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Abstract

The Federal Government’s ideal of strengthening national unity through official bilingualism has been reawakened by its recently announced goal of doubling the proportion of bilingual graduates by 2013. The underlying objectives of French second language education have not changed since the Official Languages Act of 1969, but the routes to achieve them have undergone a significant evolution. The two major pan-Canadian approaches to teaching and learning French (core French and French immersion) have now been joined by another intensive French approach. This case study documents the implementation of an intensive French program in Surrey, British Columbia over nearly three years.

I contextualized the implementation within the history of official language policy and second language education in Canada and British Columbia and examined sociopolitical forces working for and against establishment of the new program. I drew on the existing literature on language policy and implementation with a focus on the influence on language education in Canada and in British Columbia. I also considered the relationship between language, identity and education and how globalization and language commodification influence policy and individual choices. Using a responsive evaluation approach, I developed my understanding and helped stakeholders co-construct their understandings of the program and then applied theories of social hierarchy to interpret the interactions of various stakeholder groups. Finally, I considered the role of professional and organizational learning in this implementation.

The findings of this study suggest that French as a second language is viewed less as a symbol of national unity and more as an economic commodity. Students and parents invested in the program in order to gain linguistic proficiency, extra challenge and future advantages. These interests were countered by the concerns expressed by non-program teachers and school and district leaders concerning issues of equality and stability in the workplace. Assumptions about the linear implementation of program innovation were
disrupted by the experiences of the teachers. They needed time and space to experiment, reflect and share as they problematized and integrated the new teaching approach. The conclusions examine the implications of these results for teaching, learning and future research in French second language education.

Keywords: intensive French; FSL education; Year 2013; teacher learning community; British Columbia.
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Chapter 1.

Introduction

The ideology of the Canadian Federal Government with respect to Canada’s two official languages has changed little since former Prime Minister Trudeau introduced the Official Languages Bill in 1968:

We believe in two official languages and in a pluralist society not merely as a political necessity but as an enrichment …. All Canadians should capitalize on the advantages of living in a country which has learned to speak in two great world languages. (Trudeau, 1968, ¶11)

This ideal still guides the efforts of policy makers and second language educators today. I examine forces that have worked for and against the realization of this bilingualism ideal at both the national and provincial levels as well as in the context of a French second language program implementation in Surrey, British Columbia.

In 2003, the Federal Government unveiled a comprehensive Action Plan to significantly increase the number of bilingual Canadians by 2013: “We need to double the proportion of young Canadians who know both official languages from 24 percent to 50 percent within ten years. One out of every two young Canadians will speak both English and French within a decade” (Dion, 2003). A challenge was issued by the Director General of the Official Languages Branch to find ways to “do things differently” in second language education in response to the markedly low success rates of core French programs in the country (Canadian Heritage, 2004). For decades, the two most commonly implemented options for second language learning have been core French, in which students take two or more 20 to 45 minute lessons per week, and French immersion, in which students take all or part of their school subjects in French. Although approximately 85 percent of Canadian children learning French participate in core French (Canadian Parents for French [CPF], 2004), insufficient contact time, lack of intensity
and limited teacher expertise, among other factors, have contributed to less than satisfactory results. In a survey of Canadian university students, almost half of those who passed Grade 12 French felt that they could not understand spoken French, and most reported they could not carry on a conversation longer than a few set phrases (CPF, 2005). As well, core French programs have very high attrition rates; only 16.5 percent of students who begin core French in Grade 4 or 5 continue in the program to Grade 12 (MacFarlane, 2005). Most drop French once it is no longer mandatory (CPF, 2005). In British Columbia, the graduation rate is even lower than the national average: only one in ten students who take core French continues to French 12 (CPF 2004). At the same time, while French immersion has been shown to be an effective way of achieving linguistic proficiency, it involves only 15 percent of Canadian children, of which approximately 30 percent complete Grade 12 (CPF, 2004), so will have a limited impact on the goal of doubling bilingual graduates across the country. The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) calls for innovations to increase the success of French second language programs:

Student retention and success in French as a second language will only improve with the development of alternative and innovative teaching practices and programs. Newfoundland has taken the initiative in piloting programs such as intensive and extended French. These programs increase the proficiency expectations that exist in most courses. (CASLT Press release, 2004)

A new program, called intensive French, was pioneered in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1997 and, as of 2006-07, is now in practice in eight provinces and two territories, including British Columbia. Intensive French was conceived as a way to revitalize core French, improve its proficiency outcomes and address attrition (MacFarlane, 2005), and the program has been recognized as a possible strategy for meeting the goals in the Federal Government’s Action Plan (Canadian Heritage, 2004; CPF, 2005). Intensive French is a one-year initiation into learning French during which students in Grade 5 or 6 spend the first half of their year immersed in French language activities and the second half of the year following a compacted English curriculum. Students then continue to receive an enriched French learning program of 4 to 5 hours per
week until the end of elementary school, after which a variety of second language course options are possible. In the Surrey School District of British Columbia where this case study takes place, the students presently enrolled in intensive French will graduate in 2013 and likely be bilingual, as envisioned in the Federal Government’s Action Plan.

In nearly 40 years since the Official Languages Act, there has been considerable attention paid to second language education in the form of programming, research and funding. Almost all provinces have a mandatory second language policy requiring students to take a second language (in most cases, French) for at least four years and offer a variety of French second language program options. Yet, only 24 percent of high school graduates are bilingual (Dion, 2003). What factors have supported or impeded the realization of the Federal bilingualism ideal to date and what factors influence new efforts to realize the ideal? These are examined in the context of a district program implementation of a new approach to learning French as a second language.

Research Questions

Studies of intensive French conducted thus far have focused on student achievement (Germain, Netten, & Movassat, 2004; Germain, Netten, & Séguin, 2004), curriculum development (Germain, Lightbown, Netten, & Spada, 2004; Kristmanson, Cogswell, & Campbell, 2003; Netten & Germain, 2004b), teaching strategies (Netten & Germain, 2005; Germain & Netten, 2006), and learning strategies (Kristmanson, 2006). Very little research has examined the administration and implementation of this program in terms of how it fits within the Federal Government’s bilingualism agenda or a particular province’s sociopolitical context. Research is also needed to answer key questions about the application of this program’s theoretical and pedagogical principles in the field if this approach is to be sustained long-term. As MacFarlane (2005) states, “more broadly-based research, both short-term and long-term, conducted by research teams from diverse contexts and perspectives is needed to thoroughly evaluate the program across the country, give increased credibility to the results, and facilitate a better understanding of the complexities of intensive French” (p. 1).
This study expands the scope of prior research on intensive French by considering both the local institutional processes and larger sociopolitical contexts in which the program is situated. I draw on the existing literature on language policy and implementation with a focus on its influence on language education both in Canada and in British Columbia. I also consider the relationship between language, identity and education and how globalization and language commodification influence policy and individual choices. Using a responsive evaluation approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), I develop and construct my understanding as well as stakeholders’ understandings of the program and then apply theories of social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1986) to interpret the interactions of various stakeholder groups. Finally, I consider the role of professional and organizational learning in this implementation.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Is the Federal ideal of bilingualism related to program innovation in one school district in British Columbia?
2. How is an innovative French second language approach experienced and influenced by those implementing it?
3. What institutional structures and educational practices support or impede teacher and district learning during implementation?

Study Overview

In order to examine the social and organizational conditions that framed the implementation of intensive French (IF) in Surrey, British Columbia, I compiled a chronology of events, documents and commentary related to the program implementation from April 2004 to January 2007. I was able to conduct research as part of my duties as a District Helping Teacher (seconded on a 20 percent contract) and, in part, as a doctoral student researcher. The division of duties is explained in Chapter 3.) I conducted interviews with teachers and school and district leaders to record their experiences. Meetings with IF teachers were held on a bi-monthly basis to discuss how they came to understand the program, and I met with groups of non-IF teachers to record their thoughts about the program. I held focus group meetings with parents and students in order to
discover their goals and questions related to the program and to learning French. As well, I interviewed two district leaders, a language education researcher, a parent lobby group leader, and a Ministry of Education official to explore the relationship between national policy and local program initiatives. Finally, I interviewed an IF teacher, an IF program researcher and two provincial leaders involved in implementing intensive French in two other provinces.

I was guided by the premise that policies, programs and people are shaped by history and evolving understandings that are, in turn, altered by knowledge, practice, reflection and dialogue. I was influenced by Stern (1982) who recognized that reform is an evolutionary process and that different approaches are points on a continuum moving towards or away from improved second language teaching and learning. I was also guided by the view that implementation of curriculum and pedagogy is mediated and informed by those involved and that one reconstructs one’s practice as a result. Learning in this study was seen as a process that took place in a participatory framework in which dialogue played a key role. Learning occurred both on individual and organizational levels as each stakeholder group involved in the IF implementation developed understanding about the program and the process. The methodology of the study embodied a dialogic hermeneutic approach to constructing and co-constructing knowledge that fit the path taken in this study.

**French Second Language Programs in Canada**

Intensive French is the most recent large-scale French second language (FSL) program innovation in Canada and, like others before it, is predicated on the goal of producing bilingual graduates who have an appreciation for French language, culture and people. In order to situate this new approach, I offer a brief critical review of second language programs presently offered in Canada followed by an historical overview of Canadian second language education.
The four FSL programs implemented most frequently in Canada are core, immersion, extended and intensive French. As of 2005, there were 1,643,519 students enrolled in core French programs, 293,698 in French immersion, and 35,796 in extended French (CPF, 2005) and, as of 2006, there were 10,200 in intensive French (Germain, 2006).

There is mixed use of upper and lower case to denote the different programs in the literature. Following the style conventions of The Canadian Modern Language Review and Canadian Parents for French (2003, p. 62), I use lower case for “core”, “immersion”, “extended” and “intensive” in this study.

Although distinctions between core and immersion programs are generally understood, the addition of intensive French as a new option may lead to some confusion about the different second language programs available in the country given that there are several labels for Canada’s French programs, for example, extended, enriched, advanced, basic, and so on. All of these programs are classified as FSL programs, designed for students who do not speak French as their first language. The four main program options are described in the following sections.

**Core French**

Core French is defined as “a second language education program in which French is taught as a subject in short, daily class periods of 20 to 50 minutes in length” (LeBlanc, 1990, p. 2). In British Columbia, core French is defined by the Ministry of Education (1997b) as “a second-language program for Grades 5 to 12, designed to enable students to begin to understand and communicate in French, as well as to experience francophone cultures” (p. 2). Turnbull (2000) reports that, on average, Canadian students receive an approximate total of 600 hours of instructional time in core French by the end of their elementary school program (Grade 8). In British Columbia, however, students receive less than half this amount of instructional time: an average of two 40-minute lessons per week in Grades 5 to 7 and an average of 2.5 lessons of 75 minutes per week in Grade 8,
representing a total average of 260 hours by the end of the mandated period (Grade 5 to 8) for second language instruction (Carr, 2006).

**French Immersion**

French Immersion is “an optional program in which the students study the same curriculum as in the English stream program but in which the language of instruction is French” (CPF, 2006b). In British Columbia, French immersion is defined by the Ministry of Education (1997b) as follows:

A more ambitious second-language program than core French, French immersion is designed to produce functionally bilingual students by using French as the language of instruction. Upon graduation, students will have acquired sufficient language skills to be able to pursue post-secondary studies or work in either official language. (p. 2)

Students may start an immersion program in British Columbia in Kindergarten (Early immersion) or Grade 6 (Late immersion). They undertake all subjects, for example, Math, Science, Social Studies, and so on, starting with 100 percent instruction in French and gradually reducing to about 12 percent in Grade 12, after which students receive a bilingual graduation certificate. It is interesting to note that end-point language proficiency expectations are articulated in this definition but not in the core French definition. Such a disparity indicates not only the reality of program outcomes at present but also a long standing “double standard, at least implicitly, in expectations of the students in the two programs” (Leblanc, 1990, p. 1). Clearly, though, students in French immersion are considered able to function in Canada’s two official languages upon graduation.

**Extended French**

Extended French is an FSL program option that enrols almost two percent of all FSL students in Canada (in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador) (CPF, 2005). The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers’ website defines extended French as “a core French program designed to provide
additional exposure to French as French is the language of instruction for one content subject such as Social Studies in addition to core French” (For Teachers, FSL, Extended Core French, ¶2). Extended French is offered mainly in Ontario in programs with a minimum of 1260 hours of instruction by the end of Grade 8 (CPF Ontario website, FSL Education, What is Extended French? ¶1). This program is more like immersion than either core or intensive French because subject matter is delivered in French. Its stated objective is to enable students to “be able to function in a French-speaking community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 3). It holds a great deal of potential as a possible follow-up program for intensive French, that is, during the grades after the intensive year. Extended French also holds promise as a way of contributing to meeting the Year 2013 Action Plan goal (CPF, 2004). This program option is not offered in British Columbia.

