given by Halsall as to what the specific stressors were; the provision of such a breakdown was too large and time consuming to be carried out in this study. She did, however, recommend that a further breakdown of the stressors which cause students to leave immersion programs be the basis of further study in the future with a focus on the nature and duration of the stress, the techniques being used to assist the student, and the impact on the family of the child who transfers. Halsall also reported that student transfer out of FI programs causes stress for the regular English program because a good deal of the transferred students require assistance when they arrive in the English program. As well, the transfer of students contributes to increased enrollment in English program classrooms.

In 1994, Halsall undertook a study for the purposes of developing an understanding of the variables associated with attrition in the hopes of providing suggestions for ways of keeping students in FI. In 1991,Canadian Parents for French (CPF) sent out a questionnaire to 353 school

boards across Canada to determine the extent to which attrition of students in FI was a problem in school boards. The questionnaire did contain some questions relating to elementary FI programs, but the main focus was on the secondary level. Respondents to the survey were language co-ordinators, consultants, assistant principals and principals, assistant superintendents and superintendents, curriculum supervisors and department heads. Although the response rate was only 21% (74 respondents), the quantity of the comments and the enthusiasm the participants demonstrated in their responses clearly displayed the importance they attached to this issue.

Halsall (1994b) reported that the largest number of comments regarding reasons for attrition focused on the issue of support for students in FI with special needs. These respondents believed that many students would stay in FI programs if appropriate supports were put in place. Family mobility and commitment on the part of parents, students, and school boards were also cited as factors that could affect enrollment in FI programs. Respondents also expressed a perception that students had to emphasize courses taught in English in order to obtain high marks in preparation for post-secondary studies. Lack of choice of specific electives and having to make a choice between FI and alternate programs were cited as reasons for attrition, along with the need to provide capable and sympathetic teaching personnel with a good knowledge of French. Similar findings to these have been reported in other studies (e.g. Halsall, 1998; Lewis, 1986).

Halsall recommended the adoption of the model provided by Hart and Lapkin (1991) for improving secondary immersion programs and for increasing retention rates at the local school board level. She also encouraged local school boards to provide teacher training at the secondary level in secondary immersion methodology. This recommendation is found as well in Halsall (1997), in which she also recommends that boards review their procedures for the

supervision of immersion teachers so as to ensure that appropriate practices are being used in immersion programs at all levels, and that the supervision be performed on a regular basis.

Lewis (1986) undertook a study in which she compared students who left secondary immersion programs with those who stayed. Transfer students in her study cited several factors as being somewhat significant or very significant in their decision to leave: objections to the course content in French courses, the belief that the student could obtain higher grades in the English program, dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction, difficulty with the courses in French, and a perception that the teachers' expectations were too high. The following comments reflect some of the sentiments expressed by the students in her study: "The main reason why I dropped the course was because of the workload which was affecting my other marks, which I considered more important to my future plans," and "The teachers were not fair to the kids that were slow learners". A significant number of respondents also reported that they felt the teachers were too demanding and poorly trained. As well, anecdotal comments from participants in her study support the beliefs of Obadia (1984) and Tardif (1985) who underline the importance of specific teacher training for teachers in the immersion program.

Hart, Lapkin and Swain (1988) conducted a study similar to Lewis (1986). Their study compared survey responses from parents of children, Grades 5 to 8, who had left an immersion program over the 1986/87 school year (leavers' group) to a parallel group of parents whose children had remained in immersion (stayers' group). One of the three main objectives of this study was to provide information on the reasons for withdrawal from immersion programs. Many of the items on the questionnaires were similar, but the questionnaire for the leavers' group included items related to the reason for making the decision to leave, doubts about the decision to

leave, sources of information and advice used, problems encountered in changing programs, as well as an item asking about changes in the program or in services provided that might have led the parents to keep their child in immersion.

The two primary reasons for enrolling in an immersion program were similar for the two groups: 1) The opportunity to learn a second language; and 2) The challenge and enrichment that immersion is perceived to provide. The vast majority of the respondents cited educational reasons - "falling behind" or "lack of progress" - as the biggest factor in making the decision to transfer. Concern about the child's feelings - i.e. the child not liking the program, unhappiness, boredom, or an adult's judgment that the child's self-esteem was suffering- was cited as the second most important factor in making the decision to leave the immersion program. Slightly less than half of the parents of the leavers had doubts about the decision to leave the program and less than one-quarter of the respondents reported difficulties in making the transition from immersion to other programs. Of the problems identified by parents in making the transition, "catching up in English language skills", "settling in", "emotional concerns" (e.g. self-confidence) and "social concerns" (e.g. peer acceptance and friendship patterns) were the most commonly reported. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents reported that their children were doing "better than immersion" and nearly one-quarter said "about the same".

The most commonly reported recommendation for improvement made by parents dealt with the organizational aspects of the program (smaller class sizes, the provision of teacher assistants and the ending of split classes). Curriculum improvement - notably the availability of French language materials, the broadening of language activities in the classroom, as well as increased exposure to native French speakers - were the second and third most common

recommendations, followed by a call for an improvement in the quality of teachers in the immersion program. This same study also included an appendix with comments made by parents regarding particular aspects of the program. Under the category of "teachers and immersion training", one parent wrote, "Teachers should be hired on their ability to teach, not just speak French." Another parent wrote, "If more emphasis was placed on the teaching techniques, teaching children how to learn in addition to what to learn." In the category of "who immersion is for", one parent commented, "The teachers seemed only to be interested in the children it came easy to and didn't seem to give the time to the ones who needed it. They seemed frustrated with the ones who had problems." The report also included comments made in the areas of "program concerns" and "remedial support needs". While the vast majority of the comments made may seem negative in tone, they do raise some important concerns and recommendations for change for the policy makers in boards of education. It is up to the local boards to look at their own individual needs, as well as their available resources, before implementing these changes and recommendations.

Attrition in LFI at the Intermediate level

There is a lack of literature on FI attrition at the Intermediate level, and even less specifically related to LFI, with the exception of Ellsworth (1997), who studied 73 students who had dropped out of LFI between the years 1986-1996. She discovered that Grade 7 students were at greatest risk of transferring out of LFI and that males had more negative attitudes towards LFI than females, even though they did not drop out of the program in any greater numbers than females did. She contends that the primary reasons why students transfer out of LFI is because of concern over their academic achievement and a perception that the program was too challenging.

Summary

The majority of the literature on attrition relates to FI programs at the elementary (e.g. Bruck, 1978; Bruck, 1985; Hayden, 1988) and secondary levels (e.g. Hart & Lapkin, 1994; Halsall, 1994b; Adiv, 1979). While there have been consistencies and similarities in these studies as to why students decide to transfer out of FI programs, attrition rates have been inconsistent. Adiv (1979) found an attrition rate of 20% in a group of grade 11 FI students in Montreal. In British Columbia, Lewis (1986) discovered an attrition rate of 54% in a group of grade 12 FI students. And in the Carleton Board of Education, Halsall (1989) reported rates from 56 to 82% for eight years of grade 12 graduating classes (Halsall, 1994a). I was interested to see what similarities there were between what I found in my study and what other researchers found. The findings of my study will help contribute to the gap in the literature that exists concerning attrition at the intermediate level, and more specifically as it pertains to LFI at the intermediate level.

Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory

In order to help me better understand the reasons why students decide to drop out of LFI, I felt that it was important to choose a theory of human development that was "social" in nature and tied to behaviours. By the very nature of the structure of most schools today, students find themselves in situations where they are constantly interacting with their school environments and are very much influenced by these same environments. Teacher- student relationships, teacher-parent -child relationships, and parent-child relationships can all impact on a student's ability to succeed, or not succeed in school. How the student perceives him or herself in that environment can greatly influence how successful and comfortable he or she will feel in school.

Behaviorists such as Skinner (1904-1990) contend that individuals' behaviours are

shaped and influenced by their environment(s), however, I do not feel that his theory is sufficient to help me understand why students drop out of LFI. SCT is more cognitive in nature and is more context-specific , and as such, allows a greater awareness of self in particular situations such as the learning context provided by LFI programs. I hoped to gain insight into what factors were at play, in this situation or context, that might have influenced the student in his or her decision to leave the LFI program. I believe that SCT provides the most effective tool in helping me to accomplish this goal. Furthermore, since self-efficacy[6] is such a central component of this theory, it made even more sense for me to use SCT. LFI provides students with many rewards, challenges, frustrations, and obstacles that need to be overcome by the individual. As such, the student's perceived self-efficacy can greatly impact how he/she responds to the situation in which he/she finds him or herself. How a student responds to these situations in the program will quite often determine his or her ultimate success.

My review of SCT will begin with a general explanation of the theory. This will be followed by a description of two of the more central components of the theory: self-regulation and perceived self-efficacy. In doing so, I will establish a connection between these two specific components and how they relate to the experiences of students who drop out of LFI programs. This will help to explain why students make the transfer out of LFI into the regular English program.

Social Cognitive Theory: An explanation.

Bandura (1986) explains SCT in the following way: "In the social cognitive view people are neither driven by inner forces nor automatically shaped and controlled by external stimuli. Rather, human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocality, in which

behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other." (p. 18). SCT is similar in nature to Skinner's theory of behaviourism in the sense that they both contend that individuals are positively or negatively influenced by their environment and that it is this environment which will either increase or decrease the likelihood that a certain behaviour will be repeated in the future. However, Kail and Cavanaugh (2004) make an important distinction between Banudura's and Skinner's theories by stating that Bandura's theory is "cognitive" because he believes people actively try to understand what is going on in their world, and it is "social" because, along with reinforcement and punishment, what other people do is an important source of information about the world (p.18). Bandura adds a further distinction by stating that, "... behavior partly creates the environment, and the environment influences the behavior in a reciprocal fashion. To the oft-repeated dictum, 'change contingencies and you change behaviour,' should be added the reciprocal side, 'change behaviour and you change the contingencies'(p. 203).

Self-regulation.

One of the central features of SCT is what Bandura refers to as "self-regulatory capability". By this he means that individuals do not behave solely for the purpose of pleasing others. Rather, their behavior is intrinsically motivated and regulated by self-evaluation in reaction to their own actions. There are times, however, when this self-regulation can be influenced or supported by external influences. The capability to self-reflect leads the individual to develop self-percepts - their perceived capability to perform a given task - which can directly influence them in their choice of activity, the perseverance that will be used in the face of adversity and disappointing results, and whether tasks are approached with self-assurance or with

anxiety. Individuals will act on their thoughts, and then later on they well reflect upon and analyse how well their thoughts served them in their particular actions. Individuals learn from social influences and the effects of their actions provide them with knowledge about themselves and their task demands. This knowledge can in turn impact on what they do. This ability to self-regulate is a critical component in the ability of a student in LFI to succeed in the program. Academic programs such as LFI are characterized by ongoing evaluations from teachers, and students are continually evaluating their own performance in the classroom. Their own self-evaluations of their performance and progress are largely influenced by these external evaluations from the teachers. At the same time, the individual student compares his or her performance to that of his or her classmates.

Many factors can influence self-regulation. Social rewards can instill the desire for high performance in a given task. Modelling of task mastery by others can also serve to instill a sense of willingness to pursue excellence in similar tasks. Contextual supports for given tasks will differ depending on the situation, but environments where high performance standards are favored will generally lead to adherence to these standards. In situations in which the external rewards for pursuing a given activity are minimal or nonexistent, an individual's willingness to sustain the required effort to complete this activity would have to come about largely through self-encouragement. People must be sufficiently convinced that the activity in which they are participating merits the required sustained effort on their part to see it through to its conclusion. For students in LFI who lose sight of why they should remain in the LFI program and cannot see any reason for continuing on, putting forth the extra effort that is required for success in the program, and seeing it through to its conclusion would understandably not be looked upon as

viable options for them. The impact of external influences on behavior will be most noticeable when the influences are in line with personal standards. When one lacks self-regulatory skills, one will often procrastinate in the performance of tasks, will put forth a minimum amount of effort, or will not perform the task at all. I was interested to see if students who dropped out of LFI possessed these characteristics; did they put forth the required effort to succeed? Or, did they simply give up when things did not go quite as they had expected and look to make the switch into the regular English program? It is my belief that SCT can be used to help me find the answers to questions such as these.

Unlike Skinner's theory in which behavior is viewed in a unidirectional manner whereby situational influences and the environment control a person's behavior, SCT favors the concept of triadic reciprocality. By this, Bandura (1986) means that behavior, the environment, cognitive, and other personal factors operate in an interactive manner. Bandura contends that all these factors are at play for the individual and he or she tries to understand him or herself in a given situation. It is not simply a case of the individual being influenced by his or her environment, rather, it is the combination of an interplay of many factors which causes the individual to pursue a particular course of action. The influence exerted by each of the interacting factors will vary from individual to individual and from activity to activity and it takes time for each of the causal factors to demonstrate their influence. Peoples' behaviors are affected by what they think, feel and believe. The environment can influence the perceptions that they have about themselves; conceptions govern not only behavior but they may also be formulated through the individual's interaction with the environment. This can lead the individual to create either positive or negative outcome expectations which can either spur the individual on to, or deter him or her from, future

action. In LFI a student's actions and performance can be greatly influenced by what he or she believes, thinks, and feels. The self percepts that the student develops regarding his or her beliefs in the ability to work in a second language are directly influenced by the learning environment in which the student finds him or herself.

Perceived self efficacy.

Bandura (1986) clearly makes the distinction between "self-efficacy" and "self-concept". Bandura believes that self-efficacy is a context-related judgement of one's ability to accomplish a designated task or achieve a certain level of performance, whereas self-concept is a more general self-assessment that does not focus on a particular task but incorporates all forms of self-knowledge and feelings. Bandura believes that there is no inter-relation between the two; individuals who have a high degree of self-efficacy may judge themselves as inefficacious at an activity from which they derive little or no pride without adversely affecting their self-concept and suffering a loss of self-worth.

Bandura (1995) proposed that the formation of the beliefs of one's perceived self-efficacy is derived primarily from four sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional arousal.

Bandura believes that "mastery experience" is probably the strongest and most effective way to create a strong sense of self-efficacy. Successes and failures will either serve to reinforce one's perceived self-efficacy, or detract from it. If one only experiences easy successes, one comes to expect quick, successful results and is more apt to become discouraged in the face of failure. Many students in LFI experience a good deal of success in their elementary schooling, prior to entering LFI. Being a student in LFI requires a student to be prepared for the possibility

that academic performance can potentially decrease, but if the individual persists in his or her efforts, the previous academic performance from the elementary years can once again be attained. Developing a strong sense of resiliency is imperative in overcoming obstacles that stand in the way of an individual achieving success. By developing this resilient attitude and sticking it out when things get tough, the individual's perceived self-efficacy will be much higher when faced with obstacles in the future. Conversely, failure in spite of no lack of effort can serve to reduce one's perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1986) feels that the ease with which adolescents make the transition from childhood to adulthood is in no small way enhanced through prior mastery experience.

"Vicarious experience" is the second way in which peoples' self-efficacy can be influenced. Seeing other people, deemed to be similar in ability to themselves, either succeed or fail by means of perseverance and effort, can serve to either elevate or lower one's beliefs that one has the capacity to succeed. The greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive the models. One persuades oneself that if others like him or her have the capabilities to succeed then he or she should be able to achieve with the same degree of success. Schunk and Miller (2002) cite a study by Schunk and Pajares (2002) who found that the transition period from elementary grades to the intermediate level can cause changes in the level of self-efficacy for a student. Once students enter into the intermediate grades, they often find themselves exposed to different peers in their various classes - many of whom they do not know. At the same time, teacher evaluations become more normative, with less emphasis on individual progress. This leads individual students to regularly assess their performance in reference to the norms of unfamiliar peers. Schunk and Miller (2002) also cite studies by Harter (1996); and Midgley, Feldhaufer, and

Eccles (1989); that showed a decline in general perceptions of academic competence beginning in Grade 7 or earlier. Although vicarious experiences are generally weaker than mastery experiences, they can still produce significant, enduring change in an individual.

Bandura (1986) contends that vicarious experience affects the student's level of engagement through two cognitive means: First, they create outcome expectations which serve as either positive or negative incentives for action. Secondly, this self-percept will either spur the individual into action or inhibit him or her - depending on the level of doubt regarding his or her ability to achieve success. Students in LFI will experience periods which prove themselves to be more difficult than others. For example, the period of adaptation in grade 7 that comes with having instruction and curriculum delivered almost entirely in French; making the adjustment of trying to communicate as clearly and articulately as possible in a foreign language - to teachers and students alike; and learning increasingly more difficult language and grammatical concepts and then putting them into use on a daily basis. If students deem themselves to be highly efficacious, they will mobilize greater effort, persist longer on a task, and will persevere in the face of obstacles such as those mentioned above.

"Social persuasion" is another way in which perceived self-efficacy can be influenced. Bandura (1995) cites Litt (1988) and Schunk (1989) which demonstrated that people who are verbally persuaded of their capabilities to master given tasks will sustain greater effort on the task than if they have self-doubts and dwell on their areas of deficiencies. That aside, it is of importance that the persuasive boosts be realistic and authentic, for if they are not, perceived self-efficacy will be quickly diminished in the face of disappointing results. In instances such as these, the lack of success will quickly wash away the previously held efficacy expectations. LFI

is a program in which students are on a continuum of learning new skills which they are expected to be able to incorporate into their school work. The building blocks that were supposed to have been learned previously in another term's work - or in another grade for that matter- should be solidly in place for the student. If the foundation is not stable and these blocks have not been firmly established, then social persuasion will have little or no effect on the ability of the student to have success at a particular grade level.