**Intensive French**

Intensive French (IF) is defined by Netten and Germain (2004d) as “an enrichment of the core French program consisting of offering from three to four times the number of hours regularly scheduled for FSL in a concentrated period of time (five months) at the end of the elementary school cycle (in Grade 5 or Grade 6). In the other five-month period, students return to their regular curriculum, including core French” (p. 283). In Surrey, British Columbia, students started the program in Grade 5 and received 4.7 times the number of hours regularly scheduled for core French instruction. As the program evolved–changing the entry level to Grade 6 as of September 2006–students then received approximately four times the number of hours of instruction as their non-IF peers. In Surrey, the French program that follows the intensive period is not the regular core French program but, rather, a differentiated French program based on IF teaching methodology. The following definition is provided in Surrey’s Parent Information handbook:

Intensive French is an intensive French language acquisition program involving a period of intensive exposure to French (80 percent of one half of the Grade 6 year and 20 percent for the remaining half). The program
continues with strong French instruction in the following years. (Surrey School District, 2006c, p. 2)

It is important to consider the totality of French program options in Canada and to be realistic about what can be expected based on the various resources of time and personnel allotted to each as well as the pedagogical approach each embodies. It is also helpful to situate intensive French in the recent history of FSL education. I will trace the evolution of FSL approaches and identify key findings from the rich base of research on which intensive French has grown.

Second Language Education in Canada

As indicated earlier in this chapter, the Official Languages Act of 1969 was pivotal in shaping the country’s language policy. Some years before, French immersion, an innovative program initiated by parent action and accompanied by immediate and ongoing research, changed the way second language education was approached in Canada and helped to embody the powerful image of linguistic duality in this country. French immersion became, according to Stern (1983), “a symbol of hope that French can be learnt by ordinary English speakers and that it is at least one of the ways in which the two solitudes can begin to be bridged” (p. 509). I will outline some significant movements in the recent history of Canadian second language education, drawing specific examples from British Columbia, and then review the literature describing the emergence of intensive French as an FSL program option.

An early link between Federal language policy and education practice was forged with the appointment of Keith Spicer, Canada’s first Commissioner of Official Languages in 1970. Journalist Paul Gessell (2004) described Spicer’s role: “Pierre Trudeau may be the father of the Official Languages Act and the notion of Canada as a bilingual country. But it was Mr. Spicer who managed to sell the idea to Canadians and change the country forever.” Spicer supported French immersion, a program that he believed would allow 20 percent of Canada’s children to become bilingual. He also supported daily core French programs so that “the other 80 percent of children graduating
from high school [would have] a useful knowledge of the other language—the ability to read a newspaper, to carry on a simple conversation, to get around as a tourist” (in Vanio, 1977, p. 66). Spicer believed that “you cannot learn another language unless you are exposed, at some stage, to an intensive experience—preferably with native speakers, or with superb teachers who have mastered that second language and can convey the joy of knowing it” (in Vanio, 1977, p. 65).

In my own case, this joy of knowing one or more other languages has inspired me since my first exposure to French in Grade 8 in 1966. In spite of a grammar-translation method embodied in Le français vivant (Stock, Stock & Jeanneret, 1957), those early core French lessons transported me to a place quite unlike the town of Powell River, British Columbia where I grew up. My Grade 9 and 10 French teacher, Paul Kuczma, led us through subsequent chapters of the same text but managed nonetheless to infuse his passion for languages. The notion of communicating one’s enthusiasm about language learning to one’s students is one I have tried to live throughout my career both as a teacher and as a teacher educator. It is echoed by Rivers (1987) when she pays tribute to her first language teacher, Kathleen Meldrum:

We performed actions; we handled objects; we drew large pictures and labeled them; we sang; we danced; we learned poems; we read little stories, which we acted out and improvised upon. I rushed home after the first lesson, on a scorching February day, sat on the step of a wooden washhouse, and read aloud in French to my monolingual mother as she stirred our clothes in a wood-fired copper .... How did this young teacher arouse such enthusiasm for her esoteric subject? First of all, she loved young people and she loved teaching. She used her imagination as she shared with us the knowledge, perhaps imperfect, she possessed. She had us doing things and living them in a vicarious way. She wove us into a group, who worked together, talked together, played together, and were interdependent in our progress .... She developed a rapport with us that made us want to communicate with her and with each other in situations that stimulated our interest and involvement. (p. 3)

Rivers vividly describes a classroom based on experiential learning long before the term “communicative-experiential” was coined in the National Core French Study (Leblanc, 1990). That study, involving many school district educators and university
researchers across Canada, was the culmination of a life’s work in second language education for H.H. (David) Stern and the beginning of a paradigm shift in how French is taught in Canada. This pivotal study influenced and continues to influence core and intensive French programs. Further, Stern’s hope that it would be possible to meet Keith Spicer’s (1971) challenge to fulfill the demand for “bilingual citizens” is paralleled by the present efforts of second language educators to meet Dion’s (2003) call to action.

**National Core French Study**

Thirty years ago, Stern (1976) called into question the core French model saying that it had not fulfilled objectives and was in danger of being abolished. It was, in his words, “a poorly working core program which did not deliver the goods” (p. 219). In his article summarizing research on the Ottawa-Carleton French Project conducted by a team of researchers from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Stern (1976) lamented over a number of issues still on research agendas today, such as the lack of attainment of bilingualism, the undefined use of the term “bilingual” and the need for consistent proficiency standards rather than simply relating one program to another. During the Ottawa-Carleton French Project from 1973 to 1975, core, extended and immersion programs were evaluated in relation to each other. It was concluded that “extended students reach a higher level of French than do core program students, and immersion students reach a higher level than extended students” (p. 220). While Stern (1976) declared this to be not terribly helpful information, he nonetheless concluded with a damning statement about core French: “compared to the other programs it remains le parent pauvre, the poor cousin, the booby prize for those who cannot aspire to the extended or immersion alternatives” (p. 228).

In a later article entitled “French core programs across Canada: How can we improve them?” Stern (1982) stated: “the success of French immersion is undisputed, but it has been the undoing of the French core curriculum” (p. 37). Rather than denigrating core French, Stern suggested that language teachers and scholars “take a critical look at [their] own practices” (p. 38) in an effort to remedy the program’s shortcomings. He
proposed a national pooling of ideas through a modern language curriculum project, defining “curriculum” as its content (what we teach), its objectives (what we aim to achieve) and its teaching strategies (how we approach teaching). The result was the National Core French Study (NCFS).

The NCFS took place between 1985 and 1989 and was Canada’s most wide-scale national education research study (Poyen, 1990). The request for the study came from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation in 1983 which, after consulting with Stern in 1979, determined that core French, unlike French immersion, lacked a strong research base “which would give it direction and credibility” (CASLT, 1991, p. 1). The study involved all provinces and territories, and its objectives were to examine core French policies and programs, to pool ideas and to strengthen core French and improve its outcomes. At the heart was an intention to change the way core French had hitherto been considered and taught, that is, to change the focus from language form to language use:

Ways must be found that will also allow the student to perceive language more globally, this perception being achieved by doing things with the language, not just through learning it .... Communication is now perceived as the ultimate aim of French language studies. (CASLT, 1991, p. 3)

The NCFS involved scholars, students, educators, school board officials and provincial Ministry of Education personnel across Canada. It was funded by the Secretary of State and sponsored by CASLT, and its results were published in a final report in 1990. Based on the findings of the study, CASLT (1991) produced a *Model for Implementation* in consultation with the Department of Canadian Heritage, provincial and territorial representatives and Ministry of Education consultants. CASLT’s mandate was to “ensure that the recommendations of the NCFS would be incorporated into teaching practices in as short a time frame as possible to ensure that they be interpreted in as consistent a manner as possible” (p. 3). LeBlanc (1990) cautioned, however, that “the end product of the Study [was] not a complete ‘ready-to-wear’ curriculum .... [or] one solution that would apply throughout the country” (p. 5, LeBlanc’s emphasis). And therein, perhaps, lay the paradox that makes implementation so challenging, that is, the local interpretation and implementation of idealistic recommendations.
Vandergrift (1999, in MacFarlane, 2003) analyzed core French programs and corresponding curriculum documents in each province and territory and found that, while many province’s core French programs, including British Columbia’s, are grounded in the NCFS syllabi framework, this is not the case across Canada. Ontario organizes its outcomes by skill, Manitoba by skill and syllabi, and Quebec has chosen a different model organized by intellectual operation and skill-based outcomes (p. 7). The effects of the NCFS and its recommendations nonetheless made their way into the consciousness of most provincial and district level leaders and many teachers and are evidenced in the framework of all commercial programs published since the early 1990s.

**Implementation of the National Core French Study**

The ideals put forth by the National Core French Study about how core French could and should be delivered in Canada have been realised to greatly varying degrees and, according to Netten and Germain (2004a, 2004c, 2004d) and others (e.g., CPF, 2004, 2007), with little consistency or success. While some teachers embraced the paradigm shift in curriculum and pedagogy (Carr, 1997; Lewis, 1995; Turnbull, 1998), many did not, as has been reported in the intensive French literature. Netten and Germain (2004b) describe core French as a grammar-based approach wherein French is studied as a set of structures rather than as part of a communicative approach in which the language is used to communicate, undertake projects and explore culture: “enseigner un savoir sur la langue—le plus souvent, sous la forme de règles de grammaire—après quoi ces règles sont appliquées dans le cadre d’exercices plus ou moins décontextualisés, puis, éventuellement, réutilisées dans des situations relativement limitées” (p. 3).

It is important to balance generalizations made about core French by acknowledging the heightened awareness of the importance of a communicative-experiential curriculum. Leblanc (1990) stated in his introduction to the National Core French Study (NCFS) that educators should focus on advancing core French education by focusing on the tenets and recommendations of the NCFS rather than dwelling on less than satisfactory teaching and learning situations:
In many FSL classrooms, innovative teaching is taking place. In other instances, however, the teaching is less inspired. These instances always invite comparison, but it should be clearly understood that the reason for such comparison is to underline the value of what is being proposed rather than to convey the message that the poor samples are the rule in core French teaching. (p. xii)

The implementation of the NCFS curriculum has been uneven across Canada because its recommendations were based on two conditions that are highly problematic in Canada: sufficient instructional time and trained, bilingual teachers. The NCFS recommended “a program of 40 minutes per day commencing in Grade 4” (p. 2) delivered by “communicative teachers [who are] fluent or at least have the ability to communicate in the second language well enough that they feel comfortable in the teaching situation … and have training in the latest methods of communicative second language teaching” (p. 6).

In British Columbia, core French is mandated provincially from Grades 5 to 8 but has no stated time requirements—the average is 80 minutes per week in Grades 5 to 7 and 185 minutes per week in Grade 8 for a total average of 260 hours (Carr, 2006). Core French is delivered mainly by generalist teachers who have been educated in university teacher education programs that have a minimum language requirement of Grade 11 French (or other language) and no required second language methodology courses. The exception to this lack of fluency and training applies to a small group of core and immersion specialists who have taken university French courses and pass a French proficiency screening test. Only a very small number of all university student teachers take part in these specialized programs, however. This lack of preparation of preservice teachers means that many teachers delivering elementary and middle years core French in British Columbia do not have the linguistic and methodological preparation to implement a communicative French second language curriculum. As Netten (1993) points out, “innovative curricula are only as effective as the teachers who use them (p. 117).

The importance of daily core French lessons based on a multidimensional communicative-experiential curriculum delivered by well-trained teachers was critical to
the implementation process, yet many jurisdictions were not and still are not able to provide all of these conditions, especially in British Columbia. The recommendation of daily 40-minute lessons was based on Stern’s (1985) findings that short and infrequent lessons do not produce effective language learning. He studied programs composed of brief and varied lessons lengths and showed that students “may finish up with no more than a fragmentary knowledge of a single foreign language which they cannot, and no longer wish to, use for effective communication” (p. 13). In spite of these findings, core program lessons have remained short in length, following a “drip feed” approach (Lightbown & Spada, 1989, in Netten & Germain, 2004c). At the time of the NCFS, lessons varied from 20 to 50 minutes per day (Leblanc, 1990, p. 2), and today they vary nationally from 20 to 40 minutes (Turnbull, 2000).