"Emotional arousal" is the fourth way of influencing perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) states that since high arousal levels usually debilitate performance, most individuals are more confident in situations in which the arousal is non-threatening than when they are in situations in which they find themselves tense, fearful, or anxious. By envisioning fear-provoking thoughts regarding their ineptitude in the face of the task at hand, the accompanying level of distress breeds the very dysfunction which they feared in the first place. Bandura (1995) believes that the individual's perceived self-efficacy will be dependent on his or her pre-conceived capabilities, the difficulty of the task at hand, the amount of effort expended, and his or her emotional and physical state at the time. In LFI, students are regularly engaged in a wide variety of activities that require the production of a finished product - either orally or in written form. Depending on the student's perceived self-efficacy with regards to the accomplishment of the task at hand, the student will either attack the designated task with enthusiasm and confidence or will become somewhat paralyzed by his or her inability to produce an acceptable result. Previous successes, or lack thereof, in other areas of the program, or in other similar activities, (mastery experience) could either serve to encourage or discourage the student as he or she approaches the task at hand.

Bandura (1995) suggests that human functioning is regulated through four processes: cognitive, engagement, affective, and selection. In the cognitive process, personal goal-setting will be influenced by perceived self-efficacy. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set and the firmer their commitment to seeing them through to fruition. Bandura contends that it takes a strong sense of self-efficacy to remain task oriented in the face of personal demands, setbacks, or failures. Those individuals who have a low perceived self-efficacy will be more apt to become more erratic in their thinking, will lower their aspirations and the quality of their performance may deteriorate. The perceived self-efficacy of students experiencing difficulties in LFI would certainly be negatively influenced by their lack of success in the program. This reduced sense of self-efficacy could negatively influence the student's ability to remain task oriented in the face of the obstacles and challenges presented by the program, and the vision of seeing the program through to the end could be clouded. Therefore, what might become more viable and attractive to the student is the option of transferring out of a challenging and more difficult program (LFI) into a program that, for the student, would seemingly be more manageable (the regular English program).

On the engagement side, causal attributions, outcome expectancies, and cognized goals play a role in one's self-regulation of engagement. The corresponding theories are attribution theory, expectancy-value theory, and goal theory. According to attribution theory, Bandura feels that those who regard themselves as highly efficacious tend to attribute their failures in a certain activity to a lack of effort on their part, whereas an individual who perceives him or herself as inefficacious is more apt to attribute the failure to his or her own inability. According to expectancy-value theory, engagement is regulated by the expectation that a given behavior will

yield certain outcomes. Bandura believes that when faced with obstacles, the person's perceived self-efficacy will determine the level of trust in his or her capabilities and in the level of perseverance that a person will attach to a given task. Those who distrust their capabilities will give up quickly whereas those who have a strong belief in their capabilities will exert greater effort in the accomplishment of the task at hand. For example, students who are experiencing difficulties in LFI and not achieving to their expected level of success could believe that they lack the requisite skills to succeed in the LFI program. Their lack of trust in their abilities to perform to an acceptable standard could easily lead them to give up in the face of difficult and challenging situations.

In the affective process, people's beliefs in their coping abilities will affect them in stressful, threatening, or difficult situations, and can also affect their level of engagement in a particular activity or task. People with a high sense of perceived self-efficacy are likely to perceive a situation as a challenge and attack it with a sense of vigor. In contrast, those individuals who have a lower sense of perceived self-efficacy are more prone to concentrating on their own deficiencies and see situations as fraught with danger and hardship. Such inefficacious thinking greatly impairs the level of functioning of the individual in the performance of a given task.

Finally, perceived self-efficacy plays a large role in the selection of activities in which a person will, or will not, participate. Bandura contends that people with low perceived self-efficacy will avoid situations which they feel go beyond their coping capabilities, or will shy away from difficult tasks which they view as personal threats. At the same time, their low aspirations will lower their commitment to the attainment of these goals. They are also less apt to

recover easily from setbacks and can easily fall victim to stress and even depression. People with high perceived self-efficacy will view any situation as a challenge and will be more drawn to it. At the same time, these same individuals have a much higher degree of resiliency to recover from any setbacks and will quickly increase their efforts to help make up for any lack of success. This very same thing can happen to students who are struggling in the LFI program. One of the easiest ways to deal with threatening situations that seem beyond their capabilities is to simply avoid them. For these struggling students, one of the most logical solutions to their problem may be a transfer to the regular English program, where they can make a fresh start in a program where they feel they more effectively manage their school work and achieve some academic success.

Self-efficacy in intellectual development.

Bandura (1995) outlines three primary ways in which efficacy beliefs contribute to academic development. These include students' beliefs in their own ability to regulate their own learning and master different academic subjects; teachers' abilities to motivate students and to promote learning in their school; and the school's overall belief that it can accomplish significant academic progress.

Bandura believes that anxiety about the demands of school, and the academic requirements will be heightened if the student with low perceived self-efficacy experiences academic failures. He says that in order for the student to be successful in the long term and to remain committed, he or she must have a strong belief in his or her self-regulatory skills. The higher the student's beliefs in his or her ability to regulate his or her learning, the greater the chance that they will master their academic subjects. He contends that highly self-efficacious and

self-regulated students behave in a more pro-social manner, are more popular among peers, and experience less rejection than those with a lower sense of academic self-efficacy. Furthermore, this low sense of efficacy can lend itself to disengagement, physical and verbal aggression, and other harmful conduct. Repeated failures in the academic setting make it difficult for the student to remain proactive in his or her educational pursuits, and these students of low intellectual and social self-efficacy are more susceptible to associating with others who hold similar values and beliefs to their own.

Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, and Parivee (1991) found that students with high self-efficacy showed greater performance monitoring and persistence than students with low self-efficacy. In the area of language arts, Pajares and Johnson (1996) found that writing self-efficacy was a strong predictor of childrens' performance in writing. In the area of mathematics, Pajares and Miller (1994) showed that mathematics self-efficacy was a better predictor of math performance than were mathematics self-concept, perceived usefulness of math, prior experience with math, and gender. Clearly, SCT can easily be used in an educational context. In this instance, SCT will help me explain and make sense of why students drop out of LFI. Remaining committed to a program, persevering in the face of difficulties posed by this particular area of study (LFI), comparing oneself to others deemed to be of equal abilities, basing the potential for future success on past experiences in similar situations, being influenced by one's environment(s) and at the same time trying to better understand that environment, are all circumstances to which a student in LFI will be exposed. I will use SCT to help me make sense of the results of my study. In reporting my findings, I will make a direct connection between this theory and the experiences of those students who dropped out of LFI.

Now let us turn to a description of the participants in my study, as well as the methods used to collect the data.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The following section will outline my methodology and the theoretical rationale for my choice of research methods. I will describe the participants that I used for my study, the instrument that I used to collect background information on the students, and how I went about collecting my data for the study. I will also describe how I gained entry into the study site, the time-lines for the project, and how I conducted my data analysis.

This qualitative study explored the experiences of students who transferred out of the LFI program. My goal in exploring this phenomenon was to gain a better understanding of the underlying factors that played a role in the students' decision to make the transfer, while at the same time gaining insight into how they now feel about their decision. Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that the challenge of qualitative research is to situate the study as addressing a particular, important problem and that defining the problem shapes the study's significance (p.34). They go on to say that although the findings in a qualitative study are not generalizable in a statistical sense, their findings can be transferrable. Since the study and its findings are bound in a specific context and situation, it is up to the reader to make decisions about its usefulness for other settings (p.43).

I believe that a qualitative approach to this particular study is best because my focus is on the lived experiences of six students who transferred out of LFI. In order to best understand their thoughts, their feelings, their beliefs and values, and what they deemed to be important to them in their school and personal life, I felt that this could best be achieved by face to face, in-depth questioning. Allowing these students the opportunity to respond to my guided questions, but at

the same time affording them the latitude to provide further information where necessary, can yield the richness of information that only qualitative inquiry can provide. There is a story to be told about what this particular group of students experienced during the time they spent in LFI; a qualitative inquiry is the best approach to use in order to allow me to tell their story effectively.

The problem for this study has been clearly delineated. While a quantitative study could yield results that are more succinct, easily presentable in a conscise manner and perhaps generalizable to a wider population, my goal was to seek a deeper understanding of attrition as it pertains specifically to LFI in the ESD. My findings can have significance at the local level, but could also be used to help better understand the phenomenon in other locations as well.

Participants and entry into the site

The participants chosen to participate in this study were six students from one intermediate school. Five of the six participants were in Grade 9 at the time of the study and one participant was enrolled in Grade 8. All of the participants had completed at least one full year in LFI. Three of the participants were male and three were female. I chose this particular school because I had been teaching LFI there for the previous 16 years and I believed that this experience put me in a good position to conduct this study, for two reasons. First, I had a great understanding of the school culture, its history, and the operation of its LFI program, therefore, I had a good appreciation and understanding of what the students' experiences had been. Second, an important issue in conducting qualitative studies is negotiating entry with the gatekeepers of an organization (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). My long history with this school was greatly facilitative in this regard. In fact, the school's principal was very supportive of my study and was willing to help out in any way possible.

One could potentially perceive a problem because I was working with students from my school. However, I disagree. I had taught Grade 9 during the previous 14 years, and as a result, I had never taught any of the students who participated in my study, and since they had already transferred out of the program, I most certainly would not teach them in the future either. Also, at the time of the study, I was on sabbatical leave from the school, so I had no association with any of these students prior to conducting this study.

I first received ethical approval from the University of Prince Edward Island to conduct the study before receiving permission from the ESD to conduct the study (Appendix C). Following that, permission was granted from the school's principal to recruit students from that school (Appendix D) and a preliminary list of 32 potential participants was established. Information letters and letters of consent were sent out to each of the potential participants (Appendix E) and to their parents (Appendix F). Of the 32 letters, 62.5% of the students responded. 12 were not returned to the researcher. Of these 12 students, two had moved out of province and one had stopped attending school. 18 students - 11 boys and 7 girls- agreed to participate in the study and two students refused. Of the 18 who agreed to participate, five had left the program early in Grade 7, five had left at the end of their Grade 7 year, five had left during Grade 8, two had left at the end of their Grade 8 year, and one had left during grade 9. Since I had enough candidates who had started their second year of LFI from which to choose, and since it was felt that these students could yield more in-depth information and provide greater comparison between the different grades, it was decided to eliminate those students who had only completed one year of the LFI program - six males and four females.

Using purposive sampling, I sought to have a balance of three males and three females in

the study, and since four of the Grade 7 students eliminated were female, the decision was made to include the three remaining females in the study. Since two of the males in Grade 8 had only recently transferred out of the program, and their LFI experience was still fresh in their mind, I believed that they would be very suitable participants. However, upon being notified of this selection, one of the two students changed his mind at the last minute and decided that he no longer wanted to be a part of the study. The other one who had transferred out of LFI in grade 8 was purposely included in the study. The final two participants were chosen at random. All of the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Kyle was a Grade 8 student at the time of the study and he had left LFI approximately three months prior to data collection. He lived with his parents, one of whom was university educated and the other had high school education. There were no members in his household who understood French. He said that he had good memories of his elementary Core French experience. He stated that he would like to continue studying Core French in high school. French was one of his favorite subjects.

Bobby was a Grade 9 student at the time of the study and he had left LFI during Grade 8. He lived with his mother. His mother and father were high school educated and he had a sister who had been in LFI before him, but at another school. He described his elementary Core French experience as "pretty basic". He had a generally favorable attitude toward the French language and saw it as beneficial, however, he had no plans to study it in the future.

Patti was a Grade 9 student at the time of the study and she had left LFI during her Grade 8 year. She lived with her mother, who had some college education, and there were no members in her household who understood French. Patti remembered very little about her elementary Core

French experiences. Patti had a negative attitude toward the French language, and during the course of the interviews it was very hard to get answers from her. While she did give me answers to my questions, she provided very little elaboration on most of them, and there were times during the course of the interviews where she appeared disinterested with what was taking place. Of all the participants in my study, I felt that I was able to garner the least amount of pertinent information from her.

Katie was a Grade 9 student during the time of the study and had left LFI at the end of her Grade 8 year. At the time of the study, she lived with her parents, who were college and university educated, and there were no members in her household who understood French. She described her elementary Core French experience as "fun and easy". While she considered French to be beneficial, she felt she knew as much as she needed. She had a generally unfavorable attitude toward the language and had no plans to study it in the future.

Clark was a Grade 9 student at the time of the study and he had left LFI at the end of his Grade 8 year. He lived with his mother, who was high school educated and had been in early French immersion from Grades 1-8. He described his elementary Core French experience as "fun" because they were taught a lot through playing games. While he felt that young people should learn a second language and knowing a second language can be beneficial, he had no plans of studying French in the future.

Michelle was a Grade 9 student at the time of the study and had left the program approximately six months before conducting the study, during her Grade nine year. She lived with her mother and her step-father, both of whom were high school educated. She started her schooling in another province and had been in an early French immersion program from junior

kindergarten until Grade 3. She then switched to the regular English program for grades 4-6. She described her Core French experience as "extremely easy". In Grade 7 she was in an "Extended French" program - a language program that is more difficult than Core French and has more instruction done in French, but does not have the same expectations, level of difficulty, or exposure to the French language as a French immersion program. When she moved to P.E.I at the end of Grade 7, she enrolled in LFI for Grade 8. She stated that she loved learning French and would like to continue studying it in the future. She experienced disciplinary problems while in LFI and was transferred to an alternative education site for a period of three months, after which she was placed in the regular English program.

Data Collection

Background questionnaire

A background questionnaire was used to gather biographical information from the students (Appendix A). This questionnaire was completed by the participants prior to meeting for the interview (see below) with the goal of attaining as much background information on the participants as possible. This information was used to help me in the formulation of my participant profiles, at the same time giving me some pertinent information regarding their general feelings about learning a language. The information gathered included their name, age, gender, mother tongue, language(s) spoken at home, elementary school attended, level of formal education and occupation of the parents, with whom the student lived, if any siblings in the family were, or had previously been, enrolled in a FI program, and general attitude of the parents and student towards the LFI program.

In addition to the background questionnaire, further data was collected by means of

questions posed to the participants during semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Patton (2002) gives the following three reasons for using open-ended interviews: 1) The exact instrument used in the evaluation is available for inspection by those who will use the findings of the study; 2) The interview is highly focused so that interviewee time is used efficiently; and 3) Analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare (p. 346).

Interview

In this study I was seeking the students' responses, experiences, and views about LFI. My inquiry has been designed in such a manner as to allow for the participants to offer up their own insights about LFI, their experiences while in the program, and the reasons which led them to ultimately transfer out of the program. In order to gain as deep an understanding as I could about the experiences of these students who had transferred out of the LFI program, I conducted two separate semi-structured, open-ended interviews with each of the participants in a room situated in a low traffic area of the participants' school. Patton (2002) contends that the benefits of using open-ended questions is that it enables the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories. As well, through the use of open-ended questions and responses people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their points of view about the part of the world about which they are talking, or their experience with a particular program (p.21).

The first interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes each, and the follow-up interview lasted approximately 20-25 minutes. Since Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that it is important that interviewers have superb listening skills and be skillful at personal interaction, question framing, and gentle probing for elaboration (p. 110), I began the interview with a series

of informal warm-up questions. These questions were used to help set a good tone for the interview and to establish a level of comfort between me and the participants. This also allowed me to uncover such things as the student's teacher(s), the number of students in their class(es), extra-curricular involvement and special interests, how many of their friends were in LFI as well, and whether they were bussed to school or not. I then used the same interview protocol for all participants to help guide the discussion that ensued, but I allowed the participants to elaborate if and when they deemed it necessary to do so. Since the interviews were semi-structured, this also allowed me to probe and seek clarification or elaboration from the participant, or ask other questions, where required. A student might have said something which surprised me, or it may have been something which I felt needed to be explained further. In such cases, I did not hesitate to pursue the line of questioning related to that particular topic further. I had anticipated some possible probes that I felt I might have had to explore, but the semi-structured setting of the interview permitted the participants to respond to my questioning in a manner which they deemed appropriate (Appendix B).

The interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed verbatim. Patton (2002) recommends audio-taping interviews and states that when a tape recorder is being used for an interview, the researcher can focus more on the interviewee, while taking only brief notes. Note taking should consist primarily of key phrases, lists of major points made by the respondent, and key terms or words that capture the interviewee's own language. These same notes can also serve as a backup in case there is a malfunction with the tape recorder, and they can facilitate analysis later on (p. 383). I took brief field notes during these interviews which I felt could help to give a more complete understanding of what actually took place during the interview than just what

was said in the interview. For example, during one interview, Patti used a lot of body gestures and non-verbal cues. I interpreted this as her being quite disinterested in the interview and she was at times quite uncomfortable in answering my questions. Reviewing my field notes afterward reminded me of this; it helped me to form a clearer picture of what she was actually saying during the interview. In another interview, Michelle became quite animated and emotional when discussing the relationship she had with her Grade 8 teacher. Including field notes of this nature gave me a much clearer picture of what actually took place during the interview than just the transcripts.