There have been a number of timing thresholds discussed in the literature from 1200 hours (or 10 years of daily 40 minute lesson) over a child’s school career to achieve a “modest basic knowledge of French” to over 5000 hours (only possible in an immersion program) to attain “truly effective bilingualism” (Stern, 1985, p. 20). These thresholds were based in part on the three levels of proficiency proposed in the Gillin Report (1976, in Stern, 1985) and formed the basis of Ontario’s core French delivery system. However, time only affords an opportunity for learning. There are many other factors, such as intensity, age of the learner, and teaching and learning strategies, that come into play. Research conducted to date by Netten and Germain (2005) indicates that 250 hours of intensive instruction is the minimum necessary to produce some degree of spontaneous communication. They link the success of intensive and immersion programs to this early intensive learning.

Experimentation with time and intensity in non-immersion programs has been attempted with varying degrees of success, for example, compacted core French (Lapkin, Hart, & Harley, 1998; Stern, 1985; Marshall, in press). An experimental program called Place Immersion Française (PIF) took place in Coquitlam, British Columbia, between 1976 and 1988. Pioneered by Léon Lebrun in 1976, the program was continued by Jacques-André Larrivée for 11 semesters between 1977 and 1992. The elective Grade
9/10 program enrolled students with no French or one year of core French. During the
first semester, students took all their required courses for the year; during the second,
they were immersed in an integrated, highly interactive, project-based program conducted
entirely in French. A series of three-week projects took place within the framework of
Pifville, a mini-society with its own police force, bank, radio station, and Ministries of
Education, Justice, and Revenue. Teams of students developed their own way of
operating within each area of Pifville. The only constant from project to project was the
“law of no English” (J-A. Larrivée, personal communication, July 20, 2006).
Presentations, role-plays, mock trials, broadcasts and other forms of expression varied
with each three-week rotation as teams took on a different responsibility within the
society. As well each year, there was a two-week exchange trip to Québec.

Shapson and Day (1978) studied the PIF program from 1976 to 1978 and reported
that students made significant improvements in their French languages skills, performed
at a higher level in French, and had more positive attitudes towards French-speaking
people than did their Grade 10 core French peers. When Larrivée moved to another
school, the program ended. It has been noted in the literature on innovations that unique
programs often end when unique people leave. While there are some similarities between
PIF and intensive French, this particular variation of an intensive option was not
sustainable.

**How does intensive French advance FSL teaching and learning?**

The founders of intensive French acknowledge the influence of the National Core
French Study (NCFS) in the development of IF’s guiding principles (Netten & Germain,
2004b, 2004d). The NCFS was organized into four syllabi: communicative-experiential,
culture, language, and general language. Its underlying theories came from psychology,
linguistics, sociology and education. The intensive French curriculum is based on three
major categories: communication, culture and general education (Netten & Germain,
2004b) and a similar theoretical base to that of the NCFS, but with the addition of
neurolinguistically-based teaching strategies. Objectives common to both curricula are:
the use of French as a means of communication,
- the development of a learner’s general education,
- the understanding of culture,
- the exploration of meaningful, student-centred themes and projects.

In the years between the NCFS and Netten and Germain’s pilot IF study, core French commercial programs were written based on the NCFS’ multidimensional curriculum. Mas, Carr, and Mennill (1994) made explicit references to transdisciplinarity and literacy strategies which were also suggested though not articulated in those terms in the NCFS. These notions are paralleled in the guiding principles of intensive French (Netten & Germain, 2004c, 2004d; Netten, Germain, & Anderson, 2004) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Development of Key Curricular Notions in FSL Education from 1990 to 2004*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Core French Study Curriculum</th>
<th>Commercial Core French Program</th>
<th>Intensive French Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Approach</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the nature of language, at least in some of its more general aspects, can help the learner in making generalizations again in other learning contexts ..... There are, or at least, there should be, close links between the L1 and L2 (LeBlanc, 1990, p. 57).</td>
<td>Instruction in reading and writing involves many familiar first language strategies in a context of constant exposure to many types of authentic documents such as charts, graphs, newspapers, magazines, student-authored materials, poetry, songs, and literature (Mas et al., 1994, p. 11).</td>
<td>The model for the curriculum and teaching strategies recommended is based on those used in the first language classrooms in the language arts program, particularly at the primary level ..... In IF, the learning of the second language has been conceptualized as a literacy experience (Netten &amp; Germain, 2004d, p. 297).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transdisciplinary Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The general language education syllabus is an inventory of linguistic, cultural, and strategic content likely to help both with the second language learning and with the general education of the child (LeBlanc, 1990, p. 55).</td>
<td>Futurists advocate a transdisciplinary curriculum which they define as idea-and-activity-based. Traditionally, second language instruction has been considered more or less exempt from this change, the notion being that students’ limited language prohibits exploration of ideas. Experiential and thematic language instruction challenges this idea. Students can explore new ideas and gain real knowledge while learning a new language (Mas et al., 1994, p. 27).</td>
<td>The category of general language education ... in IF refers to the entire educational experience of the students and reflects the contribution of the experience to their general education. The attainment of this objective is not a separate category but is integral to the program because of its transdisciplinary nature (Netten &amp; Germain, 2004d, p. 296).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Netten and Germain expanded the use of literacy and transdisciplinary approaches and advocated for the increased level of challenge to students’ general education and the use of neurolinguistically-based teaching strategies. These notions are interdependent and, with the increased time and intensity afforded by an intensive program, can produce a highly effective language learning combination. In the following conceptualization of intensive French (Netten & Germain, 2004d), I have highlighted the elements that I believe are instrumental in making significant gains in language learning and moving far beyond the outcomes of core French programs as they are presently configured:

In conceptualizing IF, many theoretical aspects of language learning, and learning in general, were brought together to develop a new approach to second language learning: the need for increased time, the importance of intensity at the beginning stages of skill development, the need for authentic language use in learning communication skills, the interdependence between languages and the consequent development of literacy skills, the transdisciplinary nature of cognitive development, the contribution of social interaction to cognitive development, the finding that only implicit knowledge can be proceduralized, and the realization that accuracy is a skill as well as being declarative knowledge. Integrating all these theories led to the conceptualization of IF. (p. 291, emphasis mine)

The objectives common to the NCFS’ conceptualization of core French teaching, such as general education through transdisciplinarity, literacy-based learning, the use of thematic projects and authentic communication, can be met to varying degrees in both core and intensive French programs but are highly contingent upon the amount of instructional time, degree of intensity and level of teacher expertise and training. Students are much more likely to achieve program outcomes in 17 hours per week in an intensive program than in 1.5 hours per week in a core program in British Columbia. Moreover, in a program where French is not only the language of instruction but also the language of the classroom for at least five months of the year, the potential learning gains increase exponentially. This immersion-like element is simply not possible for more than extremely limited periods in a core program and only when the teacher speaks French fluently which is not the case in most elementary and middle years core French classrooms in British Columbia.
The present version of intensive French was conceptualized to improve upon the other French second language programs in Canada. Netten and Germain (2004d) articulate the differences between intensive French and core and immersion programs:

IF is not an immersion program. While activities are undertaken in French for the greater part of the school day, these activities relate to the learning of the second language. No subjects are taught in French, and content objectives for the other subjects are not achieved through the IF program …. Nor is IF simply core French covered more quickly, and thus intensively. Rather, IF is a completely different way of learning French. (p. 284)

The program founders state that intensive French goes beyond what other French second language approaches presently achieve. Germain, Netten, and Movassat (2004) point out that IF’s pedagogical strategies focus on accuracy and fluency rather than emphasizing one more than the other as they purport core and immersion do:

Le régime pédagogique du français intensif a été conçu pour pallier, en grande partie, certaines lacunes du français de base, c’est-à-dire l’accent est mis sur la precision linguistique (accuracy), ainsi que certaines lacunes de l’immersion, c’est-à-dire l’accent mis sur l’aisance à communiquer (fluency). (p. 311)

While intensive French owes much to its antecedents, there are two key features that support its claim to being a “new approach”. In addition to taking place in a context that permits increased time and intensity, the approach is conceived of as developing procedural knowledge. Netten and Germain (2005) have drawn on Paradis’ (1994) work in neurolinguistics and brain research to put forth pedagogical strategies that develop students’ communicative fluency and accuracy. These strategies could represent significant advances in the field, especially given the amount of debate in the literature about form-focused instruction (e.g., Calvé, 1994; Lyster, 1998). Netten and Germain (2005) argue that implicit or intuitive competence, not explicit or rule- and practice-based competence, is what contributes to the development of spontaneous communication. The strategies endorsed by Netten and Germain (2004d) lead to the “use and re-use of language forms and structures in real situations in order to internalize them and be able to use them intuitively” (p. 21). What makes this unique is the way teachers redirect
students’ utterances by modeling the correct form and having students use and reuse that corrected form. Germain and Netten (2006) explain the process as follows:

1. Modéliser des phrases authentiques.
2. Faire utiliser plusieurs fois les phrases modélisées.
3. Inciter l’élève à faire des liens.
4. Corriger et faire utiliser plusieurs fois les phrases corrigées.

(p. 25)

In summary, the degree to which language learning outcomes can be achieved in core French settings is limited by time, intensity and teacher training. The intensive French curriculum is based in part on the theoretical principles of the multidimensional curriculum embodied in the National Core French Study (Leblanc, 1990) but with some key differences. Intensive French makes a significant contribution to second language education by building on previous FSL education theory and practice and infusing new perspectives, strategies and a neurolinguistic approach to developing communicative competence. A number of studies on intensive French have been conducted in the past eight years.

**Intensive French: Previous Research**

The following studies describe the experimental program that Netten and Germain (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d; 2005) and Germain and Netten (2004a; 2004b) examined in two three-year studies in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1998 to 2001 and 2001 to 2004. These in turn inspired, among others, Kristmanson’s (2006) and my study.

Netten and Germain introduced the intensive French approach in Newfoundland and Labrador in 1997 as a solution to the decline of Canada’s core French programs (MacFarlane, 2005; Netten & Germain, 2004c; 2005). The intensive approach is based upon an intensive English model (Lightbown & Spada, 1997) inspired by “les classes d’accueil” which began in Montreal in 1969 wherein new immigrants learned English in an intensive block of time, focusing primarily on language rather than subject content (MacFarlane, 2005). The roots of the present incarnation of intensive French can be seen
in “les classes bilingues” from 1975 to 1981 overseen by Lise Billy, a district consultant in Mille-Îles near Montreal. The pedagogy described by Billy (1980) very closely mirrors that outlined in the present intensive French literature:

- Les enfants sont invités à répéter, mémoriser, mimer, jouer des micro-dialogues, des saynètes, à en construire à partir de modèles enseignés puis à partir de leur propre modèle;
- L'élève est stimulé, invité à parler, à formuler des questions, à intervenir grâce à des petits dialogues.

(p. 428)

The five-month intensive format emphasized oral French for the first five months of the year “sans aucune matière scolaire” (p. 423). The program objectives were the following:

- que l'élève ait acquis la capacité de communiquer oralement dans la langue seconde sur les sujets qui composent sa réalité et qu'il ait touché à la culture étrangère;
- qu'il ait acquis la capacité de lire et de comprendre un texte écrit touchant le contenu déjà enseigné oralement;
- qu'il ait acquis la capacité d'exprimer par écrit certains messages simples.

(p. 428)

Comparisons were made by Billy (1980) between students in this intensive program and those in a French immersion program in the nearby Montreal suburb of Saint-Lambert. She described the superior outcomes among intensive program students: “les enfants du groupe expérimental de 11 ans qui apprenaient le français depuis un peu moins de quatre mois [ont] pu produire un nombre d'énoncés légèrement supérieurs à celui du groupe d'enfants en immersion depuis 6 ans” (p. 426). Billy advocated for a three-week intensive teaching practicum and stressed the importance of the teacher: “le professeur doit être dynamique, positif, facile d’accès, aimer évidemment les enfants, prêt à travailler quatre heures par jour à l’oral, apte à fonctionner en équipe et à accepter un programme, une pédagogie déterminée” (p. 432). Such candidates and preparation are
still very much the ideal sought in staffing an intensive (or immersion) French program, and the challenge that this presents across Canada is considerable (Canadian Parents for French, 2004). The issue of methodologically trained, bilingual teachers as a limited resource emerged in this study and is discussed in Chapter 4.

The next group of studies involves intensive French programs in Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick. All are qualitative studies: the first describes IF stakeholders’ perspectives, the second and third consider the IF teachers’ experience of implementing a new approach, and the fourth combines these foci with the students’ learning experience.