I did a pilot test of the interview questions with two students who had transferred out of LFI in another intermediate school, that was not a part of the study. This allowed me an opportunity to see how the interview would unfold, to do some preliminary transcription of interviews, and it afforded me the opportunity to practice data analysis and preliminary coding. It also permitted me to make adjustments and refinements where necessary before conducting the actual interviews for the study. As mentioned earlier, Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that the interviewer must be skillful at personal interaction, question framing, and gentle probing for elaboration (p. 110); doing this trial run of my questions allowed me to practice and refine my questioning techniques in preparation for the actual interviews. For example, during the practice interviews, I did not spend enough time creating an effective atmosphere for the interview with my opening questions, and I also discovered that the manner in which I was asking my questions was too closed. Having the opportunity to reflect on these elements of my inquiry prior to conducting my actual interviews for the study proved to be very beneficial for me, and I felt much more comfortable and prepared for the interviews with my participants. Following these

practice interviews, I also showed my list of questions to some LFI teachers and sought their

feedback on additional information that I should seek in my questioning. This also proved to be

beneficial in that it re-confirmed to me that the questions I was asking were relevant and

important. It also allowed me to expand upon my original set of questions. For example, the

question on the participants' use of strategies while in LFI, and the last two questions that I asked

each of the participants at the end of the second interview, came from suggestions from two of

the teachers to whom I showed the questions.

Data Analysis

Patton (2002) contends that by having participants in a study review the findings,

researchers can learn a great deal about the accuracy, completeness, fairness, and perceived

validity of the data they collected in their study (p. 560). The verbatim transcripts of my first

interviews were returned to the participants prior to the second interview. This allowed them to

review and verify the information on the transcripts and make any changes and corrections that

they deemed necessary. Once this was done, I then conducted my second audio-taped interview,

which was used to delve deeper into some issues, and to seek further clarification from the

participants. Following this, I did my second set of transcriptions. After this transcription was

completed, I once again returned the transcriptions to the participants so that they could verify

what was said during the interview and make any necessary changes or clarifications.

I then began to analyze the data. Patton (2002) believes that the challenge of qualitative

inquiry lies in making sense of massive amounts of data , which involves reducing the volume of

raw data, finding information of significance, and then identifying significant patterns (p. 432).

Patton goes on to say that no absolute rules exist except perhaps this: Do your very best with

your full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study (p. 433).I read through the verbatim transcripts and field notes several times and made comments in the margins. In attempting to manage data, Seidman (1998) recommends that an important first step in reducing the text is to mark with brackets those passages of your transcript that are of interest to the researcher. I decided to approach the transcripts with an open mind and tried to discover information that was of interest and of importance. Hence, I decided to "chunk" the information from the original transcripts, that is, I used Corel Word Perfect 10 to make a new file of excerpts of significance from each of the interviews. Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that categories are generated through prolonged engagement with the data. These categories then become buckets or baskets into which segments of text are placed (p.154). With these excerpts, I continued on with the process of re-reading, reassessing passages of significance, and reducing the information. I then looked for patterns and themes that emerged.

These patterns were then coded and categorized according to three macro-categories, each of which was sub-classified into micro-categories. A "pre-immersion" macro-category contained three micro-categories, an "immersion experience" macro-category had four micro-categories, and a "post-immersion" macro-category was broken down into four micro-categories as well. Marshall and Rossman (1999) cite Lincoln and Guba (1985), who stress the importance of the confirmability of a study. When the findings of a study can be confirmed by another person, objectivity of the findings is increased and the focus of the findings becomes the data themselves. These data help to confirm the general findings and lead to the implications of the study (p. 194). I used a second coder who reviewed my data and the coding schemes that I developed in order to cross validate them. This individual was a graduate student who was a

classmate in the same cohort as mine, and was in the process of completing his thesis at the university. He agreed with my coding process and supported the themes and patterns which I deemed to have emerged from the data. Meanings were then determined and conclusions drawn from the data. These results will be discussed in the next chapter.

Time-lines for the study

My thesis proposal was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Prince Edward Island in early April, 2003. My thesis proposal was then submitted to The Eastern School District (ESD) for its ethics review. Following approval from the ESD, I began the formal recruitment process for participants in the study, and negotiation of entry into the study site. I conducted the pilot of my interview questions in mid-April, 2004. I began my data collection in early May, 2004, and completed the second round of interviews in late June. Data analysis was completed in October, 2004, at which time I began the write up of the results of my study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The six participants in my study have important stories to tell. While their individual circumstances may differ, collectively, they provided good insight into the realities of life in LFI in this particular intermediate school and the reasons behind their decision to ultimately leave the LFI program. Having the opportunity to spend time with these individuals has allowed me to collect relevant data that helped me to answer the two questions that guided me in my exploratory research: 1) What were the students' reasons for making the switch when the decision was made to move out of the program?; 2) How do the students who transferred out of LFI perceive themselves as doing academically, now that they are enrolled in the regular English program?

This section will begin with a brief description - a profile - of some of the commonalities among these students who dropped out of LFI in this intermediate school. This profile will provide the reader with a sense of what some of these participants had in common, and possibly help to deliver a deeper understanding of the characteristics of these students who made the decision to transfer out of LFI. Following this, I will present in detail the findings of the research in my study and identify the themes that emerged.

Some common characteristics of the participants

As I mentioned earlier, while the experiences of each of the participants, and the circumstances that led these students to leave the LFI program varied from individual to individual, I did see some common characteristics among them all. The most consistent trait was that they did not like doing school work. Five of the six participants reported that they simply did

not like sitting down to do homework outside of school, and that there were other things in their life that were more important than their school work. There was not a great deal of effort put into their studies and they tended to feel unmotivated and had a generally negative attitude toward their schoolwork. Katie related how she approached her studies outside the classroom. "I didn't do my work. I wasn't interested in my work, it was just like, go home and tell my mom I had no homework - I didn't study or nothing. I only study if I want the marks or if I like the subject." At the same time, there seemed to be more of an emphasis on the social side of school life as opposed to the academic side. As Michelle stated, "I guess it was pretty important (to spend time with my friends). I can't - I cannot - absolutely cannot be a loser. If I'm a loser, I'm dead. Like, if, like I can't be me without having my friends." Clearly, the influence of peers was prevalent among the participants in my study and a significant level of importance was attached to the peer group.

One other common sentiment reported by five of the six participants was that they felt they were different than most of the other immersion students in their class. There was also the perception that this difference led to a fragmentation among the student body in that most LFI students tended to socialize with other LFI students and less often with students from the regular English program. The participants in my study seemed to have more friends in the regular English program than they did in the LFI program. This lack of interaction between LFI and students from the regular English program led some of these students in my study to develop their own perceptions - even stereotypes - about other LFI students. The following excerpt from Michelle serves to highlight some of the sentiments expressed to me during the interviews.

"The kids in French don't even hang out with any of the English kids 'cause they're

looked upon as snots,...... So when the English kids see them they're like, 'oh look at them, they're so good!' .... More of the English kids are kind of from upsetted families and you know, don't have as much money and all that stuff. So the French kids have all this, like they have this together homes and they have money and all that stuff, and they like have their clothes and they almost walk down the hall with the fll-l-l-ip in their hair and they got like snotty, I don't know how to say it, but they're, they have more, so I guess there's like maybe jealousy there, but. It's weird, all the French kids, all of them, except for like one or two that I can think of, have like so much."

Michelle was not alone in her sentiments. Bobby had his own views on how he perceived himself as being unlike most of the other immersion students. However, unlike Michelle who focused on the socio-economic differences between the two groups of students, Bobby perceived quite a difference between the two groups of students from an academic standpoint. He had this to say about how he viewed the difference between students in the LFI program and students in the regular English program.

"....... Just way different, 'cause in French they, like students, kids always saying yah, I have an 80 in French and you have an 80 in English, that means I'm smarter than you, which it does, but it's a lot harder to learn in, it's a lot harder to learn in an English class, because so many kids are talking. Like you go to a French class and everyone's sitting down writing the notes, being good. But go to an English class, and so many kids are just being, not listening, I'm that student sometimes, but not as much as some."

Comments such as these serve to underscore the sentiment that exists among the participants in my study when it comes to their perceptions of immersion students in general, as

compared to other students in the regular English program. These comments reflect the belief that these students feel that most immersion students conduct themselves better in the classroom than students in the regular English program do. At the same time, these students feel that many students in immersion consider themselves to be academically superior to students in the regular English stream, given that they are in a program that they deem to be more difficult and challenging than the regular English program. They also have the perception that many of the students in immersion are in an advantageous position because their family situation is, for the most part, more stable than the family situation of many students in the regular English program. Is it representative of other members of the school population for this particular year? I cannot say this with any degree of certainty whatsoever because I only spoke with six students and I am not familiar with the rest of the student body. Is the division between students in LFI and the regular English programs as remarkable as the participants in my study make it out to be? As a teacher in this school, I have noted that there is a definite division between the students in LFI and students in the regular English program. However, from my perspective, the extent of this division varies from year to year; in some years there is very little interaction between students in the two programs, and there may even be some hostility between the two groups. In other years, the division is hardly noticeable at all, with a great deal of positive interaction between the two groups of students. Is this perception that the participants have about other students in LFI related to their perceived self-efficacy in an academic context? I think that there would be few who could argue that the answer to that question is "yes".

Emergent themes

The themes that emerged from the data collected in my qualitative study have been

organized into three macro-categories, entitled: "pre-immersion", "the immersion experience", and "post-immersion". Each of these macro-categories was further sub-divided into micro-categories with "pre-immersion" having three micro-categories, and the other two macro-categories having four each.

Pre-Immersion

      Elementary Core French Experience.

Being in LFI is an option available to all incoming Grade 7 students at this school. As I had previously mentioned, since 1997 there has been no screening mechanism in place to assist in the selection of students for LFI. Still, I felt it was important to gain an understanding about why these particular students chose to enroll in LFI, to gain some insight into what their and/or their parents' expectations were of the program, to understand better what had influenced them into enrolling in the first place, and to realize what the students and/or parents considered the benefits of being in LFI. Five of the six participants had all begun taking French during Grade 4, and this served as the foundation for their second language learning. The sixth participant had been in early immersion for three of her first seven years of schooling and started LFI upon arrival on P.E.I. All of the participants characterized their elementary Core French experience as quite easy. The participants remembered that there had been an emphasis on the basics of the language such as vocabulary development. Much of this learning was accomplished through artwork and by playing games in French class. As Clarke illustrated, "It was good, it was a lot of fun. You learn by like doing a lot of games, like Bingo, and that'd teach us the words and numbers and stuff like that, not by doing work." Bobby related how the artwork was also a fun aspect of his experience, "It was pretty simple... it was fun 'cause he always got us drawing and

coloring and stuff and that's why I liked it so much." The experiences that these participants had led them to view learning a second language as quite a positive experience and one that for most of them was quite easily attainable. The participants' perceived self-efficacy in this particular context would have been quite high. Their sense of accomplishment in the area of second language learning would have led them to believe that there would be a high probability that they would succeed in the next step of their second language journey - that being LFI - and this confidence in their abilities would have allowed them to enter into this next stage of their education without much fear or trepidation.

Four participants cited their elementary Core French experience as a factor in their decision to enroll in LFI. The fact that these participants experienced success in their elementary years led them to believe that they could achieve success in LFI as well. Clarke stated, "Well, I kinda thought it was gonna be like in School A, like just do, like we wouldn't really do a lot of stuff, and it wouldn't be really hard..... I thought it'd be more like, like in elementary where you didn't have to speak French." The perception that the learning environment for LFI would be fun and that it would not be overly difficult was shaped by the students' experiences from Core French during their elementary years. Three of the participants suggested that their Core French teacher had encouraged them to go into LFI, to at least give it a try, but it was not entirely clear how this encouragement influenced their ultimate decision to enroll in the program.

Other factors influencing enrolment in LFI.

While there was a great variety of individual reasons for choosing to enroll in LFI, such as the positive reputation of the teachers and of the school, the possibility of going on school trips, recommendations from friends, and the fact that they knew they could get out of the

program if they wanted to, there were three other reasons that were prevalent among the participants.

Clearly, the primary reason for enrolling in LFI was the desire to learn a second language. However, it is not totally clear as to what this meant exactly; it became apparent upon further exploration that the reason for learning the second language was less intrinsically based and more extrinsically linked to other reasons such as the opportunity to have a better job in the future, and even going on school trips. There was also, however, the purely pragmatic reason expressed for learning a second language. As Patti remarked, "...if you were stuck in Quebec, right, and you ran into a thing and you needed to use the phone and you could talk to them,...... and knowing two languages is better than one."

Another example of extrinsic reasons for enrolling in LFI was the prospect of obtaining a better job, because of the student having the added benefit of knowing a second language. While this was a common sentiment shared by these participants, the students were unable to be any more specific when asked to say exactly how knowing a second language could help them in securing a job, or even in what area(s) knowing a second language would be of benefit to them. Some of the participants did mention that they heard from others such as their parents that knowing a second language would enhance the student's chances of securing a job in the future. Michelle did, however, see an immediate benefit because she was able to land a part-time job because of her knowledge of a second language. She was told after starting work at her new job that it was because of her knowledge of French that the company chose her over another applicant deemed to be similar in abilities to her.

"....they pick up your resume and they're like 'oh, she knows French'. They like it

better.......... I worked at Restaurant A and there was like I think some people who were going for the job, and I was the only one with French and they picked me, the rest of them didn't have it."

The final factor of significance, that was shared by three of the participants, was the significant influence of the peer group when it came to making the decision to enroll in LFI. Although it was not the foremost reason in these participants' minds, some of their comments made it apparent to me that it played a role for the students in deciding to enter into the program. Kyle expressed his feelings about the role that his peers played in his decision to enroll in LFI this way,

"....a lot of my friends were going in it, and they said, well, it was just be a little funner and it might be easier if my friends were in the class, like, I guess....I get around with my friends a lot and it just like made it a little easier to learn with my friends, I guess...... my friends would probably be having the same difficulties as I was and it wouldn't be, I wouldn't feel much like alone, if I didn't understand."

Comments such as these indicate to me that this participant's perceived self-efficacy was quite low even before he began the program. Clearly the need for peer support was of importance to him, and something he would need to rely on in order to have success in the program.

Patti attached a greater importance to her peer group than anyone else in the study. "....everybody just wanted to go in it. I guess it was just the thing to do.... everybody was going into it, so, I don't know, I just decided to sign up for it....I don't know, it wasn't that big of a deal, it was just, I don't know, I thought it'd be kinda cool, you know, but I knew you could get out of it, so I thought I'd try anyways."

While this was not a consistent comment among the other participants, I believe it underscores the importance of the student putting a good deal of forethought into the decision to enroll in LFI. LFI is a program that will provide a solid challenge to all students who participate in it. A student must look at his or her own capabilities, strengths and weaknesses and then take a good look at the LFI program, in order to make an informed choice. Patti was obviously ill-prepared for the demands that come with being a student in LFI. How could she have been expected to persevere in the face of the many obstacles and challenges that this program poses for students like her? Bandura (1995) states that mastery experience and vicarious experience are two of the sources of developing strong perceived self-efficacy. How could Patti draw upon mastery from previous experience, or be spurred on by the success of others in her class whom she deemed to be equal in abilities, when the primary reason she was in the program in the first place was so that she could be with her friends?

Person making the decision to enroll.

Making the decision to enroll in LFI is one that is often made in consultation with others. With this participant group, there was a high degree of consistency; five of the six participants made the decision, in whole or in part, to enroll in the program in consultation with their parents. The five participants who went to elementary school on P.E.I. all attended information sessions prior to enrolling and also had former students come speak to them about the experiences they had had in LFI. The participants' parents also had the opportunity to attend information sessions and receive further details about the program. While these sessions did, for the most part, achieve their desired outcome - to present information about the LFI program - there did seem to be an element missing. Katie, who really did not want to be in the program and was the only one in the

group who was forced by her parents to enroll in LFI, reflected on the usefulness, or lack thereof, of these sessions,

> "....they didn't really give any much information other than some of the students came in to talk to us a bit, about what they did. They didn't tell us they had to know French right off....They had people come in and talk to us, but they didn't really tell us, they were just telling us how they got through, but they looked more to be like the people who wanted to be there, who wanted to learn the language, they didn't bring people who went into it because they had to."

I wonder what would have happened to Katie had she been afforded the opportunity, prior to making the decision to enroll, to hear from a student who did not want to be in the program. Would it have changed her mind about enrolling in the program? Or, would it have changed her mother's mind? Unfortunately, I will never know the answer to these questions.

In the coming pages, I will report on my participants' experiences while in LFI and share the stories that they have to tell.

The Immersion Experience

LFI can involve passing through a series of emotions, challenges, obstacles, and rewards. As is the case with beginning anything that is new, there is the inevitable initial period of adjustment to the new environment. For the participants in my study, this involved not only continuing their education in a new school, but it also came with changes in classmates and the structure of the school day, changes in teaching approaches and in teacher evaluations and reporting, and changes in social groups and in peer influences. All the while, these adolescents were going through some of the most dramatic physiological changes that they will endure in

their lifetime. When one factors all this in together, one quickly realizes the challenge that a LFI student faces when in LFI. How one responds to this challenge can largely determine one's ability to succeed in the program, or not.