In 2004, Joan Netten and Claude Germain guest edited a special issue of The Canadian Modern Language Review providing a comprehensive background of the theoretical conceptualization and curricular development of intensive French and the first three-year research study in Newfoundland and Labrador. During this study, Germain and Netten (2004a) assessed the degree of satisfaction with the intensive French program implemented in 23 Grade 6 classes. Interviews were conducted with Ministry of Education personnel, school board administrators and French consultants, all IF teachers and principals and several parents and students. There was a high degree of satisfaction with the program, especially where the IF teacher was considered very strong and the follow-up program deemed adequate. Students exceeded the French proficiency outcomes of core French and experienced no negative effects on learning of English or other subjects. For the principals and coordinators, it was generally not difficult to incorporate the new program into existing school schedules. The study concluded with a list of recommendations by the stakeholders for other jurisdictions, one of which that there be an appropriate follow-up program to the intensive year. My study probes more deeply into the stakeholders’ experience, focuses on their reasons for participation, and expands on how teachers come to understand and adapt their practices. As well, I explore the dialogic processes in which the different groups of stakeholders interact with each other.
Collins, Stead, and Woolfrey (2004) shared their experiences moving from seasoned teachers of core French to beginning IF teachers and then to experienced IF teachers. Such a journey of “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is similar to the experience of IF teachers in my study. The teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador identified the major differences between core and intensive French teaching and outlined key teaching strategies. These are particularly useful to other teachers piloting the program because they provide detailed, down to earth descriptions of teaching methodology. There are several comparisons made to core French that indicate a pre-NCFS perspective, for example, “one of the major differences from core French is that in IF the four skills are not separated at all” (p. 363) and “time is not spent on analysing and dissecting linguistic aspects of the language [as in core French]” (p. 358). That said, it is clear that teachers made significant changes in their teaching as they moved to a different pedagogy. The same shift in practice to incorporate the principles and instructional strategies of intensive French is noted in my study and described in detail in Chapter 5, although the Surrey teachers’ comments and practices were generally more grounded in NCFS theory and methodology. There was, unfortunately, no inclusion of the personal or professional processes undertaken by individual teachers as they incorporated IF practices into their pre-existing frames of reference nor was there a description of the group sense-making process in which the teachers might have engaged.

Kristmanson, Cogswell, and Campbell (2003) were directly involved in a pilot implementation of intensive French in New Brunswick (NB). Their roles as university participant-researcher, language coordinator and IF teacher, respectively, afforded a first hand view into the adaptation and development of provincial IF curriculum. They provided background to the implementation journey and a detailed account of the process of creating “a document that would meet the needs and realities of NB’s school context” (p. 4). To achieve this, they found it necessary to add a local cultural component as well as a model for evaluation. They piloted an integrated thematic unit, Bienvenue dans l’île, infused with Acadian cultural elements and an evaluation component they created by modifying documents based on the NCFS framework. The authors underscored the
importance of reflection for students in daily learning journals and for teachers individually and in groups. They recommended that teachers tailor the IF curriculum to suit the context in which it was taught:

The [IF] teachers will be encouraged not only to examine their own personal teaching practices but also to suggest adaptations of modifications to specific activities of the program. In order for the program to evolve and improve, teachers will need to engage in on-going reflection. It is hoped that pilot teachers will meet regularly to discuss their progress, successes, and difficulties and make recommendations for changes or adaptations. It is crucial that the final program guide mirror the experiences of the pilot teachers and the students in the pilot sites. (p. 15)

The need to collaborate and reflect on teaching while negotiating with the IF curriculum is consistent with what IF teachers experienced in Surrey.

Kristmanson (2006) conducted a qualitative case study of an intensive French program in New Brunswick during its 2002-03 pilot year. Her focus was the IF students, the learning strategies they employed, and how they constructed knowledge of language and content. The data she collected during many classroom observations, in the form of textual and audio field notes, formed the basis of descriptive accounts of students’ cognitive processing deduced by interpreting their “observable learning behaviours”. Drawing on Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) theory of social construction of knowledge, Kristmanson illuminated the link between interaction and cognition by analyzing the interactive roles of task, teacher, peers, and self in the language learning process. She concluded that simply increasing the amount of exposure to the target language was not enough to create an optimal intensive language learning environment nor did any one type of task appear more effective than another. She challenged her own assumptions about the role played by learners, peers and teachers and concluded that, while learners take a big part in their own learning, both individually and socially, the key lies with teachers who prepare students cognitively and linguistically to engage in carefully scaffolded, interactive tasks. Kristmanson underscored the importance of the teachers’ work and characterized it as a balancing act of time and task, of high level cognitive
processes and low-level linguistic abilities and of a “learner-centred approach and a
teacher-encouraged pedagogy” (p. 232). She also considered stakeholders’ (teachers,
students, principals and parents) perceptions of the pilot project through interviews and
questionnaires and found that most were generally satisfied with the program.
Kristmanson’s intention was not to evaluate the program; however, she stated that her
research “[spoke] to the value of IF and to ways to allow it to reach its maximum
potential” (p. 245). I hope to extend the knowledge generated by Kristmanson and
stakeholders in New Brunswick with understandings developed in British Columbia and
thus contribute to a rich and differentiated knowledge base about intensive French.

Organizational of the Thesis

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study and situated intensive French within the
recent history of French second language programs in Canada, compared it with other
second language programs and identified its distinctive features.

In Chapter 2, I provide the sociopolitical contexts of the study at the national,
provincial, district and school levels. I begin with a brief history of the Year 2013 Action
Plan and its genesis in the Official Languages Act, followed by an overview of British
Columbia’s language policies and then examine one district’s approach to implementing
programs of choice. I describe the parallel goals of Federal language policy and French
second language education and identify elements that work for and against their
realization. I propose a theoretical framework for understanding the commodification of
languages in educational contexts of globalization and the resultant forces of investment
and competition for resources. Finally, I consider the individual and group processes
involved as teachers learn within a community of practice.

The methodology used in this case study is described in Chapter 3. Since
responsive evaluation advocates the negotiated construction of understanding among and
between the groups of stakeholders most closely involved in the study, the data and their
interpretation are organized according to the emerging themes in relation to various
stakeholder groups: the IF teachers, the IF students, their parents, the school, district and provincial leaders, and the non-IF teachers. The interpretation of findings is divided into Chapters 4 and 5 according to two major themes: stakeholder investment and competition, and the negotiation of program ideals. My conclusion, recommendations and implications for further research are provided in Chapter Six.
Chapter 2.

Theoretical and Sociopolitical Background

The program implementation in this study takes place during the coalescence of several favourable conditions, that is, during the Federal-Provincial Action Plan period to increase bilingual graduates and at the emergence of a new approach to French second language education in a province and district where program choice is valued.

In this chapter, I review the sociopolitical conditions surrounding official languages policy both nationally and provincially. I then examine the provincial and district-level context for a new program of choice and present the results of archival research and document retrieval (mainly from government sources). The insights of a national language policy researcher, a Ministry of Education official, a parent lobby group leader and a district leader help to illuminate how this study fits into the larger sociopolitical landscape. To begin, I examine the links between language planning, politics and policy.

Language Planning and Policy

Language planning, according to Fishman (1974, in Cooper, 1989), refers to “the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level” (p. 30). Jernudd and Das Gupta (1971, in Cooper, 1989) add that “language planning is not defined as an idealistic and exclusively linguistic activity but as a political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society” (p. 30). Language policies and policy changes that result from this planning need to be analyzed to consider for whom, for what purpose, under what conditions, and by what means such policies are determined centrally and implemented locally.
Baker (2006) draws attention to the role of attitudes towards bilingual education in shaping the implementation of language policy. He cites Lewis (1981) to argue for a psycho-sociological analysis of policy processes:

In the long run, no policy will succeed which does not do one of three things: conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved; persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the policy; or seek to remove the causes of the disagreement. In any case knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to the formulation of a policy as well as to success in its implementation. (Lewis, 1981, in Baker, 2006, p. 211)

Baker further argues that clear goals are important in language policymaking and language planning; they are used to measure degrees of progress made by specific policies. The concept of “target language planning” is noted as a means of mitigating the disconnect between broad program aims and grounded activities. It is clear in the Action Plan (Canadian Heritage, 2004) and several related reports (Canadian Parents for French 2004, 2005; Lapkin, 2003; MacFarlane, 2005) that the Federal Government’s target of doubling the proportion of bilingual graduates has already caused an increase in attention to the implementation of new official language education programs.

According to Haugen (1987), there is a strong ideological element in language planning as much of it is situated in geographical and sociohistorical factors. The success or failure of language policies often has much more to do with politics and ideology than with other factors. Haugen cautions that policy-driven programs such as second language education will not succeed without political or societal will: “It is no problem to immerse English-speaking Canadians in French …. But if parents are opposed or if they are indifferent, bilingualism is bound to fail” (p. 58). Haugen goes on to underscore the ideological and instrumental nature of language policy in Canada identifying French as an “instrument of national policy” and “a necessary instrument of unity” (p. 52). This alignment of language and politics exerts considerable power over the lives of Canadian citizens.
Language Politics and Policy in Canada

The following section provides an historical view of how language politics have influenced language policy from the “Quiet Revolution” of the 1950s to today. A parallel movement in language education termed by Stern (1984) as a “Quiet Language Revolution” was also taking place. Connections will be drawn to show how each landscape changed and both influenced and was influenced by the other.

Historically, language in Canada has been a means of differentiating between groups who think of themselves as distinct. Heller (1999) refers to the term “two solitudes” from MacLennan’s (1945) novel about life in early Quebec and Rilke’s (1904) Letters to a Young Poet to illustrate the separation between francophones and anglophones. It is a term used by others as well (e.g., Smith, 1998) to denote the ongoing tensions between Canada’s two founding nations. Heller (1999) traces the history of Canada-Québec relations to a defining moment in 1759 on the Plains of Abraham when the British defeated New France and, from that day forward, French nationalism became centered on belief, language and ethnicity rather than on territory and state. Heller explains that a period beginning in the 1950s, known as the Quiet Revolution, witnessed the reduced power of the Catholic Church, the emergence of the middle class and a new francophone elite who challenged the supremacy of anglophones in Canada. She notes: “French Canadian spiritual nationalism was re-invented as Québécois state nationalism” (p. 154). Nationhood can be linked to geographical, political or, in the case of Québec, “an ethnolinguistic image of uniqueness” (Bloemmaert, 1999, p. 17) that has underpinned much political action from The Quiet Revolution to today.

In 1962, Lester Pearson called for an inquiry into the issue of linguistic equality. When he became Prime Minister in 1963, Pearson then appointed a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B and B) whose mandate was “to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races” (Government of Canada, 1967, p. 3). In response to the B and B report, Prime Minister Trudeau introduced the Official Languages Act in 1968, and it became official policy in 1969. The Official Languages
Act established English and French as Canada’s official languages: government institutions were to offer their services in both languages to support English and French minorities (in Québec and the rest of Canada respectively), and commitments were made to enhance opportunities for all to learn both official languages. The Office and role of Commissioner of Official Languages were created in 1969 with a mandate to oversee the implementation of the Act and to provide financial support for meeting the linguistic needs of minority groups, developing linguistic capacity within national, private and voluntary organizations, and encouraging the effective learning of English and French as second languages across Canada. In 1970, the Official Languages in Education Program was established to coordinate this funding among the provinces and territories. Ottawa’s policy of official bilingualism was intended to “defuse the indépendantiste sentiment building in Québec, especially among young francophones, in part by expanding career opportunities in Ottawa to rival the Québec public service, the growth and professionalization of which had been a key part of the Quiet Revolution” (Brooks & Miljan, 2003, p. 64).

Heller (2001) refers to the first experiments in French immersion in 1965 as a means by which the anglophone middle class could ensure that its children would have equal access to opportunities in French Canada. Heller refers to this process as the “beginning of the decoupling of language and identity” (p. 51) as French-English bilingualism began to be seen as a resource worth possessing for material benefit. Federal Government funding of French immersion, francophone school boards and improvements to the public service were symbolic investments in bilingualism as a counterbalance to Quebec francophone nationalism (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001).

There is a considerable body of research dedicated to French immersion, its evolution since the earliest program at St. Lambert in Montreal, its successes (e.g., Lambert & Tucker, 1962; Swain, 2000), and its limitations (e.g., Lyster, 1987; Olson & Burns, 1983). I review two studies that offer sociopolitical analyses of immersion program implementation.
Lamarre (1996) examined the relationship between language policy reform since the mid-1960s and the development of immersion programs in Canada. She considered the influence of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) and parent motivation for participating in second language education programs. She conducted a comparative case study to contrast the sociolinguistic and sociopolitical contexts of British Columbia and Quebec and their influences on the programs. The conception of bilingualism or plurilingualism as a valuable resource was noted in both contexts, and Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1990) theory of social class reproduction was used as a lens to interpret government efforts to implement language policy. Her methodological approach involved archival and statistical research, interviews with key personnel at the Ministry of Education and federal politician levels, and interviews with program stakeholders at the local level. Her goal was to understand how implementation was negotiated and, through speaking to parents, gain insight into their motivations and concerns. In both provinces, parents invested in second language education programs so that their children could acquire linguistic resources; however, in British Columbia, a key reason was that parents felt immersion program represented a more challenging school program. The notion that parental investment in second language education is linked to the acquisition of assets for their children is examined in this study in Chapter 4.

Makropoulos (1998) provides a sociopolitical analysis of the French immersion program from 1960 to 1995 and examines the power dynamics of French and English language groups and their influence on the evolution of the program. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977a), she refers to the attraction of anglophone parents to the symbolic and material benefits for their children associated with bilingualism and suggests that immersion developments “were closely linked to the broader sociopolitical and economic dynamic involving language planning initiatives” (p. 12). Ideological and financial support for immersion programs, she suggests, waxed and waned according to political events of the day; for example, the 1982 constitutional repatriations and 1987 Meech Lake Accord proposal led to mixed support for immersion vis-à-vis minority francophone programs.
Even as the Federal Government was asserting that Canada was unified though diverse in terms of language and culture, Quebec was entrenching its singular view of nationalism and language in language policies such as Bill 101 (La Charte de la Langue française) in 1977. The Federal Government then reasserted its vision of state and individual bilingualism in the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, deemed as essential in uniting French and English Canada. The road has been far from smooth, however, and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 was interpreted by French Canada as a rejection by English Canada of equal status for both language groups. Since that time, there was a second unsuccessful attempt in 1992 to gain Québec’s approval of the constitution. The return to power in 1994 of the Parti Québécois led to a second national referendum on sovereignty for Québec in 1995 that was rejected by a very slim majority.

In spite or because of the political situation in Québec, both Federal language policy and support for language education continued to move forward. The Official Languages Act led to the appointment of the first Commissioner of Official Languages, Keith Spicer, and the Official Languages in Education program in 1970. One of Spicer’s (1971) guiding principles was that Canadians, especially school children, needed to recognize the value of French and English. Spicer (2004) also believed that “it would help national unity if there were an English-speaking organization able to speak sensibly, perhaps even generously, about the French language” (p. 143). He therefore encouraged the formation in 1977 of Canadian Parents for French. This organization of now over 22,000 members is the only pan-Canadian parent lobby group, and its mission is to encourage opportunities for learning French. It is a registered charity that is supported financially by the Secretary of State, membership fees and sponsored donations.

In 1983, an historic Protocol on Teaching Official Languages was established to support minority education through Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and also to recognize that second language instruction should be provided throughout Canada. A bilateral agreement between the Secretary of State and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) was established and, since, 2000, Action Plans
were established to execute and evaluate strategies for supporting minority and second language education.

In 2002, Prime Minister Chrétien signalled in his throne speech yet another reassertion of the Federal ideology of official bilingualism:

Linguistic duality is at the heart of our collective identity. The Government will implement an Action Plan on official languages that will focus on minority-language and second-language education, including the goal of doubling within ten years the number of high school graduates with a working knowledge of both English and French. (p. 5)

In the ensuing Action Plan for Official Languages, the Government of Canada announced its goal of doubling the proportion of bilingual graduates so that “Canada [would] be even more open to the world, more competitive and better positioned to ensure its prosperity” (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 61). The underlying assumption is that these goals are widely shared by its citizens and will favour national unity, as evidenced in the following statements in the Government’s Official Languages Annual Report:

• Canada is recognized at home and abroad as an officially bilingual country;
• all Canadians recognize and support linguistic duality;
• social cohesion in Canada is increased.

(Canadian Heritage, 2003c, p. 3)

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze these statements in terms of their veracity or measurability, for example, if these ideals are held by most Canadians or to what extent social cohesion might be increased through educational endeavours. The latter question is considered by Beynon, Dagenais, and Mathis (under review). What is known is that a spotlight has been placed on programs that can serve the Action Plan for Official Languages.
I will now situate the evolution of language policies in Canada and the goal of linguistic duality within a changing multicultural context. The effects of this policy on the political and educational landscape of British Columbia are examined next.

**Language Policy in British Columbia**

After the introduction of the Official Languages Act in 1968, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan refused to recognize the official status of French (Raptis, 2001). British Columbia did comply in time, but it was found that public service employees could not communicate in French even though they had studied French in school. This and other factors caused provincial education administrators to consider Federal language initiatives that would enhance language skills beyond those attained via grammar-translation methods. Raptis (2001) provides an account of the province’s political journey and its effects on second language education from post-World War II to the 1980s, tracing the efforts of two key Ministers of Education, Eileen Dailly, and Patrick McGeer, to bring French second language education to the forefront. Working in concert with the Secretary of State and the Council of Ministers of Education, these politicians were instrumental in obtaining federal and provincial funding to support French instruction, pilot immersion programs and teacher training. In 1977, in response to concerns about national unity after the election of René Levesque’s Parti Québécois in Québec, McGeer recommended to the Cabinet that this province should establish a French language policy:

> British Columbia should declare that French language instruction is prescribed as part of the provincial education curriculum …. The first priority is to assign the teaching force to the task of providing opportunities for as many as possible to learn French as a second language. (P. McGeer, memorandum to Cabinet, August 3, 1977, p. 1)

French immersion had already been established in British Columbia, first in 1968 with the first “bilingual” public kindergarten program in Coquitlam and then in 1972 with a province-wide program. It was not until 1997, though, that a second language—in most cases French—became mandated for students in Grades 5 to 8 by British Columbia’s first
language education policy. The Policy incorporated a view of second language education firmly rooted in a global context. Its introduction shows that the Provincial Government recognized the changing demographics in Canada, in general, and British Columbia, in particular, by placing increased importance on linguistic diversity rather than duality.

The Government of British Columbia recognizes that the province is culturally, linguistically and economically diverse. A language policy must reflect this diversity and respond to the needs of the community. The Ministry of Education, Skills and Training encourages all students to develop language skills which will assist them to live and function more effectively in British Columbia’s ethno-culturally diverse environment and in a bilingual Canada .... The Language Education Policy is designed to be an integral part of the new Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education Plan and to recognize the growing number of other languages spoken by British Columbians. (Ministry of Education, 1997a, p. 2, emphasis mine)

A study by Reeder, Hasebe-Ludt, and Thomas (1997) raises ideological issues about this policy, noting that “the blurring of the distinction between social policy and language education policy raises important questions about the broad societal purposes of public education and its role in promoting particular ideologies, no matter how benign” (p. 375). They state that policy development with profound effects upon language teaching and learning should also be informed by knowledge in applied linguistics and education. They further argue that the forces undergirding this policy are influenced by factors that go beyond education, for example, the link to the economy: “In view of the importance of changing economic relationships, such as the developing links with Pacific Rim countries, opportunities should be available for students to learn languages that will prepare them to take a role in future economic development” (Ministry of Education, 1997a, p. 3).

The British Columbia Language Policy objectives are listed in this order:

- achieving proficiency in English,
- ensuring French minority education,
- recognizing Aboriginal languages for students with Aboriginal ancestry,
Second language education is mandatory in Grades 5 to 8, and the choice of second languages is left to individual school boards—core French being the language offered if an alternative is not chosen. Second language study ceases to be mandatory after Grade 8.

In preparation for the implementation of this language policy, a multidimensional curriculum and set of communicative-experiential learning outcomes called the *Core French 5 to 12: Integrated Resource Package* was published by the Ministry of Education in 1995. Based on the tenets of the National Core French Study, this document became the template for other provincial second language curriculum documents. In spite of widespread approval in the field of this curriculum document, the prevalent use of generalist teachers and brief time allocations to deliver core French have meant that the implementation of British Columbia’s Language Policy and the provincial curriculum have been inconsistent (Carr, 1997, 2006).

The Federal policy of linguistic duality is applied differently in each province and territory for many reasons. The choice of learning French or another second language is left to school boards in most provinces except Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Ontario where French is the mandated language (Mady, 2006). In a number of districts in British Columbia, other languages such as Mandarin, Punjabi and Russian are offered at the Grade 5 to 8 level. As of 2006-07, in Surrey, Punjabi is offered in four out of 99 elementary schools; in Vancouver, Punjabi is offered in one out of 91 elementary schools and annexes, and a Mandarin bilingual program is offered in one school. In almost all cases, these classes are attended by first-language speakers (H. Horban, personal communication, June 15, 2006), but it is not my intention to engage in the debate on heritage language maintenance versus second language education (e.g., Cummins, 1992). The vast majority of second language learners in British Columbia learn French as a second or additional language.
As has already been noted, the Federal Government has no direct responsibility for what is taught in Canadian classrooms because education is under provincial jurisdiction; however, its impact is felt in terms of funding. The Federal Government provides financial incentives for French minority and second language education via the Office of the Secretary of State and Commissioner of Official Languages. The funding dedicated to realizing the Action Plan in British Columbia comes from both federal and provincial budgets and is controlled by a multilateral protocol between the Federal Government of Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education and by bilateral agreements with each province and territory. Funding transfers for French first and second language education have occurred since the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) was created in 1970. The bilateral agreements have been in place since 1993-94, but it is only since 2000-01 that Action Plans have also been incorporated into the agreements (Canadian Heritage, 2001). The present OLEP British Columbia Action Plan Bilateral Agreement was executed on March 28, 2006 and applies from 2005-06 to 2008-09. The provincial Action Plan objectives support the Federal Action Plan:

British Columbia recognizes that Canada has set ambitious qualitative and quantitative pan-Canadian targets in official languages. British Columbia's Action Plan is focused on increasing the number of students in minority language schools ….. It is also reasonable to expect a significant increase in the number of BC students who have a working knowledge of French as a second language by 2009. (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, p. 3)

In addition to regular program funding of $9,465,000 per year, matched by the Federal Government, the Provincial Government has allocated additional funds of approximately $14 million per year, exceeding by $2 million the federal contribution, for second language instruction. One of the priorities for these additional funds is “enhancing what has been neglected or overlooked (core French–new approaches, following up on the beginnings of intensive core French and offering core French in K to 3)” (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, p. 3). To this end, a grant of $300,000 was given to the Surrey School District to support the implementation of British Columbia’s first intensive French pilot for five years. One feature of the Action Plan is attention to quantifying its objectives and outcomes: “British Columbia will continue its work to define provincial
standards for a ‘working knowledge’ in order to determine current numbers and future projections” (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, p. 3). Although not yet stipulated beyond the use of provincial measurement tools, such as a satisfaction survey, exam results and grade-to-grade transition rates, the British Columbia Ministry of Education plans to quantify the objective in a way that the Federal Action Plan has not yet articulated.

It is important to note that, although bilingualism is a Federal ideal, it has not been well defined. French second language approaches are typically compared with others in terms of advancing students’ language learning to various levels. In at least one discussion about how to measure proficiency on a national basis, MacFarlane (2003) suggests that students’ proficiency levels in the various approaches “represent various points on a continuum” (p. 4). This perspective is also seen in Grosjean’s (2002)

definition of bilingualism:

Bilingualism is the use of two (or more) languages in one's everyday life and not knowing two or more languages equally well and optimally (as most laypersons think) …. The bilingual uses two languages—separately or together—for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people …. Because the needs and uses of the two languages are usually quite different, the bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in his/her languages …. In their everyday lives, bilinguals find themselves at various points along a situational continuum. (p. 2, Grosjean’s emphasis)

A dynamic view of bilingualism is echoed in a recent Brief to the New Brunswick Department of Education (Rehorick, Dicks, Kristmanson, & Cogswell, 2006) supporting that province’s Action Plan to increase to 70 percent the proportion of high school graduates who will “function effectively in their second language” (p. 1). This level of proficiency is assessed at the end of that province’s mandated period in Grade 10, but the authors explain that it is “a mistake to assume that ‘functioning effectively’ is a static condition” (p. 1). As Grosjean (2002) has suggested in his continuum approach to bilingualism, Rehorick et al. (2006) point out the different levels and uses of language in and out of school:
Language learning … takes time, and students who can ‘function effectively’ at the end of Grade 10 (when the assessment of proficiency is done) are using a different French than that required to ‘function effectively’ after graduation in the world of work or in post-secondary studies. The topics for discussion are different; the domains of use are different; and the number of people in different roles with whom one interacts is different. Learners need to keep on learning.” (p. 1)

Recommendations are made by Rehorick et al. (2006) to adopt a common framework to describe language proficiency, including a language portfolio to be used in schools and beyond as a means of providing “a common way of describing proficiency across all levels and age groups” (p. 2).