While there were some differences in the experiences that these participants had while in LFI, through the stories that they told, I was able to identify some consistent patterns. There were four themes that emerged and tell the story from the data: *personal experiences while in the program*, which will describe some of the realities that these students faced during their time in LFI as well as some of the program difficulties they encountered; *student-teacher relationships* which will highlight some of the inter-personal relationships that these students had with LFI teachers and the impact that these teachers had on their LFI experience; *factors influencing the decision to leave* which will provide some insight into some of the reasons which ultimately led these participants to leave LFI; and *assessment and supports while in the program* which will look at some of the supports, or lack thereof, and strategies for success that the students used in order to help themselves be successful in LFI. I will elaborate in further detail how there was a connection in the experiences of these participants and I will draw on SCT to help me understand these students' experiences.

Personal experiences while in the program.

As I mentioned above, most of the participants in my study had positive experiences during their years spent in Core French in elementary school, which in turn influenced them, at least in part, to enroll in LFI. For many of these participants, they had the belief, rightly or wrongly, that the structure of LFI would be quite similar to Core French, and with that, their success would continue in Grade 7; this was the case for four of the six participants who reported

that their Grade 7 year had been pretty fun and relatively easy. Clarke shared with me how he

remembered his experience in Grade 7,

> "It was fun, like in grade 7, the first 2 weeks all we did was like play games and met each
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> other, like, and stuff like that. We didn't do much work, but as time got on, we started
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> doing all this hard work and stuff like that....At the first it was easy but then it got really
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> hard, it's just, we started doing more and more work and then not as much games and
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> playing around....... and they made us do our work, instead of having fun."

Based on Clark's comment, one can assume that since the Grade 7 teachers realized the

students had limited abilities in French, they did not place a significant emphasis on the use of

French in the classroom in the beginning. This was apparently done in the hopes that the

participants would become more settled in the classroom, and to help facilitate the adjustment to

LFI. These same participants all stated that they found their Grade 8 year significantly more

difficult than Grade 7. In the following excerpt, Bobby relates his experience in terms of how he

felt about the difference between the expectations for Grades 7 and 8,

> "I didn't get the French at all, like I thought, I sort of thought that from Grade 7 to Grade
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> 8 was a *big* difference, like they didn't, either they didn't do enough in Grade 7 or it
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> wasn't, like it was too much in Grade 8, I don't know, there was just a really big
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> leap....Just the language, you know they expected us to know so much more,....It was
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> more realistic for some kids, the smart students and then, I sort of think that like they
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> thought that everyone was as good as the smartest kids, the smartest kid in the class, but
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> like some kids were having trouble and they didn't, I don't know, they might not have
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> looked at that kid."

Kyle also commented on the personal impact that the difference between the two grades had on him,

"In Grade 8 it was pretty fun for the first little while and I could do pretty good with the work part, but then it started getting really hard and I was starting to get like stressful, like the marks that I got and stuff, like and, I didn't really understand the homework and stuff like that....grade 7 teachers sort of like, they didn't give you as much work and stuff, like they'd talk English and stuff. But, in grade 8 they sort of like clamped down harder on you and make you learn."

As I stated earlier, it appears that the Grade 7 teachers were trying to ease the transition into the LFI program by making the early stages as non-stressful as possible. However, in doing so, the data would suggest that they may have instilled a false sense of competence in second language learning in these students as it seemed that as time went on, and the demands of the LFI program increased, these students were unable to make the required leap and keep up with the program requirements.

Given that a high percentage of the students in LFI come from homes where English is the primary language most often used on a daily basis, the only opportunity that many of these students have to use their second language is during school hours. Therefore, it only stands to reason that the LFI student must take full advantage of the limited time in class in order to reap the greatest benefit possible from the program. However, four of the six participants in this study reported that they used English extensively during class time while in LFI. Katie related how limited the use of French in the classroom was, a comment that was similar to ones made by the three others as well.

"Among the students, I would say, 10 per - not even 10 percent - there was not a lot of French talking between students, like in the halls no-one talked French to each other. There was just basically the teacher or when we all sat down and we were all learning and when we had our hand raised, that's when we talked French.... it was a lot easier to communicate in English. 'Cause one person could know this word in French but this person could know the different word in French and you'd be asking for like crayons and they'd give you like a glue stick or something."

It is often human nature to take the path of least resistance when approaching a particular task. Was this the case for Katie, or did she simply not see any compelling reason to make use of her second language in the classroom? Or maybe she was not interested enough by what she was doing in class? Regardless of the reason(s), it is quite obvious that it was a choice that did little to help her achieve success in LFI. Clark's comments here reveal his beliefs about how increasing the usage of French in the classroom could have benefitted him while in the program,

"I think we should have been practicing it when we were talking to our friends instead of learning English, 'cause I guess we were forgetting the french whenever we were doing it and you get used to talking English instead of French....you would have been able to sound the words out better and know the meanings or something, I guess."

Indeed, using English in the classroom where they should have been using French can become habit forming; this appears to have been the case for the participants in my study. Kyle and Katie did mention that the students who most frequently made use of French during class time were the high achievers in the class - students who had averages in the 90's. Was this a coincidence? I hardly think so.

One of the biggest challenges a student in LFI will face is having the skills to skillfully express oneself in a second language. To do so takes patience, diligence, self-discipline, and perseverance. According to Bandura (1995), students with low self-efficacy can not self-regulate sufficiently in order to allow themselves the opportunity to achieve this success. Rather, when things become increasingly difficult, they will opt for the easier route, in this instance, speaking English instead of French. The student cannot see the reason for putting in the extra effort required in order to help him or her be successful, therefore, little is made.

It is well known that the academic workload in LFI is more demanding than in the regular English program, and this was expressed as a source of frustration by four of the participants in my study. The participants' inability to keep up with the expectations of the program led them to fall further behind other students in the class. As well, spending this extra time on schoolwork outside of class can cut into the LFI's student's social time, something that I have already noted as important to them and to which they attach a high priority. Kyle informs the reader in the following passage about how the workload affected him,

> "Kinda frustrated 'cause it was more than you could handle and stuff like that and then. It started to get piling up and stuff like that, and you have to do so much for homework, so it'd take them a while....... {laugh} I didn't like it. It was getting boring and stuff like that, couldn't go outside and play sports and stuff like that."

This desire to do activities other than schoolwork outside of class was a common sentiment shared by many of the participants. The following sentiment succinctly sums up Michelle's attitude toward her studies outside of class, "I - I did, homework - it was like - if I didn't get it done in school it wasn't getting done. I did it in school and then when I'd go home

I'd have like my social life and that's it. .... I totally blew off everything, I was like, whatever!" Bandura (1986) states that when one lacks self-regulatory skills, one will often procrastinate in the performance of tasks, will put forth a minimum amount of effort, or will not perform the task at all. Clearly, a lack of self-regulation on Michelle's part played a role in her experience; this was characterized by her lack of initiative to apply herself, leaving tasks to the last minute, or not even doing them at all.

Four of the participants expressed difficulties with the material in the LFI curriculum - specifically in the area of language comprehension. This difficulty in language comprehension, not surprisingly, led the participants to obtain poor test results. It also caused them to have problems doing their homework. Further complicating the issue was the fact that large class sizes meant that the students could not get the individual attention they needed. All of this begs the question; Was the fact that they were doing so little work outside of class the reason why they were doing so poorly in class, and having difficulties with language comprehension? The data would suggest that I cannot answer that question with any degree of certainty.

Bandura (1995) contends that successes and failures will either serve to reinforce one's perceived self-efficacy, or detract from it. The following excerpt from Bobby clearly indicates how his perceived self-efficacy was affected,

"I could say three words in like a 10 word sentence and like 3 of them were French and that's all I could say..... I couldn't understand the books, I'd always have to have the teacher's attention and she couldn't focus on me all the time. So I always needed someone to help me basically, ... my parents didn't understand French so basically I was on my own with most of my homework. I had no close friends that helped with

homework and stuff, they were all in Teacher A's classroom or in English."

The unfortunate part about having so many students in a LFI class is that all the students cannot conceivably have all their needs met all the time. If a student does not have alternative supports at home, or the immediate and daily support of a classmate or an in-class peer group, as was the case for Bobby, then program difficulties most certainly will follow. In addition to this, the fact that there was no resource program available to struggling students in LFI would have meant that a student such as Bobby could not receive additional supports from the school.

Student-teacher relationships.

Establishing a sense of connectedness with a teacher and feeling a sense of belonging are critical elements that need to be established in order to facilitate the learning dynamic for the adolescent during his or her intermediate schooling. In examining qualities of effective and successful intermediate level school teachers, Solomon, Schaps, Watson, and Battistich (1992) stated that, "Students who feel valued and accepted in their school, and who have close ties with accepting and sympathetic adults there, will want to accept and uphold the values and norms exemplified and promoted by the school and by the adults and the students within it." This lack of a sense of connection and shared values and norms was a common theme among the students in my study. In fact, four of the participants cited it as problematic for them.

Michelle related how the relationship with her home-room teacher affected her overall view of school, and of being in that particular class, and then contrasted that experience with another teacher with whom she got along better.

"I didn't like going to my class. I didn't like it all, I hated my class. I hated school that year, I didn't like being there at all except like at break where you go and talk to your

friends. But, um, oh I hated being in class so much. You knew you were going to get in trouble for something.... I didn't get in trouble with my other teacher, Teacher B kinda made it like, well you don't do your homework, that's your problem. I'm just gonna have to mark you lower, and it almost made me do the homework 'cause I needed the mark, at least, so....if you don't like your teacher, you're gonna be really rude to them and probably get sent out of class. And if you get sent out of class, then you don't get your work done, so, you miss a lot of stuff............ it's really important to like your teachers."

The idea of respecting the student as an individual and treating him or her with respect and dignity, while at the same time upholding the educational values of the school, is a difficult balancing act for teachers to accomplish. Because of the intensity and demands of this job, I know that there were times as a classroom teacher when I forgot that other people's needs come first. The fallout from not establishing this mutually respectful relationship can impact deeply on a student and negatively affect his or her educational experience at this level.

It has been my experience as a LFI teacher that there is a fair degree of transcience in the teachers who teach LFI, and students quite often are exposed to teachers who have little experience teaching a second language. Bobby shared his views on teacher-student relationships by saying it is important that LFI teachers understand how the learner acquires a second language. In this passage he differentiates between the approach used by two of his teachers, one a newer teacher to the school and the other a more veteran teacher, and the impact that this had on him as a learner.

"Grade 7, my teacher and me didn't get along, it was both of our first years in French, her teaching and me learning, so I don't know, we just didn't get along very well.... Teacher

C knew both the French and English language really well, and he understood, I guess,

how hard it was for kids to start from grade 6 and to grade 7 and learning a new language.

So you're meeting all these new people and you have to learn a brand new language."

Kyle echoed similar comments by stating that sometimes if you have a non-francophone

LFI teacher, he or she tends to have a better understanding of how it feels to learn French as a

second language and how difficult that can be for a student. Understanding the adolescent and the

adolescent needs, both on a personal as well as an educational level, are also critical elements in

developing an effective framework for learning in the LFI classroom. This, in turn, can impact on

the student's perceived self-efficacy, which can impact on the individual's ability to succeed in

LFI.

Three of the participants shared with me their perception that there was a disparity in how

LFI teachers treated the "smarter" students in the class - the higher achievers - as compared to

students who were not doing as well. Clarke illustrated this sentiment by stating,

"I sort of think that like they thought that everyone was as good as the smartest kids, the

smartest kid in the class, but like some kids were having trouble and they didn't, I don't

know, they might not have looked at that kid....they uh don't think give any special like

really special attention to the, the not smarter kids."

Comments such as that serve to underscore the need for differentiated instruction within

the LFI program. We as teachers realize that not all learners learn the same way and that different

approaches need to be implemented for different students in order to give our best attempts to

reach all students in the classroom. Currently, the range of abilities of the students in any given

LFI classroom is quite spread out. There was a time in the 1980's when LFI was perceived to

include only the best and most academically successful students available in the program. Now, with the increase in popularity in terms of the sheer number of students in the program, and with LFI being available in more schools these days, we no longer find as "elite" of a group of students as there may have once been. The needs of the students in LFI, while maybe not as great as those in other regular English classrooms, are still quite significant, and tending to their needs has become more of a challenge for the LFI teacher.

Factors influencing the decision to transfer out of LFI.

The Immersion experience of all the participants in my study was negative. Getting to the point where one decides that one no longer wants to be in LFI be a difficult road. The student feels that the road has come to a dead end and he or she must leave the program. Five of the six participants in my study came to this decision through discussions with their parents; ultimately, they felt it best that the child leave the program. The decision to leave the program for the sixth participant was administrative, and she had no choice but to leave the program since the administration decided to enroll her in an alternative education site.

While there was consistency among the participants in that the decision to leave LFI was arrived at in a consultative manner, the actual reasons for leaving LFI were varied: some of the participants reported that they did not like the program or did not like the teachers, others cited large class sizes or getting into trouble for speaking English too much in class as reasons why they decided to leave. In the end, there were three main factors that influenced the participants in my study to leave LFI: the perception on the part of the participants that they were academically inferior to many of their classmates, the belief that they could be more academically successful in the regular English program, and the influence of peers and the fact that many of their friends

were in other classes in the regular English program.

Bandura (1986) believes that self-efficacy is a context-related judgement of one's ability to accomplish a designated task or achieve a certain level of performance. One of the major reasons why four of the six participants in my study decided to leave the program was because they perceived themselves to be academically inferior to other students and they wanted a higher academic average in school. These students considered themselves inefficacious in the context of the LFI educational environment, therefore, they sought an alternative route that they thought would lead them to be more successful in school. While experiencing a lack of academic success in LFI, Bobby shared how this made him feel personally,

> "I was getting 60's and they were getting 90's, 'cause it was just - I was thinking that - oh well, you have to be smart to be in this program, I guess, and I'm not very smart, so I left. I don't think now, but I did think that..... I didn't think about everything, but I thought about the most, biggest and important things."

Bandura (1986) also contends that vicarious experience can serve to either elevate or decrease one's perceived self-efficacy. Comparing oneself to others in the class whom the student deems to be of equal ability will either encourage or discourage the student into believing that he or she is capable of performing successfully or not in the educational setting. In this instance, the vicarious experience had a negative influence on this student's perceived self-efficacy and made him feel inferior to other students in the classroom.

In the case of two of the participants, this sense of inferiority was even more pronounced and the very real fear of failure was something that adversely affected them and surely influenced their decision to leave the program. Kyle shared his fears by saying, "..... it (LFI) started getting

really hard and I was starting to get like stressful, so like I couldn't understand it and my tests were like really low, and I didn't want to fail grade 8, and then all my friends would go on, and so I went to English." Michelle had already experienced failure in a previous grade and clearly remembered how this made her feel and did not want the same thing to happen again while in LFI, "I can't fail, but I can just - pass. I - I can pass with great marks, I can pass with low marks, as long as I'm passing.... ever since I failed grade 3 I just cannot fail another year." Comments such as these provide firm evidence that the perceived self-efficacy of these two students was not at the level required for them to achieve success in LFI. Bandura (1986) feels that by envisioning fear-provoking thoughts regarding one's ineptitude in the face of the task at hand, the accompanying level of distress breeds the very dysfunction which one fears in the first place. Situations such as these students experienced illustrate clearly how fear of failure played a role in their decision to leave the program. The students' fear of not succeeding in LFI effectively paralysed them in their ability to perform to the best of their abilities.

The belief that they could do better academically in the regular English program was cited as a factor for leaving LFI by five of the six participants. As I previously mentioned, my participants perceived that the workload in the regular English program was not as heavy or demanding as the workload in LFI. In my years of teaching at this school, I can honestly state that I had heard reference to the belief that LFI was more demanding than the regular English program on an annual basis, with students in my home-room class often getting into friendly arguments with students in the regular English program about who had more work to do and which program was more rigorous. Rightly or wrongly, this perception exists and it was alive and well among the students in both programs. Furthermore, the participants in my study had a lot of

friends in the regular English program and the perception that the English program was easier than LFI was perpetuated by students who had previously been in LFI and had transferred. Michelle revealed how what friends of hers were telling her about the English program, and the impact that what they were saying about it had on her decision to leave LFI,

" 'Cause my friends are all in it and they were telling me it was easier. I had friends who dropped out of French that year, like student 1, student 2, and student 3 were all telling me, you know, this is much easier than before. Here, you'll like pass.... lots of them didn't want me to fail, even though some of them are failing themselves. But like, I don't know, I guess they knew Michelle's not gonna fail in the English program and they all told me all the time, like, if I went into English I'd be fine and like."

Bobby, who was struggling in LFI, related to me that having good marks was important to him, as well as to his parents. He looked to the regular English program as the answer to his academic woes because he was not achieving academically as well as he would have liked.

"I was - it was just like the quick way to get out at that time. 'Cause I was just getting deeper and deeper into a bad average and stuff and I just wanted to redeem myself as much as I could. And then, you know you're just looking and saying, 'I'm barely struggling in grade 8, how am I going to do in grade 9?' So I thought it was the best thing at the time, just to get out."

Even though he was enduring difficulties at the time, Kyle also had an eye out for the future, as the following excerpt reveals,

"Because without marks, teachers are saying that these next couple of years determine the rest of your life, which I think, I'm taking that pretty serious, I think, because they're

telling the truth. Because if you graduate from school with an 80 average instead of a 60 average, you're going to get a better job than the guy with the 70 average, or something like that, so, I think marks are very big, and I think you should get good marks."

These students' lack of academic success was clearly negatively affecting the environment in which they found themselves. Bandura (1986) states that the environment can influence the perceptions that they have about themselves; conceptions govern not only behavior but they may also be formulated through the individual's interaction with the environment. This can lead the individual to create either positive or negative outcome expectations which can either spur the individual on to, or deter him or her from, future action. In this instance, the outcome expectations created for this participant were negative and thereby deterred him from continuing in LFI. The environment in which he had been going to school (the LFI program) was not yielding the sort of success that he, or his parents, desired. Therefore, the decision was made to pursue an alternate route in pursuit of academic success.

The third factor that contributed to the students' decision to leave LFI was the influence of their peers and the fact that their friends were in other classes. Schunk and Miller (2002) report that adolescents' self-efficacy is greatly influenced by their peers, especially in the area of vicarious observations, and that the peer network with whom students associate are key sources of self-efficacy. Cairns, Cairns and Neckerman (1989) found that when students associate with other students in networks that tend to be highly similar, the likelihood of influence by modelling from their peers is heightened. A study done by Berndt and Keefe (1992) found that discussions between friends influence their choice of activities and friends often make similar choices. As I alluded to earlier, most of my participants had a lot of their peer network, their closest friends, in

the regular English program. In the interviews, it became clear to me that there was much

discussion among the participants in my study and the rest of their peer group, some of whom

had already made the transfer out of LFI into the regular English program. It is not surprising that

their friends' decisions to leave LFI influenced my participants to chose to leave as well. They

were, in effect, modelling similar decisions made by their peers.

Michelle, who had had previous discussions with her friends encouraging her to leave

LFI, placed a significant degree of importance on the social side of her peer network. Her

comments reveal the extent to which she was influenced by her peer group when it came time to

make the decision to leave LFI.

"Well, my best friend was in English, uh, like a lot of my friends were in English and I

wanted to be in their classes. Uh, I'm very, very, very different from the kids in my class

and I had one friend who hung out with the English kids too, in my class - um -...... I'm a

- uh - a 'need my friends person', so....... I just didn't hang out with them and things like

that, so I had nothing to talk to them about, ... I have to have friends or I'm like -

depressed, so, this is one of the needs of mine."

Was it surprising that she succumbed to the influence of her peer network and their

requests for her to join them in the regular English program? Given the emphasis that she places

on her peers' opinions and the value that she attaches to them, one could hardly be surprised.

Bobby also placed a good deal of significance on the importance of his peer group, but for

different reasons. He talked about how it was important to have friends in his class to support

him in his school work and in other areas. When I asked him whether having friends in his LFI

class would have kept him in the program or not, he responded by saying,

"It probably would've helped, 'cause every - like all my friends now, they were in
Teacher D's class, like, I don't know, 5 of them were. And then I had one friend in my
class but then he left, and that showed me like, hey you can leave wow, my friend did it
so why can't I? So it would've kept me in a lot easier I think, so, because I'd have
someone to talk to and I can say oh yeah, I see you got a test and maybe help, like, I can
go to someone's house, we can work on homework together, but. I probably wouldn't go
to anyone's house that was in my class last year."

This same student did not have the supports at home to help him with his difficulties in
the program. Nor did he have the peer network to help support him in his academic endeavors in
class. Bobby's circumstance further supports the findings from Cairns, Cairns, and Neckerman
(1989) which illustrated the influence of modelling from peers. Once again, it is hardly surprising
that he chose to leave the LFI program to be with his peers in the regular English program, and to
make choices similar to the ones that they made.

Assessments and supports while in the program

There was one final commonality among all the participants. Prior to leaving LFI, none of
the participants had received any assessment or evaluation to determine if there was any specific
area which may need to be examined as a possibility for any sort of intervention that could help
the student. There was no consistent strategy used by the participants which could serve to help
them be more successful in LFI. Patti and Clark both mentioned that they found it helpful when
their Grade 7 teacher photocopied a group of words onto vocabulary sheets, and made them into
a mini-dictionary for the student. This dictionary included accents, which assisted the student in
improving his or her pronunciation. Other participants mentioned how they would call upon the

support of friends but there was no mention of regular extra help after school. Also, this particular group of students sought little or no external assistance, such as tutoring, before making the decision to leave LFI. All of which begs the question; had these participants sought outside assistance, or if there had been more resources available to them, at school or elsewhere, would they have still chosen to remain in LFI?

Post Immersion

With the participants now finally switched out of LFI and into the regular English program, would they finally realize the academic success that had eluded them in LFI? Would there suddenly be a revitalization in their schooling, and the effort that they put forth in their schoolwork? Would being with more of their friends in the regular English program provide the sort of support network that some of the participants mentioned as lacking in LFI? How would they get along with the teachers in the regular English program? How easy or difficult would the transition into the regular English be, and what supports would be there for the students? How easy or difficult would the schoolwork be in the new program? Surely these were some of the thoughts that crossed the participants' minds , and maybe even the minds of the school administration and their former teachers, as these students embarked upon the new leg of their educational journey.

The data related to the participants' experiences while in the regular English program have been categorized into four major themes: the participants' personal experiences in the English program; their feelings about their decision to transfer out of LFI; their recommendations for improving the program; and requirements for success in the LFI program.

Personal experiences in the regular English program.

The participants' experiences in the regular English program covered a wide range of areas. The obvious difference for some of them was that they no longer had to deal with the language difficulty that had plagued them during their time in LFI. With instruction delivered in English, the participants no longer had to focus their efforts on making sense of the material presented in class. For them, the barrier to comprehension that French had provided had been removed. Others mentioned that although they were happier to have more of their friends in their classes, this also led them to get into more trouble in terms of exhibiting unacceptable behavior in the classroom, and in some cases made learning more difficult. In the end, I found three common patterns that emerged from the data.

The most consistent finding was that the participants found the workload in the regular English program to be much easier than in LFI. For four of the six participants, a lesser academic workload meant that there was less homework and more time for social activities and fun time. Katie illustrates here how she perceived the difference between the workload in the two programs,

"Well in the English it's easier and you could, {long pause} it's, it's I won't have as much homework 'cause I can finish it in class ..... In English the teachers will, like, if you finish your work you can have, like whatever's left to talk with your neighb - like the person sitting beside you if they're done. We can speak in English, and as long as we're doing our work we can like chat, but in French it was like if you're done he'd give you another worksheet just to work on until the class finishes. And you can't talk."

Clark went on to tell me how he felt that he did not have as much of a workload, yet he

still managed to have higher marks than he was receiving in LFI,

> "Barely any (homework). Just the odd day you get some {laugh}. There's barely ever any homework. I don't have to do - have two hours a day doing homework, I just go out right after school, and do stuff with my friends.....I don't put the effort, well I put some effort into like whenever there's tests and all that, but it's easy, you don't have to really work that hard to get a good average in English. It's just easy, it's not like all this work and this other stuff."

While two of the participants admitted that their marks did not improve in the English program, which they attributed largely to a lack of effort, four of the participants touched on the fact that they found that their marks had improved once they made the move to the regular English program. As Clarke mentioned earlier, for many of the participants, this improvement in their academic performance came without much improvement in their effort toward their schoolwork. The following excerpt from Kyle demonstrates how it was easier to obtain good marks in the English program, whereas in LFI, it required a much greater effort to receive similar marks.

> "I guess, like I understand it better..... when I went into English I just started doing really good in all my tests and all that, I just understood better. Some people in English are as low as I was, or lower.....Like in French you had to work like really, really, really hard to get like a half decent mark, but in English, for me, I only have to, I don't have to work as hard, ' cause I just get pretty good marks."

For people who had previously struggled in the program, achieving this newfound success must have been a positive and rewarding experience for them. It was interesting to note

how Kyle's perceived self-efficacy was influenced by his vicarious experience. In LFI, he felt that he was struggling academically and not doing as well as his peers in the program. However, in the regular English program, he perceived that he was doing well academically and was probably exceeding most of his peers. Michelle, who was experiencing much greater academic success in the English program than she had in LFI, also alluded to this same idea when she said, "I don't feel like I'm like the lowest grade in the class. I feel like I'm, you know, middle or higher at least."

Three of the participants also focused on the improved teacher-student relationship once they had made the transfer into the English program. Kyle felt that if he had a teacher in LFI like his teacher in the English program, he might have remained in LFI. In the following excerpt, he speaks to what he considers to be an essential part of his education, and what I mentioned earlier as an important component of teaching the adolescent learner - the ability to make a strong inter-personal connection,

> "Some of my teachers, like Teacher E, when I played hockey or whatever, against
> another friend who was in my class, she'd go watch us, or she, me and my friend, we
> have a membership out at Golf Course A, where we golf, and she's going to take us
> golfing there, either this week or next week. So they interact with sports and stuff, with
> us.... Uh, it'll probably make you work harder and achieve better, 'cause the teachers are
> like, they just like, if you like them and all that and they're nice and they're fun in the
> class and it'll make you happier and you'll just do better, I guess."

Not having a strong inter-personal connection with the teacher was an element that was missing among some of the participants during their LFI experience, but was re-captured in the

regular English program. Colvin and Scholosser (1998) contend that intermediate level teachers are particularly well positioned to influence the self-efficacy beliefs students acquire through the critically important middle years (p.27). The interaction that intermediate teachers have with their students can influence their ability to achieve success in school. One has to wonder if the difficulty that students such as Katie experienced with the French language was directly connected to their ability, or inability, to effectively establish relationships with their teachers. She stated that she spoke a lot of English in class; did she do so because she was unable to communicate in French, or was it merely a bad habit, and did this inability adversely affect her relationship with her LFI teachers? One would think that there must have been a connection between the two.

Feelings about the decision to transfer.

It was not surprising to me to find out that the students felt that it was a good move for them, academically, to make the decision to transfer into the regular program, and that for the most part they enjoyed school more. It also did not surprise me to find out that there were those in the group who were unsure about the future ramifications of deciding to transfer and some who were afraid that they would forget their second language. What I found surprising was that, although they were more successful in the English program, and they felt better about how they were doing in school, four of the six participants still believed that LFI was a better academic program than the regular English program. During the interviews with my participants, the belief that LFI was a "better" academic program than the regular English was mentioned on several occasions. While this was not an item on my original set of interview questions, after hearing this sentiment mentioned during the first interviews, I felt it necessary to probe further and get some

of the participants to clarify what they meant. Bobby was one of the participants who believed that LFI is a superior academic program to the English program and offered the following comment,

> "I think it's a better - French is a better program because the teachers have more control over the students too, they're probably not as stressed out because they're a lot better. Not to be mean to them or nothing, but they're (students in LFI) a lot, probably, better, easier to teach. We're (students in the English program) a lot more rambunctious and yah..... There's people giving them lip all the time, basically. There's kids refusing to do work for no reason. So it's a lot harder for the teachers to uh, teach."

Bobby went on to say that getting used to the difference in the general atmosphere created by the students and teachers in LFI, and the attitude that the students in LFI had to their schoolwork, made for the biggest adjustments that he had to make when he made the transfer to the regular English program. When asked to clarify which program he thought was better, Clark had this to say,

> "The French one, I guess, cause you're working harder instead of just slacking around and still getting marks easily. But, in French it makes you work for what you get, I guess, so..... Well, I think it was better for me academic wise, but, I don't know, it's not, it's gonna make me like slack, slack like in the future, I guess, 'cause I know that I don't have to work for my marks, I guess something, in English."

Another common sentiment expressed by four of the participants was that they were generally happier now that they were in the regular English program. The source of the newfound happiness was quite often linked to the fact that they were now achieving more success

academically and the stress that they had previously felt from what they perceived to be an excessive workload in LFI was now removed. Katie gives a good example of how the transfer into the English program was beneficial not only to her, but to her parents as well.

" I'm hap- I'm fine with the transfer. And this year I'm doing like 79.... They're (Katie's parents) better, they like it better than being in French. They can actually help me with my homework, and I'm bringing home better marks......I think now, I like, I can do my work, and now that I can do my work I'm getting better marks. But in French it was like there's no point in doing my work, I can't do it anyway."

Michelle, who also experienced more academic success in English but still had a strong interest in learning French, provided some insight into how she felt about the decision to transfer. I found her comments particularly interesting because they stood out from the others'. While all of the other participants expressed little or no interest in pursuing French language education in the future, Michelle clearly sets herself apart from the other participants because of the interest in the language that she maintained.

"I wanted to go back, only 'cause I really enjoy French. I - I never did - I purely left because of teachers and friends and all those things that had nothing to do with the school, basically.....I spend a little more time with my friends now, just because I'm talking to them more, in school. Emotionally, I don't really know, I'm still like the same person I ever was. I don't know, I'm pretty happy in English."

Comments such as these clearly illustrate that the decision to leave LFI was not an easy one, and this decision brought out a mix of emotions in the participants. Katie related how she also had mixed emotions about leaving LFI because she had heard from other classmates who

were still in the program that the Grade 9 year was more enjoyable for them than in Grade 8. In light of this, she wondered if she had made the wrong decision, even though she had such a difficult time while in LFI.

Recommendations for improving the program.

When asked whether they would recommend LFI to other people, four of the six participants stated that they would. Patti and Katie were the only two who would not recommend the program to others; Patti because she did not like it, and Katie because she feels that she would only recommend it to people who were willing to put the necessary work into it. This sentiment was also shared by the other participants - the idea that you really had to give your best effort in the program and really want to be there. According to these four participants, if you have this desire, then you are probably more apt to remain in the program.

In terms of recommending changes to the program, there was not a great deal of consistency. Clark suggested playing more games and a greater variety of teaching methods. Katie felt that there should be more emphasis on vocabulary and more opportunities for practice. Katie and Bobby both felt that more should be taught at the Grade 7 level. As Bobby put it, "I'd say, either make Grade 7 harder or make Grade 8 easier." When pressed further as to which option he would suggest, he said that he would recommend making Grade 7 harder. Kyle and Bobby both felt that the larger class sizes also caused some problems, especially in the area of meeting the needs of the struggling student(s) in the program. In the end, the most common recommendation that came forth was a reduction in the workload. Four of the participants mentioned this as an area that could be improved. Clark related his feelings by stating, "I don't know, probably not as much work. People don't like doing that much work, they like, that's

probably why most of us dropped out 'cause there was so much work in there, but." Michelle expanded upon this sentiment by stating that with this increased workload comes an increase in the expectations of the teachers. In her opinion, the expectations in both of these areas were unrealistic,

"And there'd be probably, um, less, like less of the homework, like the way they do it, like without explaining it, they just kind of give it to you. They have to go through it with us and stuff with us.... And, I guess, like stop having these high expectations where it's like we - we're all normal kids, we're not all like super, amazing, 90% people all the time...... they expect you to be so good in that class that, like not everybody's that good."

These passages demonstrate that these participants felt that they could neither meet the demands of the program nor the expectations of the teachers in LFI. Bandura (1986) contends that people must be sufficiently convinced that the activity in which they are participating merits the sustained effort that is required for success in the program; neither of these individuals could see themselves as able to live up to the academic expectations and the workload expectations of students in LFI, therefore, I am not surprised that they would see this as an area that needed to be improved.

Requirements for success in LFI.

In terms of what the participants felt was required for success in LFI, there were three areas which they cited as important. Clark, Kyle and Bobby and Katie all felt that one has to want to work hard, and persevere when things get tough. These same four felt that it was important for students to pay attention in class. As Katie relates in this excerpt, she feels that this is a critical element for any student in the program,

"Even if you don't have homework, bring books home, study your French. Don't get distracted in class, like keep concentrating all the time...... 'Cause you don't pay attention in class, you're not gonna know what you're doing at home. And if you don't know what you're doing at home, you're not gonna study anything."

This seems like such a simple recipe for success, unfortunately, all too often at this age there are students who fail to realize the benefits of adopting regular study habits, which in the end can make all the difference when it comes to measuring the progress of students in LFI.

I will conclude my findings in this chapter with a quote from Bobby that sums up his thoughts about the requirements for success in the program, a sentiment that was expressed by three other participants as well,

"Probably dedication to it. And the, you need to know when to do homework and when to go outside and play. And uh, it's not as much that you have to be smart, you just have to be good that you have to want to do it. You have to want to learn French."

As is the case with many things in life, one needs to have the basic dedication and desire to pursue any given activity and to give one's best effort while pursuing it. Being a student in LFI is no different.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of students who had started LFI in Grade 7 but transferred out during their intermediate years. In doing this, I hoped to provide answers to two central questions that guided my research: 1) What were the students' reasons when the decision was made to move out of the program? and 2) How do the students who transferred out of LFI perceive their academic performance, now that they are enrolled in the regular English program? I believe that I have been successful in gleaning some good insights into the school experiences of these students. In this chapter I will discuss my findings and how they relate to the literature and conceptual framework (SCT). As well, I will highlight some of the limitations of this study, including some limitations to my conceptual framework (SCT), suggest some implications for LFI education here on P.E.I. and offer some recommendations for the future. This chapter will conclude with some personal reflections on conducting this research.