Concern about accountability and need for a national standard is echoed in the Plan Twenty Thirteen (2013): Strategies for a National Approach in Second Language Education (Canadian Heritage, 2004). Several examples to measure the impact of second language education renewal efforts are a tracking system of second language proficiency attained by graduates, a standardized national test, and a definition of “functional knowledge”. In the rationale provided for instituting tracking measures, it is noted that, at present, self-description on census forms provides the only data for measuring the level of bilingualism. As the authors of the Plan 2013 report rightly point out, “this kind of general self-assessment lacks the degree of specificity required for the purposes of valid comparisons” (Canadian Heritage, 2004, p. 21). They suggest linking bilingualism to scholastic achievement, specifically by testing a stratified national sample in order to define minimum requirements to be considered bilingual. Once this standard is defined, it can then be used to establish baseline data from the first testing period, then as part of a tracking system in 2008 and finally in 2013. Work is presently underway to address the lack of pan-Canadian measures for bilingualism (e.g., CASLT, 2006; Canadian Heritage, 2004; MacFarlane, 2004; Rehorick, 2005; Vandergrift, 2006).

**Provincial and District Context**

There is one other layer to be considered in the sociopolitical context of this study; that is the provincial and district agendas for quality, choice and accountability.
The Provincial Government’s vision for British Columbia is “to be a just province whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future” (Government of BC, 2006, p. 6). Its stated core values are integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, respect and choice (p. 7). The Ministry of Education provides leadership and funding, develops policy, sets standards and monitors performance. Its vision is “to make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent” (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 7). Individual school boards establish accountability contracts with specific goals for enhancing student performance, usually related to literacy, numeracy and/or social responsibility, and performance is measured through tests and graduation rates. Themes of quality and choice are found in both governing bodies and are reflected in the School Act (Ministry of Education, 2006) which states:

Government is committed to ensuring that parents in every region of the province have access to quality public schooling for their children .... In an effort to accommodate varying parental and student expectations of school services, public schools, within available resources, will provide parents and students with choice of programs. (p. D-84)

In accordance with the Ministry of Education’s guidelines, the Surrey School District (2004) has developed its accountability contract around goals in literacy and social responsibility. The Surrey School Board’s (2005) stated goals include ensuring well-rounded educational programs that address students’ needs in a program with smooth transitions from preschool to post secondary. As well students should “have access to a broad spectrum of educational programs, choices and timetable options” (p. 4). The intensive French program is one of a number of programs of choice offered in the Surrey School District in addition to Montessori, Traditional school, intensive Fine Arts, Adlerian philosophy, International Baccalaureate, French immersion and five different languages, among many other electives, at the secondary level.

When intensive French was offered as a new program of choice in the spring of 2004, a number of parents explained their interest by saying that this program seemed more able to “deliver results” than core French. This opportunity for a better way to learn French presented itself at a fortuitous moment. Federal and provincial will, in the
form of related Action Plans, coupled with provincial and district valuing of choice, provided optimum conditions for the introduction of intensive French.

In summary, I have traced a shifting perspective of language as a right to language as a resource that is generously funded in this country. I have not discussed the French first language legislation that resulted from the Official Languages Act and continues to exercise a considerable force in language policy both nationally and provincially. This major thrust of Federal-Provincial agreement funding has been and continues to be directed to language education for minorities; however, the focus of this study is French as a second rather than first language. Within that context, second language education as a desirable resource is an element that I explore next.

**Commodification of Language**

Language policy is not only influenced by or generated from internal forces; it also responds to transnational trends of globalization. Globalization is defined by Gidden (1990, in Block & Cameron, 2001) as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 64). Heller (2001) suggests that, in a context of globalization, languages are now viewed less as symbols of national identity and more as economic commodities. They are perceived as means to improve educational and vocational opportunities. Nationalist ideologies are being tested by globalization with resulting “contradictions between language as a mark of authenticity and belonging or identity, and language as an acquirable technical skill and marketable commodity” (p. 47). Viewed in this light, access to education in French can be perceived as a resource for which groups compete.

The struggle for resources is key to Bourdieu’s (1977b; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) theory of social hierarchization. The objective of human activity, according to Bourdieu, is the accumulation and monopolization of different kinds of capital. This activity takes place in “fields”, a term he uses to refer to institutions and conventions and
their dynamic relationships within a given enterprise. Hierarchy and conflict characterize every field as actors struggle for position and capital within the constraints of the social world:

Different classes and class fractions are engaged in a specifically symbolic struggle to impose the definition of the social world most in conformity with their interests …. They may carry on this struggle either directly in the symbolic conflicts of everyday life or indirectly through the struggle waged by the specialists in symbolic production …. The field of symbolic production is a microcosm of the struggle between the classes.” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 115)

One’s location in a field is determined by the allocation of specific capital in specific fields and this, in turn, by one’s own knowledge of and history in the world, also known as one’s “habitus”. Bourdieu (1977b) defines the habitus as “the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment … systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations” (p. 72). Habitus develops according to a specific social field in a process similar to learning the rules of a game; an individual internalizes these social rules for engaging in and finding one’s place in the field. One seeks capital in material and symbolic form, and this capital is transformed into status and power. Bourdieu theorizes that educational systems reproduce social inequality from one generation to another by “transmitting knowledge in codes accessible only to those who, upon entering, already possess the linguistic and cultural capital required to appropriate it” (in DiMaggio, 1979, p. 1464). For those who do not possess this capital, there is only a limited chance of betterment through education.

Individuals exercise agency, the ability to control their own actions, to differing degrees but always, according to Bourdieu, in relation to objective structures within a cultural field. Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002) analyze Bourdieu’s position about education and social change. They underscore the importance Bourdieu places on education as an “academic market” in which capital is conferred and state that, although education tends to reproduce social hierarchies, there are actions that can be taken within education-related fields to bring about change. The authors put forth two sides to the
argument that people can actually consciously change their lot relative to their habitus. They underscore Bourdieu’s position that, despite the influence of changing contexts, one’s sense of habitus prevails:

> People do think and act in strategic ways, and try to use the rules of the game to their advantage, but at the same time they are influenced—or almost driven—by the values and expectations that they get from the habitus. (in Webb et al., 2002, p. 58)

They then put forth de Certeau’s (1984, in Webb et al., 2002) opposing view that one can exercise agency to move outside one’s habitus:

> [People] ‘navigate’ among the rules, ‘play with all the possibilities offered by traditions’, make use of one tradition rather than another, compensate for one by means of another. Taking advantage of the flexible surface which covers up the hard core, they create their own relevance in this network. (p. 59)

Webb et al. (2002) conclude that one’s cultural trajectory typically follows a certain social order. There can be, however, certain options and pathways that allow some to stray from the reproductive norm, but the forces that conspire against this are great.

Carrington and Luke (1997) further elucidate Bourdieu’s theory by showing that the belief that acquired capital will result in success or increased life potential is seen not only in the learning of a second or additional language but also in literacy acquisition. The authors refer to “folk theories of literacy” or those beliefs popularly accepted as facts about the social effects of literacy. Folk theories are reinforced by politicians, parents and employers who believe that society is bettered if its members acquire certain capital. This “human capital” rationale is based on the belief that “increased” literacy necessarily leads to increased economic productivity and national development with an array of 'trickle-down' effects that might include individual social mobility, increased intergenerational levels of wealth, and ... enhanced minority community development” (p. 97). Carrington and Luke underscore the fact that literacy is equated with the potential of individuals, communities and societies in general. They characterize the exchange or acquisition of symbolic capital (literacy) as “the dialectical relationship
between the objective structures of a society and the practical, goal-seeking activities of individuals” (p. 100).

**Investment**

Norton (2000) applies Bourdieu’s economic metaphor of symbolic capital to explain learners’ investment in a second language:

If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources that will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return on that investment—a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (p. 10)

From this perspective, one might suppose that learners, or in this study, IF students and their parents, hoped that future benefits would accrue to their investment in language learning. Norton and Toohey (2001) extend the notion of such benefits to include an “enhance[d] … conception of themselves and their desires for the future” (p. 312).

Drawing on research each conducted with individual second language learners, the authors argue that attention to social practices in language learning contexts is necessary to understand “the ways in which learners exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in those contexts” (p. 318). Language is not viewed as a neutral medium but rather socially-referenced and influenced by power relations (Norton, 2000). Norton and Toohey (2001) hold that good language learners exercise agency to achieve standing within their various communities.

Norton (2000) focuses on identity construction at the individual level, defining identity as “how a person understands his or relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 5). Norton refers to the important role of language in being “constitutive of and constituted by a language learner’s identity” (p. 5). This identity changes over time and space and is influenced by education and interaction as language learners organize and reorganize “a sense of who they are and how they relate
to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s own identity” (p. 11).

In his study of biliteracy and identity construction in adult learners of English, Gentil (2002) extends Norton’s discussion of investment in language learning as he observed that individuals invest in and are invested in particular fields such as linguistic markets both economically and psychologically. Language learners, according to Gentil, are disposed to “direct their specific investments in particular forms of capital, including proficiency in one language, within particular markets. These investments are based on mostly tacit assessments of the exchange and usage value of particular symbolic and material resources ... within particular markets” (p. 108). In this instrumental light, the acquisition of language by (or for) a learner is a calculated choice. Using Bourdieu’s social theory, Gentil (2002) analyzes his study participants’ experiences of developing biliteracy in an academic context and concludes that their actions result from how they engage in and respond to a particular social field as they seek biliteracy as a desirable resource.

The idea that acquisition of symbolic capital will lead to a better life helps to explain why some are motivated to move beyond the confines of their circumstances. Kanno and Norton (2003), among others, draw on the conceptualization of “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) to explain the expanding of possibilities for communities of language learners. Anderson theorized that all communities, even nations, are socially constructed and imagined. He traced the decline of historical hierarchically-based loyalties and the emergence of a “new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together” (p. 36). Kanno and Norton (2003) suggest that imagined communities, even more perhaps than real ones, influence learners’ actions and investment.

communities, Dagenais suggests that immigrant parents invest in immersion programs because they imagine future possibilities for their children in Canada and the world: “As multilinguals, their children’s identity can be reframed from offspring of immigrants, whose linguistic resources may be unrecognized in the host country, to transnationals whose capital is marketable elsewhere” (p. 281). The extent to which imagined communities and the pursuit of linguistic capital are also operative in parents’ choice to enrol their children in Surrey’s intensive French program is explored in Chapter 4.

Investment and motivation are also considered in interpreting the study’s findings related to teachers’ participation (or non-participation) in the program innovation. Abrami, Poulsen, and Chambers (2004) examined these constructs, which they treat as one and the same, in teachers’ decisions to implement innovation. They used a cost-benefit framework to analyze key motivational factors and found that expectancy of success, rather than perceived cost or benefit, was the most influential in teachers’ decisions to implement or not. While I do not use the same framework, I do examine the costs and benefits associated with teacher investment or non-investment in the program implementation.

**Competition for Resources**

The struggle for resources or capital is the basic tenet of Bourdieu’s (1977b) theory of social hierarchization:

A distribution, in the statistical but also the political-economy sense, is the balance-sheet, at a given moment, of what has been won in previous battles and can be invested in subsequent battles; it expresses a state of the power relation between the classes or, more precisely, of the struggle for possession of rare goods, and for the specifically political power over the distributor or redistribution of profit. (p. 245)

Bourdieu’s work in education (1974; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) centres on the relationship between higher education and social class structure. While this study’s context takes place in a public school at the elementary level, the principle of power relations with a social hierarchy applies. Swartz (1977) explains:
In a stratified social order, dominant groups and classes control the most socially valued and legitimate cultural meanings. When inculcated through education, these meanings tend to elicit assent and encourage respect by subordinate groups for the social order. Thus, symbolic meanings mediate power relations among social groups and classes; culture, at its most fundamental level, is not devoid of political content but is an expression of it. (p. 547)

Symbolic capital is a manifestation of other types of capital (economic, cultural, social). Marginson (2004) points out that cultural, symbolic and social capital are not entirely equitable to economic capital, but the root is economic in nature. He illustrates this equation by referring to private schools where “wealthy parents purchase cultural and social capital” (¶5). Bourdieu (1986) describes such possession of capital as “membership in a group [that] provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word” (pp. 248-249). The benefits may accrue in the present and/or in the future as material or symbolic profits. Marginson (2004) adds that the value of social capital is derived from inequalities and exclusions, concluding that the structure of the field and, in fact, the value of social capital is based on the unequal distribution of that capital: advantages gained by one group invariably represent costs incurred by another. The result is competition for access to resources as was seen on several levels in this study.