As a LFI teacher, I had often wondered why students decided to enroll in the program. While I had my own ideas as to what these reasons might have been, I never really knew for sure. Consistent with the findings in Hart, Lapkin, and Swain (1988), I was not surprised to find that one of the primary reasons for enrolling in LFI was the opportunity to learn a second language. It also did not surprise me to find out that the prospect of obtaining a better job, and the influence of having other peers deciding to enroll in the program, were also significant factors in the students' decision to enroll in LFI. One area that surprised me somewhat was the influence that the elementary Core French experience had on these participants. It caught me a

little off guard when I discovered that many of these students believed that their years in LFI would be similar to what they had experienced in Core French in elementary school and that there would not be a great deal of difference in terms of language difficulty and language expectations from the teacher. Why would they have thought this way? Were they really listening to others when they were telling them about what the program would be like? It should hardly be surprising that those students who held this perception going into the program would have decided to transfer out when they found the program difficult. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, it is crucial that the students receive all the pertinent information about the LFI program prior to enrolling, and that the decision to enroll be well thought out in advance. Such advance preparation can greatly facilitate the adjustment into LFI, for both the teacher and the student.

The environment in which students in LFI find themselves is like no other in today's education system. The fact that students are required to work and learn in a second language brings a dynamic to the learning environment that does not exist in other programs. These LFI students only started receiving their instruction completely in French in Grade 7. Not only do these students have to deal with the natural adjustment that comes with the transition into the intermediate level curriculum, they have to deal with the curriculum in a language that is relatively foreign and unfamiliar to them. Along with this increased content level comes a relatively high expectation that they put forth a strong effort in their work, especially when it comes to ensuring that they understand the complexities of the French language. Bandura (1986) explains human functioning in terms of a model of triadic reciprocality, in which behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other. In turn, these factors help to create either positive or negative

outcome expectations. It was clear to me that this triadic reciprocality was embedded in my participants' experiences in LFI. These participants were regularly evaluating themselves in response to the environment in which they found themselves, which subsequently affected their behavior while in the program. In my role as the researcher, I saw a strong interplay between how the students were performing in class and the behaviors they exhibited. For example, I am certain that Katie's refusal to speak French came about largely because her ability to do so was limited. This in turn impacted on her ability to succeed academically in class. At the same time, her refusal to speak French in class affected her relationship with her teachers and caused a strain among them, thereby negatively affecting how she behaved in class.

Bandura (1986) contends that individuals lacking in self-regulatory skills will often procrastinate in their work, will put forth minimal effort, or will not perform the task at all. I originally wondered if these students put forth the required effort in order to be successful in LFI. My findings consistently showed that they did not. This lack of effort, not surprisingly, led to academic difficulties. When it came to their perceived self-efficacy in LFI, this lack of academic success resulted in the participants creating negative outcome expectations as they progressed in the program. These low self-efficacy beliefs caused these participants to truly believe that they were no longer able to achieve success in the program, and in the end looked to the regular English program as the best alternative to find success. Furthermore, they had experienced little success upon which to draw that could serve as an encouraging force for them when the demands of the LFI program became increasingly more difficult.

Commitment is a key element for success in pretty much any venture in which a person participates. Bandura (1995) believes that students who experience academic failures will have

their perceived self-efficacy affected negatively. In order for students to be successful in the long term and to remain committed, they must have a strong belief in their self-regulatory skills. The higher the students' beliefs in their ability to regulate their learning, the greater the chance that they will master their academic subjects. The repeated academic failures experienced by these participants surely impacted on their level of commitment to, and engagement with, LFI. Why would they bother to put in the required extra effort when they could see no justifiable reason for doing so? How could they remain in a program to which they really were not committed? Instead, they listened to what their peers were saying to them about how the regular English program was easier, and they took what seemed to be the easy way out for them and sought to discover their desired academic success elsewhere.

One cannot ignore the impact of vicarious experience on the perceived self-efficacy of the participants in this study. My participants regularly found themselves in a situation in which they were constantly comparing their performance to others in the class. Not only was this comparison done in an academic sense, wherein the participants regularly compared their academic performance to the performance of their peers in class, but the comparison also happened in a social context as well, as many of the participants felt that most of the other students in LFI considered themselves to be socially superior, and the family dynamic for many of the participants was different than the dynamic for most of the other students in LFI. As a result, these students perceived themselves differently from many of the other students in the LFI class, in most instances, this resulted in my participants comparing themselves in an inferior manner to their classmates. The socio-economic distinction that my participants made between LFI students and students in the regular English program led them to feel a sense of alienation

within the larger group of students in the LFI classroom. They simply felt that they did not belong. This is a strong example of the interplay among behavioral, environmental, and cognitive factors all playing a significant role in the participants' decision to ultimately leave LFI; the student was repeatedly making personal assessments of his or her place within the LFI environment and the resultant behaviors were affected by the cognitive decisions made by the individual. As was the case with a lack of mastery experience, this vicarious experience in which my participants compared themselves to others in the class failed to serve as a positive reinforcement in the eyes of these students.

Bandura (1995) feels that a low sense of efficacy can lend itself to disengagement thus making it difficult for students to remain proactive in their educational pursuits. Furthermore, students of low academic and social self-efficacy are more susceptible to associating with others who hold similar values and beliefs to their own. In this case, the group with the similar beliefs were those students who had previously transferred out of LFI into the English program. This low perceived self-efficacy leads the students to lower their aspirations as well as their quality of performance. The findings in this study indicate that the lowering of aspirations and the quality of performance were at play for my participants. These findings are similar to Schunk and Miller (2002) who reported in their study how self-efficacy was influenced by the individual's peers. Many of my participants were influenced by what their peers in the regular English program were saying about how they would have more success in English than they were having in LFI. If their friends in the English program were telling them that it was better in the English program than in LFI, and that they would no longer be struggling academically like they were in the French program, then it only seems logical that these participants would decide to transfer

out of LFI. The previously held aspiration of remaining in LFI no longer seemed as attractive as it once was.

Limitations

While this study is valuable at the local level here in the ESD, I do also see some limitations. First of all, the study may not be generalizable to a wider population. However, (Weirsma, 2000,) states that this is not of great importance; what is important is to use the results of the study to benefit the local area. My goal was to gain insight into attrition as it pertains to LFI at the intermediate level here on P.E.I. and to contribute knowledge that will help people understand the nature of the problem and use the information to more effectively manage the immersion environment as it pertains to LFI on this island. People in other jurisdictions can look at this study and use it to help draw their own conclusions about how it pertains to them. It could possibly spark future research on P.E.I. and elsewhere.

Secondly, the small number of participants could be perceived as a weakness. However, this is only a Masters thesis and I was limited, in both time and resources, to do qualitative exploratory work on a bigger scale.

The third limitation relates to perspective. The feelings expressed by the participants in my study are one-sided. While I am in no way doubting their word or minimizing their feelings, there is always another side to the story and the big picture must be considered. I would have liked to have been able to conduct interviews with the teachers as well as the parents of these same students so that I could learn from their side of the story. This would have enabled me to give a much clearer picture of attrition at this level and give a much more rounded account of the circumstances which led these students to leave the program. Also, I would have liked to

have the chance to speak with the teachers from the English program and get their perspective on how these students were doing in their classrooms. One of my original research questions related to how the students were doing once they made the transfer to the regular English program. Once again, only one half of the story was told. It would have been beneficial to have the students' views correlated with the teachers' views.

The fourth limitation relates to time frame. It had been nearly a year for four of the six participants since they had made the transfer out of LFI, and I am quite sure that the passage of time had altered their memory and their perspective to a certain degree. I would have preferred to do a study similar to Hayden (1988), in which she interviewed students who had dropped out of immersion during the same year as she conducted the study. However, I was not afforded that luxury since only one of my participants had dropped out during the same year that I conducted the study. If that had been possible, the whole LFI experience may have been even fresher in the minds of all the participants in my study.

The final limitation relates to my conceptual framework itself (SCT). While this theory was useful in helping me understand a good deal of what the students were going through in their LFI experience, it cannot stand alone and adequately tell the whole story. Education is a partnership- a shared process that relies on involvement from the student, the teacher, as well as the parent(s) of the student. When students succeed academically, one can readily credit each of the aforementioned role players for the students' success. Conversely, when students do not succeed, the responsibility for this lack of success must be equally shared by all. SCT is limited in its perspective because it lays the blame or responsibility for what goes on in a student's education on the learner only, and ignores the other two critical elements. What is needed is a

model that will help to broaden the lens and allow for more sharing of responsibility for student learning. The reasons for the students' decision to leave LFI cannot fall solely on their shoulders; the responsibility for this has to be shared with other players involved in this program - namely the teachers, their pedagogy and the relationships they develop with their students, the curriculum and its implementation, and the school itself.

Cambourne (1988) details a literacy learning model, which I only recently became aware of, based on seven components: *immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, approximation, use, and response*. Cambourne contends that learners are always in close proximity to proficient users of the language and that among these users, there is usually one "expert" with whom the learner will form a significant bond. Kelly (2002) found that the bonding styles of teachers are unique and that it is up to the individual to cultivate that style so he or she can effectively connect with the student. This sense of connection, he contends, is as significant, if not more so, as the curriculum, when teaching the adolescent learner. I heard Michelle relate how much she hated her class because of her repeated confrontations with most of her teachers, especially her home-room teacher. Katie related how she felt that she was singled out for her extensive use of English in the French classroom, thereby causing friction between her and her teacher. Bobby mentioned how he did not get along with one of his Grade 7 teachers, and did not do very well in that class, but got along much better with the other Grade 7 teacher, and as a result, performed much better. Given that there was little or no bond between these students and their teachers, it is not surprising that there was little or no engagement on their part in their studies.

With the *immersion* component, Cambourne feels it is important that the learner be

immersed in texts of all kinds, and that these be meaningfully used in a context which can make sense In the LFI classroom, it is essential that students be immersed in texts that will stimulate the learners' interest; this material must also be something to which they can easily relate and be able to maintain their interest. *Demonstrations*, which Cambourne believes are essential to learning, are then used to help the learner understand how the language is structured. Cambourne also emphasizes the need for immersion and demonstration to be accompanied by "engagement". However, in order for this engagement to occur, learners must be convinced that: 1) they have the potential to perform observed demonstrations; 2) engaging in these demonstrations will further the purposes of their lives; and 3) they can engage without fear of unpleasant physical or psychological consequences if their attempt is not fully correct.

With the *expectations* component, Cambourne states that if those to whom the learner is bonded conveys that certain kinds of learning are expected, then that learning usually takes place. These expectations can coerce behavior in subtle yet powerful ways. Repeatedly I heard reference to the fact that the expectations of the teachers were too high, especially during the Grade 8 year. Cambourne reminds us how learners need to be convinced they have the potential to do or perform demonstrations. If my participants felt that they could not meet the teachers' expectations, how could they adequately engage themselves in the act of learning a second language? *Responsibility* means that the learner decides what part of the task will be internalized at any given time. Cambourne adds that once this responsibility is taken away from the learner, then the process of learning becomes complicated because the language act becomes fragmented and decontextualized.

Approximation relates to the idea that the learner does not need to have all systems intact

for learning to take place. Those responsible for the learner's development should expect immature forms of language to be replaced by more conventional and appropriate forms, as long as the learner is allowed to produce language. At the same time, learners of a language need time and opportunity to *use* the language and develop those immature language skills. Once the learner has put the language to use, *responses* need to be readily available, given frequently and in a non-threatening manner with no strings attached, and there can be no penalty for not getting the appropriate form correct. Cambourne also would suggest that no limit be placed on the number of exchanges given. Given that most of the LFI classes were quite big, were my participants afforded ample opportunity to practice, and improve upon, their immature language skills. Also, because of these same big classes, was the response time on the part of the teachers sufficient to meet the language needs of these students, so that they could grow in their second language acquisition? Unfortunately, I do not have the answers to these questions, but I do believe that they warrant consideration for further research in LFI in the ESD.

While Cambourne feels that immersion and demonstration must be accompanied by engagement, he suggests that engagement will probably be increased if the components of expectation, responsibility, approximation, use, and response are present during the process of learning a language. A teacher's ability to achieve engagement on the part of the learner is what Cambourne refers to as the "artistic" side of teaching. He also goes on to say that achieving this engagement is difficult for a teacher who does not like children, or for one who has a difficult time forming that requisite bond with the learner. Clark reminded the reader how he got tired of all the homework, and the amount of seat work in his classes - how this made it boring and uninteresting for him. Katie talked about when a student in LFI was finished assigned work, the

teacher would simply hand the student another worksheet to do. Bobby was emphatic in voicing his displeasure with the "orange books" that were used in French class, and how they made the work in LFI unattractive. These are all good examples of how the pedagogy and the curriculum in the LFI classroom were possibly not as effective as they should have been for these students. I do know that the curriculum for French language arts has recently been replaced by a newer and more attractive resource for the students; it will be interesting to see what impact this has on future attrition in LFI, and whether or not the material will be sufficiently interesting to meaningfully engage LFI students.

Connection to previous research

In spite of the limitations, I do believe that the information that I was able to glean from my participants was quite rich, and I also believe that my findings have a good deal of significance in contributing to the knowledge base that already exists. As well, the findings in my study are consistent with several studies that have been done on attrition:

The participants in my study reported that they were experiencing difficulties with the course content, believed that they would obtain a better academic average in the English program, and also felt that the teachers' expectations were too high, especially when they compared the expectations of Grade 8 teachers to those of Grade 7 teachers. These findings were consistent with the findings in Lewis (1986) and Hayden (1988) who found that high teacher expectations were cited as a reason for students' decision to leave the immersion program, along with the desire to obtain a better academic average.

Participants in my study also related how their lack of success caused them stress and frustration; this was consistent with the findings in Hayden (1988), whose participants also cited

stress as being a factor in their decision to switch out of FI.

Falling behind or lack of progress was also cited as a factor in the decision to transfer out in Hart, Lapkin, and Swain (1988) and in Ellsworth (1997). My participants also feared that, because they were falling behind academically, there was a strong possibility that they would fail. This fear of failure led them to believe that the best option for them to succeed would be if they switched into the regular English program.

One of the common concerns that parents have prior to enrolling their child in LFI is that they do not have the ability to help their children when it comes to homework and they worry that their child's academic average will not be as high when they enter the program. The fact that some of the participants in this study stated that their parents were happier now that they were doing better in the regular English program, and they could help them with their homework, was consistent with findings in Hayden (1988) and Hart, Lapkin, and Swain (1988).

The consistency between the findings in my study and the findings in other studies increases the generalizability of my study to other jurisdictions.

Implications and recommendations for LFI education

I believe this study will be beneficial to expanding the knowledge and understanding of the LFI program in the Eastern School District. To date, there has been little research done in the area of LFI at the intermediate level here on Prince Edward Island; this study offers a solid contribution to the knowledge base which will hopefully be expanded upon in future years. This study will also be beneficial in helping to identify realities in LFI attrition and the underlying factors contributing to this attrition. My qualitative exploration gave some clear insight into the lived experiences of these students while they were in the program, including an identification

of the reasons why they eventually decided to transfer out. The findings from this study may also offer some considerations for future plans in LFI in the district. Immersion programming must be regularly under review - to revise its objectives, outcome expectations, curriculum, and pedagogy. Although LFI has proven itself to be a successful venture on the education scene for many students here in the ESD, I feel it is important that we not rest on our laurels and that we continually monitor the program and strive to find ways that we can make it better and more equitable.

Halsall (1989) recommended clear practices when it came to making the decision to transfer out of LFI. For the participants in this study, the decision to remove them was made on a case by case basis, seemingly without reference to pre-established criteria. Some of the participants also made reference to the fact that they were confused that some people were allowed to leave the program, but when they first made the request, they had been denied. Furthermore, none of the participants in my study received any intervention such as a formal assessment, tutoring, or counselling, prior to the transfer into the regular English program. I find this to be an unacceptable practice which should receive further consideration in the future. Resource teachers are often allocated to help struggling students in the regular English program; I believe that, wherever, possible, schools offering FI programs should extend the same benefit to its students. Although I recognize that no two cases are identical when it comes to a student deciding to transfer out of LFI, I do feel it is necessary to have some sort of guidelines established to help those involved - student, parent, and school personnel alike- make the most informed decision possible.

In studies conducted by Obadia (1984), Tardif (1985), Halsall (1991) and Halsall (1997),

they all recommended improved teacher training for teachers in the immersion program. Also, they recommend improved supervision of immersion teachers, done on a more regular basis. Based on my findings in this study, I concur with the findings from those studies. When I heard Bobby talking about how he noticed a difference in his academic success with his two teachers in Grade 7, or Kyle referring to how it is important for a teacher to understand what life is like for a student who is learning a second language in LFI, or Michelle expressing her belief that the teachers should not expect all of their students to be as capable as the brightest students in the class, I realized that there is a need to increase the specialization in the area of second language instruction and inclusion. In the average LFI classroom in this millenium, we find an increasingly diversified group of students in terms of academic abilities. Given that, we need teachers who are skilled in the delivery of second language instruction and who can effectively attend to the needs of this diversified group. Having a solid working knowledge of the French language alone is not satisfactory. With the recent implementation of the French Immersion Education program - a joint venture between U.P.E.I. and Universite de Moncton- the timing for this sort of specialization could not be better. Teachers in immersion should be required to have at least some formal training in second language education prior to being hired as an immersion teacher. And for those who have been in the system for some time but do not have the requisite training, they should be required to take some courses from this program in order to adequately upgrade their skills. With the students in the LFI classroom changing the way it has, I feel it is incumbent upon LFI teachers to be current with the most recent "best practices" in second language instruction and that they be able to offer a greater degree of differentiated instruction, so that the needs of all LFI students can be met more effectively. In addition to this, wherever

possible, regular supervision of LFI teachers should be carried out by qualified personnel. Unfortunately, not all schools are equipped with bilingual administrators who can carry out this assessment. In such situations, I would recommend that these supervisions be carried out by trained personnel, either from the Department of Education or from U.P.E.I.

I could not help but be intrigued by what the students were saying about the differences in the difficulty they found in the program between Grades 7 and 8, as well as the differences in teachers' expectations. It made me wonder if we are doing enough at the Grade 7 level to adequately prepare students for the next steps in the LFI program. I realize that teachers at this level are trying to ease the students' transition into the program as best they can, but is there too much of a reliance on the use of English in the classroom, and are the students being allowed to use English too often as a crutch? Should we be requiring them to use the French language on a more frequent basis, so that they can maximize the time that they have to spend on the language? Should there be an increased emphasis in terms of the time allocated to French language arts at the Grade 7 level - in both oral and written skills? What about raising the curriculum and pedagogy standards in elementary Core French education so that LFI students are well prepared to make the transition into the new program in Grade 7? I do not know the answer to these questions, but based on the findings in my study, I feel it is an area that should be explored in great detail in the future.

Halsall (1997) recommended the removal of the screening mechanism for selection of students into the LFI program in the Eastern School District. It was her view that there was no existing screening mechanism that could be used to effectively select students for the program, nor could it be used to adequately predict how successful a student would be in LFI. In addition

it was felt that, given the results the screening mechanism yielded, it was not worth the time and effort required to administer the existing screening mechanism. While it may be true that the mechanism the ESD was using prior to 1997 was ineffective, I disagree with Halsall's view that it should be abolished. It is my belief that by having the students undergo a screening mechanism prior to enrolling in LFI, there is, in effect, a certain degree of self-screening which does take place. Based on what I have discovered in my study, it is the type of student who decides to enroll in LFI "just to give it a try" that is more apt to experience difficulty in LFI. Having a screening mechanism in place can save this student a lot of grief by helping him or her to make an appropriate decision before enrolling in LFI. In place of the screening mechanism that the ESD previously used, I would recommend the adoption of the instrument that Schunk and Miller (2002) cite from studies done by Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, and Parivee (1991), Schunk (1995), and Pajares, Miller, and Johnson (1999). In these studies, the self-efficacy assessments they used have been beneficial in predicting success with academic achievement, skillful performance, problem solving, mathematics, and writing performances. I would recommend that the ESD re-institute a screening mechanism such as the one used in these studies. This mechanism would not be used solely for being admitted into LFI but it could be used to help identify students who could potentially succeed in LFI, and it would be an effective tool in helping students and parents make an informed decision as to whether LFI is a program in which the child should be enrolled.

Finally, when I heard Katie talk about how she felt that the information session which she attended was a little one-sided in the sense that she did not hear from students who were struggling in LFI and/or they did not truly want to be there in the first place, it made me realize

the importance of ensuring that all the stakeholders in the program, i.e. parents and students, receive a well-rounded and complete presentation of what the program entails, prior to making the decision to enroll their child in LFI. It has been my experience that when making the presentations during these sessions, there is a tendency to accentuate the positive aspects of LFI- of which there are many - but at the same time it is crucial that the whole story be told when it comes to what these students should be looking forward to when they go into the program.

Time after time I heard the participants in my study tell me - explicitly and implicitly - that you "have to want to be in the program" and that you "have to be willing to stick with it in times of difficulty". I would recommend that the ESD adopt a uniform means of giving a well-rounded, complete presentation of what the program entails and what the student can expect should he or she decide to enroll in LFI. This would ensure that all schools offering LFI are delivering a consistent, realistic, and well rounded message to the potential LFI students and their parents.

Summary of recommendations

1. Reinstate a screening mechanism based on perceived self-efficacy.

2. Establish a clear, consistent, well rounded information session for parents and students prior to enrolling in LFI..

3. Improve teacher training and requirements for teaching LFI.. Increase specialization in the areas of second language instruction and inclusion.

4. Supervision of FI teachers be conducted on a more regular basis

5. Explore the area of expectations of students in grades 7 and 8.

6. Schools that offer FI programs should provide resource teaching for students struggling

in FI.

7.   Establish some consistent and clear practices when making the decision to transfer out of FI.

Researcher's reflections

When I first embarked upon this process, one of the first documents I received from my advisor was a sheet entitled "The Thesis Journey" . This piece of paper outlined the standard steps involved in putting together an acceptable thesis. At that time, when I looked at those steps, I felt like a triathlon runner attempting to complete his first triathlon, without a great deal of training. The triathlon course consists of many challenges: extreme heat and sometimes pelting rain, head winds that greatly impede one's progress, roads that wind through many peaks and valleys, surprises at almost every turn, and the knowledge and foresight that at some point the runner is going to "hit the wall". Once you finally break through the ribbon at the finish line you look back at what you have accomplished and overcome and wonder how you ever came through it. It is at that moment when you finally realize that the journey is finally over and you fully reap the fruits of your efforts. I remember vividly feeling each of the first four challenges, the only problem was that I was having a hard time envisioning myself at the finish line, reflecting back on what I had overcome, and relishing with delight the fact that I had finally come to the end of my journey and achieved what at the time seemed unattainable.

As with every journey, when doing a thesis you always start out with a particular plan in mind, usually formulated with other members of your team, in my case in conjunction with my advisor. Then you find that the path you have chosen is not entirely appropriate and will require some minor adjustments along the way. You feel that you are making progress, only to find that

there is another barrier in your way and you have to return to the proverbial drawing board and plan another line of attack. You begin to wonder if your plans are effective. Have all the proper procedures been followed? Is what I am setting out to do going to be of significance? Will I be able to come up with enough valuable information to enable me to put together a meaningful thesis? And if I am able to do that, will I be able to make sense of the data that I have collected. I must admit that there were times during the course of doing this research that I felt like that tri-athlete; there were times when I felt like I was slipping away and could go no further, there were many times when I experienced much insecurity about the work that I was doing, there were times when I thought that the trip would never end, like any tri-athlete I did hit the wall but somehow managed to scale it, and yes there were times when I experienced great frustration and felt like turning backwards and going home. Fortunately for me, through the combination of what I now know about my own perceived self-efficacy and self-regulation, the guidance I received from my advisor and the various professors with whom I worked in this Masters program, along with a heavy dose of stubbornness, I now find myself at the finish line, looking back on what I have accomplished, rejoicing in the work that I have done. To say that I am satisfied would only tell part of the story.

This whole process has been extremely revealing. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to delve into the lives of these six individuals and gather some insight into questions that had been nagging at me as a professional over the last few years. Currently, I am no longer working as a classroom teacher in LFI, a situation about which I have some mixed emotions. On the one hand, I had 16 enjoyable years as a LFI teacher. On the other hand, although I am very much enjoying my new role as a Vice-Principal in my new intermediate

school, I sometimes wish I had the opportunity to return to my old classroom so that I could see what effect conducting my research would have had on me as a classroom teacher. The chances of that happening now or in the near future are slim. However, I still feel that, as an administrator at an intermediate school, I can use what I have learned from doing this study in future dealings with students who are facing the decision of moving out of LFI. I will have a greater understanding of what it is that they are experiencing and why it is they are feeling the way they are. It is this understanding that will serve me well in advising students what they should do next when they find themselves experiencing difficulties in the program. Hearing the stories from these students who transferred out of LFI into the regular English program really helped me to more fully understand what they had experienced in LFI. I believe that this knowledge will prove invaluable in the future in terms of having a good understanding of what the struggling LFI student is feeling, and because of this knowledge, I feel that I can provide good direction for that student.

As I listened to the stories that the participants were telling me, I could not help but reflect back upon my years spent in the LFI classroom. I had high expectations for my students, and for that I do not apologize. At the same time, I can not help but wonder if maybe I was unrealistic in my expectations of my students. How many Patti's, Katie's and Clark's did I really have in my classroom? How often did they feel like giving up when the work with which they were faced seemed too much for them to handle? Was I able to meet all their needs when it came to second language learning, or was I one of those teachers who grouped all the students together and expected the same from them all? As I think about questions such as these, I feel confident that I know the answer to them, yet I know that I can never truly know unless I do

return to teach LFI one day. Suffice it to say that conducting this research has reconfirmed in me the need for the compassionate and understanding side of LFI teachers when it comes to second language learning.

In my experience as a classroom teacher in LFI, I often found that success was a somewhat vague term, and it was difficult to come up with a uniform measure for this success. Was the student successful when he or she could fluently converse with another individual on any given topic, or was that student successful when he or she could only maintain a conversation in a particular context? Is a student deemed to be more successful if the product of his or her efforts is done better orally, or when the work is done in written form? Is the student who willingly answers everything you ask of him or her, and participates enthusiastically in all in-class activities, but clearly struggles to accomplish designated tasks, deriving more benefit from the program than another student in the class who may be stronger academically, yet more reserved, and participates in these same activities only when called upon to do so? What do we know about curricular interest and students' engagement in LFI? Is it too simplistic to think that success is only relative to the level of engagement on the part of the student while in LFI? What can we deem to be realistic expectations for students who have only been studying the language for three years? Are we setting the bar too high for these students, or is it not high enough? I often found myself asking questions such as these while I was a LFI teacher. Now that I am an administrator and no longer teaching in the program, I still have these same questions, yet I still cannot answer them with any degree of certainty.

In conclusion, Patton (2002) says that the researcher should do his or her very best with full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose

of the study (p. 433). I realize that some of the information that I have presented here may seem to have a negative overtone. However, it is important to stay true to the data which have been gathered to accurately reflect the views of the participants. If I had portrayed a positive experience of these participants, it would not have been an accurate reflection. The experiences of these participants were, largely, negative and I am confident that I did an effective job in capturing what it was they were telling me. The reader must keep in mind that, overall, LFI has been a success story here on P.E.I., and for all the Bobby's, Michelle's, Katie's, Patti's, Clark's and Kyle's of the world, there is a far greater number of students who could paint a far different picture. We must remember to look at the big picture and keep it in mind. In spite of this success, there is always room for improvement; it is my sincere hope that the results of my study contribute to the evolution of an extremely successful program. Only time will tell.

ENDNOTES

1.   Grade 7 is the entry point for LFI in P.E.I. Typically, 70% of all instruction is done in French for Grades 7-9: French (23%), Math (19%), although in most schools Math is done in English in Grade 9, Science (14%) and Social Studies (14%). If another subject is taught in French, it is supplementary time above these allotments.

2.   The "open door policy" means that students wishing to enroll in LFI no longer have to undergo a screening procedure prior to admission into the program.

3.   P.E.I. schools had, up until May 1994, been divided into 5 Units. Starting in September, 1994, the schools on the Island were re-organized and reduced to three districts: Eastern, Western, and the French School Districts. The Eastern and Western school districts were further sub-divided into "families of schools" based on geographical location.

4.   Based on the existing data at the time, these findings need to be interpreted with caution. The figures presented here represent the *net* change in enrollment in LFI, that is, all students who left the LFI program and those who arrived. Where the student came from, or why a student left, is not clear.

5.   In this case, The Hawthorne Effect means that, initially, the student will show a noticeable increase in his/her academic performance and/or behavior. This improvement is largely attributable to the novelty of being in a new learning environment. According to the theory of the Hawthorne Effect, over a period of time during which the novelty wears off, the child will revert to previous behaviors and academic performance.

6.   Bandura (1995) defines "perceived self-efficacy" as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves , and act (p. 2).

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Appendix A

Background Student Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of my study on attrition in Late French Immersion. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather some background information about the participants' language background, their family background, their views on learning French, and their elementary school experience in Core French. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL BE SEEN BY NO ONE EXCEPT THE RESEARCHER. The results will be reported in such a manner that no individual can be identified.

Name: _____ Age:_____

Male: _____ Female: _____

A. Your Family and home background:

Mother tongue: _____

Language(s) spoken at home: _____

Occupation of parents: Mother - _____

                             Father - _____

Education of parents: Mother -   ____ university   ___ college   ____ high school

                             Father -   ____ university   ___ college   ____ high school

Participant resides with: Mother _____   Father _____ Guardian _____

                             Both parents _____   Other family member _____

Members of your household who understand French?

Mother   ___ yes   ___ no   Father   ___ yes   ___ no

Brother(s)   ___ yes   ___ no   Sister(s)___ yes   ___ no

Have you had any brothers or sisters who were in immersion, either Early or Late? If yes, how many, and in which program were they enrolled?

	Early Immersion	*Late Immersion*
brother(s)	_____	_____
sister(s)	_____	_____
parent(s)	_____	_____

B. Elementary Core French experience:

Elementary school(s) attended: _____

Were you enrolled in an immersion program in elementary school?_____

If yes, in what grade did you stop your immersion program? _____

In what grade did you begin Core French? _____

Who was (were) your Core French teacher(s) in elementary school? _____

_____

How would you describe your experience in Core French in elementary school? _____

_____

_____

_____

Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements.

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	can't say
I've learned as much French as I need.					
Knowing French would give me an edge in my career.					
I want to continue studying French in high school					
My parents encourage me to keep studying French.					
French is one of my favorite subjects.					
I'd like to experience living in a French environment one day.					
Young people should learn a second language.					

Appendix B

Interview questions

Possible probes I could expect to ask during the interview are listed in italics below.

1. Why did you originally decide to enroll in LFI?

 What were your expectations of the LFI program?

2. Whose decision was it for you to enroll in the program?

3. Describe for me your experience while you were in the LFI program.

 How did the realities of the LFI program differ from your expectations of what you thought it would be like?

 What effort or strategies did you try in order to be successful in the program?

4. Why did you eventually decide to transfer out of LFI into the English program?

5. Whose decision was it to make the transfer?

 With whom did you discuss the decision to transfer, i.e. teachers, Prinicpal, Vice-Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Parents, friends?

 What were teachers recommending that you do?

 How long did it take to make the decision to transfer?

 Was there any testing involved prior to your transfer?

 Did you receive any tutoring prior to your transfer?

6. Tell me what it was like when you transferred into the regular English program.

 What adjustments did you have to make when you made the transfer?

 What supports did you receive to help make your transition into the English program easier? Was any support offered?

7. Tell me how you now feel about the decision to transfer out of LFI.

 What changes have you noticed, either socially or emotionally, since the transfer was made?

 How are you doing academically, in French and in other subjects, now that you are no longer in the LFI program?

8. How do your parents now feel about the decision to move you out of LFI?

9. Looking back on your experience, what do you think could have been done differently which possibly could have kept you in LFI?

10. What changes would you suggest making in order to improve the LFI program, and potentially keep students from transferring out of the program?

Following the completion of the second interview, I asked each of the participants the following two questions:

1. Would you recommend LFI to other people?
2. What does it take to be successful in LFI?

Appendix C

Letter of information and informed consent for the Eastern School District

I am asking for your consent for 6 students from _____ Intermediate School to participate in a research study that I would like to conduct at _____ School entitled **Attrition in Late French Immersion: Discussions With Six Students.** This study is a requirement for my Masters of Education in Leadership and Learning at the University of Prince Edward Island. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of students who are presently in Grades 7-9 at _____ Intermediate and who have transferred from the Late French Immersion (LFI) program into the regular English program. The students would be involved in two 30-45 minute interviews with me that focus on this subject. The interviews would take place in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ School, during regular school hours, sometime during the month of May or early June. These interviews would be semi-structured, in that I would have a pre-set number of questions for each participant. There will also be the opportunity for the students to elaborate on any subject that may come up during the interview. As well, if there is an area which I feel should be explored in further detail, I will take the opportunity to do so. The questions will focus on such things as why the student originally decided to enroll in LFI, why he/she decided to transfer out of LFI, any changes the child or their parents have noted since the transfer was made, and how they and their parents now feel about the decision to transfer out of LFI. The interviews will be audio-taped and will later be transcribed verbatim. Once the transcription of the interviews are done, I will return the transcript to the participant and he/she will be afforded the opportunity to verify what was said and offer any changes or clarifications.

My reason for exploring this phenomenon is so that I can get a snapshot, and gain a good understanding, of the underlying trends in attrition (drop-out rate) in LFI and the factors that are involved in making the decision to transfer out of LFI. At the same time, I hope that the results of this study will be used in developing future plans for LFI in the Eastern School District and that my findings can be used to benefit students in LFI and help reduce attrition in the program in the future.

The students' participation in this study is entirely voluntary and he/she is free to refuse to participate, to withdraw from it at any time, or to refuse to answer certain questions, without any negative consequences. In the event that a student decides to participate, but then decides he/she wants to withdraw at a later time, the interview will terminate immediately. I will ask the student for permission to use any information gathered up until that point of the study in the report of my findings. If the student refuses to allow me to

use the information, I will destroy it immediately. It will be noted that the student did not participate further in the study.

The students' confidentiality will be protected in this study. In order to achieve this confidentiality, wherever their name would be used in the study, I will use a pseudonym instead of his/her real name. I will be the only person who will be able to match the real name with the pseudonym. Once the interviews are completed, I will identify the audio-tape the participant's pseudonym and it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. The only person who will have access to the information in the cabinet will be me. While I cannot *guarantee* anonymity, I do believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality and I will be required to report what was shared with me.

At the conclusion of the study, all of the raw data collected in this study will be kept in a locked cabinet for three years, unless the student or their parents specifically request that I destroy the data following the completion of the study. Following this time, the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. The results of the study will be prepared for presentation at a special meeting during which I will defend the findings of my research. The study will be published in its entirety at a later time and will be available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at U.P.E.I. If so desired, I will provide you with an executive summary of this study. If you wish to contact me regarding any matter in this study, you may do so at 892-5624, or by e-mail at

nobeck@upei.ca. , or you may contact my faculty advisor, Miles Turnbull, at 566-0341, or by e-mail at mturnbull@upei.ca. You may also contact the U.P.E.I. Research Ethics Board at 566-0637, or by e-mail at lmcphee@upei.ca if you have any questions about the ethical conduct of the study.