In the first part of this chapter, I traced the shaping of education and language policy by social, political, and historical forces, both globally and locally. The Quiet Revolution and subsequent shift in Canadian language legislation and policies led to new government infrastructure and programming. These policies, programs and structures vary from province to province due to regional differences in education contexts. Integrated into this mix is a globalized view of language acquisition in which language is viewed as symbolic capital. The competition for this capital is analyzed in my study as parents enroll their children in a program of choice, as teachers apply to teach in the program, and as other stakeholders perceive gains and losses to their own “holdings” within a cultural field.
Shifting the focus from the global and national context, I now consider the local context into which these sociopolitical forces converged, that is, the case study of an educational program implementation in British Columbia. The following section outlines several theoretical perspectives that pertain to the individual and collective learning that took place during this implementation.

**Communities of Practice and Organizational Learning**

Learning played a key role in this study. Intensive French is an approach intended to improve the way children learn French, and the quality and extent of this learning was and is of great interest to the parents and teachers who took part in this study as well as to the participating school, district and provincial leaders. The IF teachers engaged in learning about and understanding IF since their first involvement with the program. The Surrey School District and the Province of British Columbia, through its Ministry of Education, have learned and continue to learn about this program from the experiences of stakeholders most closely involved.

One focus in this study is the learning that took place among the IF teachers and how it contributed to the overall understanding of the program. I also considered the learning undertaken by students, their parents, school leaders and non-IF teachers as well as the lessons taken forward to the district level. I examined what is involved in situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the practice of learning (Lave, 1993; Stoll, Fink, & Earl, 2003), and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). I also looked at the role of dialogue (Beairsto, 2003; Bohm, Factor, & Garrett, 1991; Isaacs, 1999) and learning organizations (Senge, 1990; Wenger, 2005) in order to complete the conceptual groundwork for interpreting the study findings.

The participation of teachers in this study could be characterized as “legitimate peripheral participation”, a term coined by Lave and Wenger (1991) while studying apprenticeship as a learning model. They used the term “community of practice” to refer to the community that acts as a living curriculum for the apprentice. In my study,
teachers became part of a community of practice and started a journey from debutante (in this new context) to more experienced practitioner. This journey was predicated on learning as a process that took place in a participation framework:

Learning understood as legitimate peripheral participation is not necessarily or directly dependent on pedagogical goals or official agenda, even in situations in which these goals appear to be a central factor ... rather, we have argued, that learning must be understood with respect to a practice as a whole, with its multiplicity of relations—both within the community and with the world at large. (pp. 113-114)

Rather than looking at learning as the acquisition of certain forms of knowledge, Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that learning is situated within social relationships. They argue that “meaning, understanding and learning are all defined relative to actional contexts, not to self-contained structures” (p. 15). Newcomers to a community typically participate peripherally, become familiar with the organization and language of the community, contribute to its tasks and goals, and gradually become old-timers.

Wenger’s (1998) notion of communities of practice supports the assumption that learning is a social enterprise and that knowing requires active engagement in the world. He proposes that learning within communities of practice “shapes not only what we do but also who we are and how we interpret what we do” (p. 4). He also notes that identity is constructed and negotiated through active participation in communities and that it evolves with time and social interaction. Wenger (2006) describes three crucial characteristics of communities of practice:

- **domain** – identity is defined by a shared domain of interest and commitment;
- **community** – members engage in joint activities, help each other and share information (but may do their work individually);
- **practice** – practitioners develop a shared repertoire of resources (a set of stories and cases) through time and sustained interaction.

(Definitions, ¶2)

Wenger (1998) posits that any community of practice “produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms, and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed
form” (p. 59). He extends the meaning of reification to include processes and products that represent significance in human practices and suggests that participation and reification are complementary. This construct is explored in terms of the IF teacher learning community and its actions, interactions, and points of focus.

Toohey’s (1998, 2000) application of Lave and Wenger’s (1991) conceptualization of legitimate peripheral participation within communities of practice in her research in primary classrooms was also considered in interpreting the social interaction and learning trajectories of members of the teacher learning community. In both contexts, the social structure of the community and the power relations that developed within it had an impact on certain individuals’ learning.

**Learning Organizations**

Senge (1990) advances a conceptualization of links between individual and community learning in his description of the learning organization. He argues that learning organizations start with the assumption that learning is important, continuous and best shared. Personal mastery, building a shared vision and team learning are tenets of this model, and capacity building is necessary to shape an organization’s future. Just as Anderson (1991) and Taylor (2004) have described other modern states, Senge (1990) portrays the learning organization as a means of allowing one to connect to the world and contribute to one’s own reality.

Much of what is written about learning organizations is situated in business contexts; however, Isaacson and Bamburg (1992) and Shields and Newton (1994) used Senge’s (1990) model to analyze whether schools are learning organizations. Isaacson and Bamburg refer to the tenets of a learning organization and posit that individual rather than collective group learning is valued in schools and that vision tends to come from leaders rather than from a distributed base. Shields and Newton (1994) used Senge’s model to analyze four schools participating in a provincial school improvement program in Saskatchewan. They conducted a case study involving observations and interviews with school principals and members of the school improvement team. They found that
personal mastery was centred on action rather than learning, some schools had a mission statement but unidentified goals, teachers were usually not team players, and there was more compartmentalization than collaboration. Both sets of authors concluded that schools are generally not effective learning organizations. When asked about this conclusion in an interview, Senge (1995) agreed: “Teachers don’t work together; there’s very little sense of collective learning going on in most schools” (cited in O’Neil, 1995, p. 20). These generalizations about individual and collective teacher learning (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992; Shields & Newton, 1994; Senge, 1995) are not supported by the findings of this case study.

Wenger (2005) advocates for the integration of organizations and communities, though admits the idea is paradoxical because organizations tend to manage and control and communities tend to self-govern. He points out that one must “not demonize organizations and romanticize communities” (p. 16) but, rather, integrate them productively. In the context of this study, recommendations are offered as to how to legitimize and value teacher learning communities without dictating what they do.

**Dialogue**

The dialogic process proposed in this study, both in its methodology and the process of meaning-making undertaken by stakeholders, can be considered on a continuum moving from reflection and discussion to dialogue on several levels. A number of perspectives from different fields such as physics, education, philosophy, and organizational management, are useful in considering what is meant by and can be attributed to dialogue.

Dialogue is a productive means of building collaborative meaning. According to Beairсто (2003), an educator and administrator, “the goal is to use the diverse points of view in the group to develop new understandings that no one participant had previously, and probably could not have developed alone” (p. 20). Dialogue does not strive for one single truth but rather “allows for multiple partial truths of equal value, and even for conflicting truths” (Beairсто, 2003, p. 22). Physicists Bohm, Factor, and Garrett (1991)
view dialogue as “an arena in which collective learning takes place and out of which a sense of harmony, fellowship and creativity can arise” (¶1). Their view extends the content of what is deliberated upon to the process itself as participants examine their preconceptions, patterns of thought and roles within the process. These insights, rather than problem-solving or learning, become the focus; however, solutions and/or learning may occur as by-products of dialogue.

Bohm et al.’s (1991) conceptualization of dialogue goes beyond that which is proposed in this study; however, there are some parallels and a similar set of conditions. The authors see dialogue as a microcosm of society taking place with groups of twenty to forty people seated in a circle. The roots of their conceptualization may be found in psycho- and sociotherapy although the authors point out that group therapy is not the objective. The purpose of dialogue, according to the authors, is to reveal and explore deep, collective meanings. The conditions for starting and developing a dialogue include suspending assumptions, taking time to talk and listen, providing unobtrusive leadership and including flexibility in topics. Dialogue occurs when people are involved in a mutual quest for understanding. The suspension of assumptions and judgments is difficult but necessary, according to Bohm et al. (1991) because it allows participants to listen. It is in listening to others and to oneself that the actual process of exploration takes place. Participants must view each other as colleagues or peers with a common interest in working together: “Dialogue is essentially a conversation between equals” (p. 10). In the early stages there needs to be a facilitator who “holds the context” of dialogue. Her role should be to assist the group in moving forward but should not control the group or its interactions. In fact, this guidance should take the form of “leading from behind” and make itself redundant as quickly as possible.

Although there are common elements among the various conceptualizations of dialogue, there is no step-by-step approach for creating the necessary conditions for it to take place. Educational leader, William Isaacs (1999), suggests that harnessing the power of dialogue involves nurturing “fields” of interaction within “containers” that we have the power to create:
A field is the quality of shared meaning and energy that can emerge among a group of people. We cannot manufacture a ‘field’. But we can create conditions under which a rich field for interaction is more likely to appear. These conditions make up what we have called the container for dialogue, in which deep and transformative listening becomes possible. You cannot work ‘on’ a field. But you can create a ‘container’. (p. 242, Isaacs’ emphasis)

Containers can expand to accommodate deeper and broader forms of interaction as long as certain boundaries are maintained. Within these limits, according to Isaacs, “the intensities of human activity can safely emerge” (p. 242).

Dialogue is a means to move to a higher, more thoughtful level of discourse. Philosopher Charles Taylor (1991) calls for “an openness to horizons of significance ... [and] a self-definition in dialogue” (p. 66). In other words, we define ourselves, that which matters and that which should matter in dialogue with others. What is needed is not simply a discussion of what is or what we might like but, rather, a focus on a moral ideal which Taylor defines as a “picture of what a better or higher mode of life would be, where ‘better’ and ‘higher’ are defined not in terms of what we happen to desire or need but offer a standard of what we ought to desire” (p. 16). He suggests that moral discourse increases the level of meaning as well as the potential for rich mutual understandings. Examining teacher development, educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1986) also denounces preoccupations with individual growth that do not involve dialogic processes. Instead, she argues that “connectedness is required, an overcoming of passivity, a capacity to notice what lies around us, and a commitment to the constitution of what might be called a common world” (p. 74).

The interdisciplinary theoretical lenses used to interpret the findings of this study provided conceptual tools to illuminate how each stakeholder group engaged in a process of understanding and adapting to the IF program, and how the collective experience of each group influenced the others’. This enabled me to examine processes involving situated learning within the IF teacher learning community and to explore how dialogic processes did or did not influence learning among other stakeholder groups. This collective experience is discussed further in terms of organizational learning in Chapter 5.
In the following section, I review several key research studies involving groups of teachers who were engaged in learning, adaptation and/or communities of practice during the implementation of an innovative program.

**Previous Research**

The following four studies are significant to considering the learning and dialogic processes that occurred among the IF teachers, the group with which I spent the most time. Links will be made to my study, specifically the processes of decision-making and meaning-making experienced by teachers.

Prabhu (1987) conducted a three-year study of English second language teachers in India as they implemented a new teaching approach focused on meaning rather than form. The approach, called the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP), was an attempt to improve the outcomes of the existing grammar-focused pedagogy in place since the mid 1970s. Learner outcomes left much to be desired, however, because there was very little application outside the classroom and, although able to achieve some degree of accuracy, learners displayed very little fluency. The purpose of the CTP approach is to develop pedagogic procedures that focused on meaning and communication rather than pre-selected planned language structures and form-focused language practice. The parallels in the history of Canadian FSL education are evident, but what is more pertinent to the present study is the process teachers and researchers underwent to develop understanding about the pedagogical approach. This process involved classroom experimentation, teacher meetings, sharing of lesson plans and reporting to a wide audience through newsletters and annual seminars. It was clear that “the project was not designed as an experiment to 'prove' a given methodology empirically but was, rather, a classroom operation for developing a methodology and gaining some understanding of it” (pp. 2-3). The interplay of theory, practice and perception through a dialogic process directly influenced the teaching and vice versa.
Prabhu discovered the importance of a teacher’s “sense of plausibility”—a sense that develops over time from perceptions that are “borrowed” from past experiences as a learner and teacher and gradually become part of a teacher’s mental frame. When faced with innovation, that frame is disrupted, and the extent to which the teacher is influenced by the innovation “will depend on what perceptions teachers are already operating with, how strong their sense of plausibility is about them, how firm or 'fluid' the mental frames are at the time, and so on” (p. 105). I found this particularly appropriate in interpreting how different teachers incorporated (or did not) the elements of IF pedagogy as they came to understand them.