Signature of Chief Investigator: _____

EASTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSENT FORM

I _____ have read the information outlined in the Information Letter. I fully understand the contents of the letter and I have no further questions at this time.

In this study the students will be required to do the following:

❋ Participate in two 30-45 minute interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped and conducted in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ Intermediate School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or early June.

❋ Review the verbatim transcripts of the interviews so that he/she can check what was said and make any changes or clear up any mistakes that were made.

❋ Complete a background student questionnaire prior to the interview being held.

Some other important considerations:

❋ The child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

 The child can withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions, without any negative consequences.

❋ If the child withdraws from the study, Norman will ask for permission to use any information gathered up until that time in the report of his findings. If the child does not allow him to include this information, he will destroy it immediately.

 The child's real name will not be used in the report of his study, instead he/she will be given a pseudonym.

❋ Transcripts and audio-tapes will be identified using the child's pseudonym and this information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Norman's house. He will be the only person with access to this information.

❋ Norman will keep this information for three years, unless the child or his parents ask that it be destroyed immediately.

❋ Norman will present the findings of his study at a later time and the study will be published and available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at UPEI. Norman will provide you with a summary of the findings of his study.

Thank you for considering my request to have these students participate in my research study. I've included an extra consent form that is yours to keep. Please complete the other copy and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I can not assure confidentiality for your child and I will be obliged to report what was shared with me. While I cannot *guarantee* anonymity, I do believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

If you wish to contact me regarding any matter in this study, you may do so at ' or by e-mail at '   '   '   , or you may contact my faculty advisor, Miles Turnbull, , or by e-mail at ⸺⸺⸺⸺   ' ᴸ You may also contact the U.P.E.I. Research Ethics Board at ⸺ ⸺ , ꞓ by e-mail at l̲r̲⸺⸺⸺.c̲a̲ if you have any questions about the ethical conduct of the study.

Please check one:

_____ I do give permission for the selected students to participate in the study outlined in the information letter.

_____ I do not give permission for the students to participate in the study described in the information letter.

Signature of Judy Hughes: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Letter of information and informed consent for the school principal

I am asking for your consent for 6 of your students to participate in a research study that I would like to conduct at your school, as a requirement for my Masters of Education in Leadership and Learning at the University of Prince Edward Island. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of students who are presently in Grades 7-9 at _____ Intermediate and who have transferred from the Late French Immersion (LFI) program into the regular English program. I hope to obtain a cross-section of students who transferred out of Late French Immersion during Grade 7 and Grade 8.

Your students will be involved in two 30-45 minute interviews with me which will focus on this subject. I would like to conduct the interviews in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or in early June. Prior to this, they will be asked to complete a short background student questionnaire. These interviews will be semi-structured, in that I will have a pre-set number of questions that I will be asking your students. There will also be the opportunity for your students to elaborate on any subject that may come up during the interview. As well, if there is an area which I feel should be explored in further detail, I will take the opportunity to do so. The questions will focus on such things as why the students originally decided to enroll in LFI, why they decided to transfer out of LFI, any changes they or their parents have noted since the transfer was made, and how the child and the parent(s) now feel about the decision to transfer out of LFI. Your students' interviews will be audio-taped and will later be transcribed verbatim. Once the transcription of the interviews are done, I will return the transcript to your students and they will be afforded the opportunity to verify what was said and offer any changes or clarifications. Once this is completed, I will then proceed with the analysis of my information. I will also be using a second person to assist me in the analysis of the information.

My reason for exploring this phenomenon is so that I can get a snapshot, and gain a good understanding, of the underlying trends in attrition (drop-out rate) in LFI and the factors that are involved in making the decision to transfer out of LFI. At the same time, I hope that the results of this study will be used in developing future plans for LFI in the Eastern School District and that my findings can be used to benefit students in LFI and help reduce attrition in the program in the future.

Your students' participation in this study is entirely voluntary and they are free to refuse to participate, to withdraw from it at any time, or to refuse to answer certain questions, without any negative consequences. In the event that any of your students decides to participate, but then decides to withdraw at a later time, the interview will terminate immediately. I will ask the student that any information that has been gathered up until that time be used for the final report. If any of your students do not permit me to use the information in my report, it will not be included and the information will be destroyed immediately. It will be noted that the student did not participate further in the study.

Your students' confidentiality will be protected in this study. In order to achieve this confidentiality, I will use a pseudonym to refer to the students in the thesis and reports. The only person who will be able to match the real name with the pseudonym will be me. Once the interviews are completed, I will identify the audio-tape by your student's pseudonym and it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. The only person who will have access to this material will be me. In addition to this, your school will not be identified in my report as the site of my study. While I cannot *guarantee* that people will be able to recognize that it is one of your students who is referred to in the study, I believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality and I will be required to report what was shared with me.

At the conclusion of the study, all of the raw data collected in this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home for a period of three years, unless a participant, or the parents of a participant, requests that I destroy any data related to their child, in which case I will do so immediately. Following the three years, the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. The results of the study will be prepared for presentation at a special meeting during which I will defend the findings of my research. The study will be published in its entirety at a later time and will be available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at U.P.E.I. If so desired, I will provide you with an executive summary of my study.

Signature of Chief Investigator: _____

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I_____ have read the information outlined in the Principal Information Letter. I fully understand the contents of the letter and I have no further questions at this time.

In this study your students will be required to do the following:

❋ Participate in two 30-45 minute interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped and conducted in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ Intermediate School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or early June.

❋ Review the verbatim transcripts of their interviews so that they can check what was said and make any changes or clear up any mistakes that were made.

❋ Complete a background student questionnaire prior to the interview being held.

Some other important considerations:

❋ Their participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

❋ They can withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions, without any negative consequences.

❋ If they withdraw from the study, Norman will ask them for permission to use any information gathered up until that time in the report of his findings. If they do not allow him to include this information, he will destroy it immediately.

❋ Their real name will not be used in the report of his study, instead they will be given a pseudonym.

❋ Transcripts and audio-tapes will be identified using their pseudonym and this information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Norman's house. He will be the only person with access to this information.

❋ Norman will keep this information for three years, unless your student or their parents ask that it be destroyed immediately.

❋ Norman will present the findings of his study at a later time and the study will be published and available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at UPEI. Norman will provide your students with a summary of the findings of his study, if they wish.

Thank you for considering my request to have your students participate in my study. The extra copies of this information letter and the consent form are yours to keep. Please complete the other copies and return them to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality and I will be required to report what was shared with me. While I cannot *guarantee* that people will be able to recognize that it is one of your students who is referred to in the study, I believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

If you wish to contact me regarding any ma

questions about the ethical conduct of the study.

Please check the following spaces which apply to you:

_____ I agree to allow my students to participate in this study.

_____ I do not permit my students to participate in this study.

Signature of Principal of _____Intermediate School: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Letter of information and informed consent for student participants

You are being asked to voluntarily participate in a research study entitled **Attrition in Late French Immersion: Discussions With Six Students**, that is being conducted by Norman Beck as part of the requirements for the Masters of Education in Leadership and Learning degree at the University of Prince Edward Island. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of students who are presently in Grades 7-9 at _____ Intermediate and who have transferred from the Late French Immersion (LFI) program into the regular English program. The reason for doing this study is so that Norman can get a snapshot, and gain a good understanding, of attrition (drop-out rate) in LFI and the factors that are involved in making the decision to transfer out of LFI. At the same time, he hopes that the results of this study will be used in developing future plans for LFI in the Eastern School District and that his findings can be used to benefit students in LFI and help reduce attrition in the program in the future.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two 30-45 minute interviews with Norman that will take place in a private room, in a low traffic area, at _____ Intermediate School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or early June. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to complete a short background questionnaire in which Norman will gather some further personal information from you. The interviews will be semi-structured, in that Norman will have a pre-set number of questions that he will be asking you. There will also be the opportunity for you to give more explanation on any subject that may come up during the interview. As well, if there is an area which Norman feels should be explored in further detail, he will take the opportunity to do so. The questions will focus on such things as why you originally decided to enroll in LFI, why you decided to transfer out of LFI, any changes you've noted since the transfer was made, and how you and your parents now feel about the decision to transfer out of LFI. Your interviews will be audio-taped and will later be typed out word for word. Once the typing is done, Norman will return the script of what was said in the interview to you and you will be given the chance to check what was said and make any changes or clear up mistakes that were made. Once the interviews and transcriptions are complete, the data will be analyzed by Norman. He will also be using a second person to work with him on the analysis of this information.

Your participation in this study is entirely up to you. You are free to refuse to participate, to withdraw from it at any time, or to refuse to answer certain questions, without any negative consequences. If you decide to participate, but then decide to stop at a later time, the interview will stop immediately. Norman will ask that any information that has been gathered up until that time be used for the final report. If you do not permit Norman to use the information in his report, it will not be included and the information will be destroyed immediately. It will be noted that you did not participate further in the study.

Your real name will be protected in this study and will not be used. In order to do this, in the study Norman will use a fake name instead of your real name. The only person who will be able to match the real name with the fake name will be Norman. While he cannot *guarantee* that people will be able to recognize that it is you who is referred to in the study, Norman believes that he has increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact

that a fake name is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class. Once the interviews are completed, Norman will identify the audio-tape by your fake name and it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in his home. The only person who will have access to this information in the cabinet is Norman.

Norman does not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, he cannot assure confidentiality and he will be required to report what was shared with him.

At the conclusion of the study, all of the information collected in this study will be kept in the cabinet in Norman's home for three years, unless you or your parents ask that it be destroyed immediately, which he will agree to do. After three years, the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. The results of the study will be prepared for presentation at a special meeting during which Norman will present and discuss the findings of his research. The study will be published at a later time and will be available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at U.P.E.I. If you like, Norman will provide you with a brief summary of the findings of his study.

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_____ ____ ıtuuy ıs about.

Signature of Researcher: _____

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I_____ have read the information outlined in the Student Information Letter. I fully understand the contents of the letter and I have no further questions at this time.

In this study you will be required to do the following:

❀ Participate in two 30-45 minute interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped and conducted in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ Intermediate School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or early June.

❀ Review the typed scripts of your interviews so that you can check what was said and make any changes or clear up any mistakes that were made.

❀ Complete a background student questionnaire prior to the interview being held.

Some other important considerations:

❀ Your participation in this study is entirely up to you.

❀ You can withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions, without any negative consequences.

❀ If you withdraw from the study, Norman will ask you for permission to use any information gathered up until that time in the report of his findings. If you do not allow him to include this information, he will destroy it immediately.

❀ Your real name will not be used in the report of his study, instead you will be given a fake name.

❀ Typed scripts and audio-tapes will be identified using your fake name and this information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Norman's house. He will be the only person with access to this information.

❀ Norman will keep this information for three years, unless you or your parents ask that it be destroyed immediately.

❀ Norman will present the findings of his study at a later time and the study will be published and available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at UPEI. Norman will provide you with a summary of the findings of his study, if you wish.

Thank you for considering my request to participate in my study. The extra copies of this information letter and the consent form are yours to keep. Please complete the other copies and return them to your home-room teacher in the self-addressed envelope provided. I will collect them from your home-room teacher at a later time.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality and I will be required to report what was shared with me. While I cannot *guarantee* that people will be able to recognize that it is you who is referred to in the study, I believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a fake name is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

Please check the following spaces which apply to you:

_____ I agree to participate in this study.

_____ I will not participate in this study.

_____ I do permit the researcher to keep audio-tapes and transcripts of my interviews in a secure place for up to three years. If the information is to be used in the future, I will be contacted at _____ (phone number) to ask for permission once again and to receive further details concerning their use.

_____ I do not permit the researcher to keep audio-tapes and transcripts of my interviews for future use. Please erase the tapes and destroy the transcripts at the end of the study.

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Letter of information and informed consent for the participants' parents

I am asking for your consent for your child to participate in a research study that I am conducting at _____ Intermediate School entitled **Attrition in Late French Immersion: Discussions With Six Students.** This study is being conducted as a requirement for my Masters of Education in Leadership and Learning at the University of Prince Edward Island.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of students who are presently in Grades 7-9 at _____ Intermediate and who have transferred from the Late French Immersion (LFI) program into the regular English program. Your child will be involved in two 30-45 minute interviews with me that will focus on this subject. The interviews will take place in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ School, during regular school hours, sometime during the month of May or early June. These interviews will be semi-structured, in that I will have a pre-set number of questions that I will be asking your child. There will also be the opportunity for your child to elaborate on any subject that may come up during the interview. As well, if there is an area which I feel should be explored in further detail, I will take the opportunity to do so. The questions will focus on such things as why your child originally decided to enroll in LFI, why he/she decided to transfer out of LFI, any changes you or the child have noted since the transfer was made, and how you and your child now feel about the decision to transfer out of LFI. Your child's interviews will be audio-taped and will later be transcribed verbatim. Once the transcription of the interviews are done, I will return the transcript to your child and he/she will be afforded the opportunity to verify what was said and offer any changes or clarifications.

My reason for exploring this phenomenon is so that I can get a snapshot, and gain a good understanding, of the underlying trends in attrition (drop-out rate) in LFI and the factors that are involved in making the decision to transfer out of LFI. At the same time, I hope that the results of this study will be used in developing future plans for LFI in the Eastern School District and that my findings can be used to benefit students in LFI and help reduce attrition in the program in the future.

Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary and he/she is free to refuse to participate, to withdraw from it at any time, or to refuse to answer certain questions, without any negative consequences. In the event that your child decides to participate, but then decides he/she wants to withdraw at a later time, the interview will terminate immediately. I will ask your child's permission to use any information gathered up until that point of the study in the report of my findings. If he/she refuses to allow me to use the information, I will destroy it immediately. It will be noted that your child did not participate further in the study.

Your child's confidentiality will be protected in this study. In order to achieve this confidentiality, wherever your child's name would be used in the study, I will use a

pseudonym instead of his/her real name. I will be the only person who will be able to match the real name with the pseudonym. Once the interviews are completed, I will identify the audio-tape by your child's pseudonym and it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home. The only person who will have access to the information in the cabinet will be me. While I cannot *guarantee* anonymity, I do believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality and I will be required to report what was shared with me.

At the conclusion of the study, all of the raw data collected in this study will be kept in a locked cabinet for three years, unless you specifically request that I destroy the data following the completion of the study. Following this time, the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. The results of the study will be prepared for presentation at a special meeting during which I will defend the findings of my research. The study will be published in its entirety at a later time and will be available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at U.P.E.I. If so desired, I will provide you with an executive summary of this study.

Signature of Chief Investigator: _____

PARENT CONSENT FORM

I_____ have read the information outlined in the Parent Information Letter. I fully understand the contents of the letter and I have no further questions at this time.

In this study your child will be required to do the following:

❋ Participate in two 30-45 minute interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped and conducted in a private room in a low traffic area at _____ Intermediate School, during regular school hours, sometime in the month of May or early June.

❋ Review the verbatim transcripts of your child's interviews so that he/she can check what was said and make any changes or clear up any mistakes that were made.

❋ Complete a background student questionnaire prior to the interview being held.

Some other important considerations:

❋ Your child's participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

❋ Your child can withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions, without any negative consequences.

❋ If your child withdraws from the study, Norman will ask for permission to use any information gathered up until that time in the report of his findings. If you do not allow him to include this information, he will destroy it immediately.

❋ Your child's real name will not be used in the report of his study, instead your child will be given a pseudonym.

❋ Transcripts and audio-tapes will be identified using your child's pseudonym and this information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Norman's house. He will be the only person with access to this information.

❋ Norman will keep this information for three years, unless you or your child ask that it be destroyed immediately.

❋ Norman will present the findings of his study at a later time and the study will be published and available in the Resource Centre at the Faculty of Education at UPEI. Norman will provide you with a summary of the findings of his study, if you wish.

Thank you for considering my request to have your child participate in my research study. I've included an extra consent form that is yours to keep. Please complete the other copy and return it in the self-addressed envelope to your child's home-room teacher.

I do not foresee any conditions in which confidentiality or anonymity would be breached, or a situation in which disclosure would be an issue. However, in the rare case where it is required by law to report and make a disclosure, such as in the case of child abuse or suspected communicable diseases, I cannot assure confidentiality for your child and I will be obliged to report what was shared with me. While I cannot *guarantee* anonymity, I do believe that I have increased the possibility of it happening, given the fact that a pseudonym is being used, and that the interviews are being conducted in a low traffic area during regular school hours while the other students are in class.

Please check one:

_____ I do give permission for my child to participate in the study outlined in the information letter.

_____ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the study described in the information letter.

If you do give permission for your child to participate, please check one:

_____ I do permit the researcher to keep my child's audio-tapes in a secure place for up to three years. If the tapes are to be used in the future, I will be contacted at _____ (phone number) to ask for permission once again and to receive further details concerning the use of the audio-tapes.

_____ I do not permit the researcher to keep my child's audio-tapes for future use. Please erase the tapes at the end of the study.

Child's name (please print)   _____

Parent/guardian (please print)   _____

Signature of parent/guardian   _____

Date: _____