Smith (1991) studied nine English second language (ESL) teachers in three British Columbia post-secondary institutions, gathering data through classroom observations and post-observational meetings and interviews. Smith examined these data with the teachers to determine the instructional decisions the teachers made and why they made them. She also analyzed the data in terms of congruency between stated beliefs and classroom actions and consistency with second language theory. Smith provided background on the dominant theoretical perspectives and instructional methods in the ESL literature in order to situate the teachers’ theoretical bases for their decisions. She discovered that teachers’ decisions were influenced by their beliefs, their experiential knowledge, perceptions of instructional tasks and contextual factors. She concluded that teachers’ practice extends far beyond a single method or range of strategies and that teachers blend theory in different ways in their classrooms. Their classroom autonomy outweighs institutional factors such as exams and planning, and the socioaffective dimension is most important in their practice; in fact, it is deemed essential in “developing an instructional theory that is considered viable by practitioners” (p. 250). The valuing of autonomy and certain personally significant practices that Smith observed is consistent with my observations of the IF teachers in this study. Smith used ethnographic methods to probe deeply into individual teacher’s beliefs and practice but did not seek to develop jointly constructed theories or understanding.
A third study involving ESL teachers’ principles and classroom practices was conducted in Australia by Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, and Thwaite (2001). The conceptualization of 18 teachers’ practice was explored through classroom observations over five-week cycles followed by “genuine dialogue” between researcher and teacher in order to probe underlying principles. The purpose of the study was to understand and explain teacher action so as to inform curriculum policy in relation to innovation because “any innovation in classroom practice—from the adoption of a new technique or textbook to the implementation of a new curriculum—has to be accommodated within the teacher’s own framework of teaching principles” (pp. 471-472). These principles, according to Breen et al. derive from underlying beliefs or personal theories about broad educational processes, the nature of language and of language learning and teaching. Drawing on Bourdieuan theory, the authors explored language teaching as the “situated interaction of dispositions and social practices in a particular field of professional activity” (p. 474) and examined whether teachers share a particular set of dispositions or principles or a collective pedagogy. To uncover teachers’ professional knowledge and principles, which are most often embedded in their action, small teams of researchers observed teaching, took field notes and, with the teachers, co-constructed the data by transcribing teachers’ descriptions of practices and their reasons for each. Breen et al. discovered that teachers were very different from each other in how they operationalized their principles and that each appeared to have a “personal configuration of pedagogic principles” and favoured practices. Despite this diversity, there was also a collective pedagogy or professional consensus of how certain classroom activities lead to certain outcomes similar to those linked to Prabhu’s (1987) sense of plausibility. I too considered teachers’ sense of plausibility as a mediating force in integrating IF principles and practices.

The study that mine closely parallels was conducted by Lewis (1995) also in Surrey. The study took place over two school years (January 1993 to January 1994) with a group of French teachers during the early stages of implementing a new approach to teaching French as a second language. In this narrative inquiry, Lewis described in detail
the experiences of nine teachers and herself as they struggled with the challenges of incorporating into their practice a multidimensional, project-based curriculum. She identified certain tensions early in the study which she categorized as “risk-taking” and “engagement” and then explored these with teachers through individual interviews, group meetings and classroom observations. Lewis wove together the individual and group constructions of meaning throughout the process and, in documenting teachers’ lived experience and growing understanding, she noted that not only were their assumptions about second language teaching and learning disrupted, so too were assumptions about the relationship between theory and practice. The disparity between what is prescribed and what is experienced, as well as the altering of assumptions, was also observed in my study. Both studies document the concurrent re-construction of theory and practice and the sense-making of experiences through a professional learning community. One of the key lessons learned through Lewis’ study is that “no matter how noble the aims of the curriculum or how innovative the strategies, the work of the teacher is crucial in mediating this curriculum for students” (p. 109). Another is that one of the essential elements of teaching is “remaining ‘just a little off balance’, continuously involved in evaluating the best way to proceed towards goals which are ever open to scrutiny” (p. 92). While Lewis’ study and mine are both oriented towards disrupting the unproblematic assumptions of a new curriculum and sharing the teachers’ lived experiences within a learning community, my study does not probe as deeply into personally held beliefs and individual meaning-making. It does, however, draw personal examples to build a collective sense of understanding and, as well, weaves in the constructions of other stakeholders.

A common element in the four studies and mine is the fact that theory and practice were consciously intertwined in the classroom and in negotiation by and among teachers. Two other studies undertaken to explore teacher groups working with intensive French in other jurisdictions (Collins, Stead, & Woolfrey, 2004; Kristmanson, Cogswell, & Campbell, 2003) were reviewed in Chapter 1. My case study differs from all of these previous studies by examining a wide range of stakeholders and analyzing not only their
experiences during the program implementation but also their aspirations and interactions. The methodology used to discover these is outlined in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3.

Methodology

Social program evaluation is a “field of applied social inquiry uniquely distinguished by the explicit value dimensions of its knowledge claims, by the overt political character of its contexts, and by the inevitable pluralism and polyvocality of its actors” (Greene, 2000, p. 981). There are many diverse approaches to evaluation as well as alternative epistemological assumptions, ideological stances and methods. Historically, program evaluation has been dominated by an orientation to the interests of policy makers and funding agencies, normally involving causal questions about attainment of outcomes. Since the 1970s or the “third moment” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) in qualitative inquiry, there has been an emergence of approaches in evaluation that share a hermeneutic view of knowledge claims, an interpretivist/constructivist epistemology and a value orientation that promotes contextualism, pluralism and understanding. Qualitative methods that honour the experiences of stakeholders are typically used within case studies and involve open-ended interviews and observations, document reviews and dialectics (Stake, 1995). The role of dialogue in evaluation is paramount and signifies, according to Greene (2001), a commitment to “engagement with problems of practice, the challenges of difference and diversity in practices and their understandings” (p. 181). These elements typified my interactions with the stakeholder groups in this study.

Constructivist inquirers seek to understand, and this objective is best achieved relationally. The constructivist paradigm is based on socially constructed realities in which the inquirer and the inquired-into create their own specific, contextual constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, 2000). Gergen (1988, in Schwandt, 1999) adds that “understanding is not contained within me, or within you, but in that which we generate together in our form of relatedness” (p. 447). Such a connection between
inquirer and inquired was evident from the start of this study as I tried to understand stakeholders’ constructions of meaning. I recognize that my own worldview became part of those constructions and that I needed to acknowledge it as part of the interpretive process. Greene (2000) supports such an acknowledgement: “Inquirer bias, experience, expertise and insight are all part of the meanings, constructed and inscribed” (p. 986).

**Negotiating my Role as Participant-Researcher**

My interest in this program is far from unbiased: my 31-year background as a French teacher and, for half that time, a teacher educator, means that I not only have an abiding passion for second language education but care about how it is regarded societally and politically and how it takes shape in the classroom. This background is what drew me to the intensive French (IF) program and this study and allowed me to contribute to its collective understanding. I did not think of myself as an evaluator per se; however, Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) conceptualization of “fourth generation evaluation” and Stake’s (1985, 1991) “responsive evaluation” resonated deeply as being descriptive of my role and function. While not hired by the Surrey School District to evaluate the program, I was nonetheless closer to that task than anyone else in the process. In often-indirect ways and from within as well as outside the district, I was asked questions, such as, How is the program going? What does the district mean by … ? How am I doing in my teaching? How are other staff members feeling? How might the teachers respond if…? What will happen next for me? and so on. Guba and Lincoln (1989) consider this type of intercommunication an important and required step in the evaluative process, that is, “cross-fertilizing each group with the constructions, claims, concerns and issues arising from other groups so that those items must be confronted and dealt with” (p. 72).

Early in the implementation process, I noticed certain tensions in my role. I had been hired by the district not only to support the program and the IF teachers but also to measure the attainment of language proficiency outcomes as part of the district’s program research. At the same time, I was conducting my doctoral research. This external affiliation, added to the fact that I was not a district employee but, rather, a seconded
consultant, contributed to my position as an outside “monitor” of the program and its progress. Some confusion or unease with a researcher in an organizational setting has been documented by Mirvis and Seashore (1979, in Cooper, Brandon, & Lindberg, 1998) when the researcher becomes “entangled in a network of multiple roles” and the “ambiguous and conflicting expectations derived from them” (p. 266). In my research journal, I recorded that, in one school, a non-IF teacher referred to me as the “district researcher” and the “intensive French testing person” (Research journal, September 2004). I since became known and referred to as the intensive French Helping Teacher who was doing her doctoral research on the program, a label that accurately described my role.

I became part of the program and it became part of me through district level planning sessions, parent information meetings, teacher discussions and training sessions, demonstration-teaching, working with students, and talking to school leaders and other school staff members. My external yet deeply engaged position in the district, my personal and professional commitment to the program and the integrated nature of my interpersonal and intergroup relations contributed to my becoming a “passionate participant” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Furthermore, I altered the study landscape by interacting with and changing it through purposeful intervention. The questions I asked, such as, "How was the program being experienced by various stakeholders?" and “In what ways was the program meaningful?” are typical, according to Greene (2000), of social program evaluation. I also asked broader questions about what there was to be learned in terms of second language education, policy implementation and professional learning.

I tried very hard to differentiate between conducting research for the district and for the thesis. I conducted student testing and worked with teachers and students as part of my role in the district, whereas focus group meetings with parents and students and interviews with parents, teachers and leaders took place separately. For the most part, the division of research duties worked well. There was one area of overlap, however; that is, meeting with the IF teachers as a group, which was part of my district duties. These
meetings were geared to open-ended discussion, resource-sharing and professional learning. With teacher permission and Ethics approval from the district and university, I taped, transcribed and shared the texts of these meetings with teachers in an effort to grasp and represent their understanding about the program. During the subsequent interviewing of individual IF teachers, groups of non-IF teachers and school and district leaders, I noticed that some of the issues and concerns of one group entered into the discourse with other groups. At some points, I felt as though I was sharing secrets, but I also knew that some groups, for example, the district and school leaders, needed to hear issues and concerns of IF- and non-IF teachers that they were not otherwise hearing. I also realized that the group discussions allowed individuals to articulate, share and formulate their constructions in ways that could inform other stakeholders. I was not asked to act as a go-between, but that is what I became.

From the earliest involvement, I not only fulfilled the district IF Helping Teacher and tester roles, I was also the program historian, recording events and collecting documents related to the program. I was aware that all stakeholders and I were walking on new ground and that everything mattered and would be memorable. Without knowing what would be significant to whom, I erred on the side of collecting or recording as much as possible. Considering Stake’s (1995) view that case study researchers emphasize different roles throughout a study, that is, researcher as observer, interviewer, teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer or interpreter, all seemed to unfold as it should.

I initiated my research by chronicling the various events in the implementation of IF in the Surrey School District by collecting documents, interacting with those closest to the study, and coming to understand the program and its context. I interacted with groups of stakeholders in formal and informal settings as the IF program took shape:

- 255 students in 9 IF classes (IF students) and their parents (IF parents),
- 9 teachers delivering the IF program (IF teachers),
- 16 teachers in IF schools not delivering the program (non-IF teachers),
- 6 teachers who may receive IF students in Grade 8 (future IF teachers),
- 8 principals and 2 vice-principals in IF schools (school leaders),
• 4 district curriculum leaders and supervisory personnel (district leaders),
• 1 provincial Ministry of Education personnel (provincial leaders),
• 1 parent lobby group director (parent lobby group leader).

I also interviewed two provincial leaders from two other provinces, one program researcher from another province and one national education researcher. These interviewees were not directly involved with the British Columbia implementation but shared knowledge and insights from their experience of IF implementation elsewhere.

The kinds of knowing and understanding that program stakeholders and I sought were, on one level, highly practical. This was certainly the case with the group with which I worked most closely, the IF teachers. Aristotle termed the kind of knowledge that supports practical activity, *phronesis* or practical wisdom; it comprises yet goes beyond *episteme*, scientific, objective knowledge and *techné*, knowing how to do. *Phronesis* means knowing what to do in specific contexts; it is knowledge and skill that is practice-based but also grounded in theory and morality and enables us to engage in informed, practical activity or *praxis* (Schwandt, 2001b). When teachers in this study discussed their practice, they did so at a deeper level than as mere technicians. The frequency and intensity of our meetings during the first year of implementation were useful in developing praxis. I acted as both “a facilitator and critical (Socratic) interlocutor, introducing the ideas of one group to another and ‘keeping the conversation going’—probing and encouraging stakeholders to reflect upon their views” (Schwandt, 2001b, p. 233). The implementation process came to life on many levels, and a framework for action and reflection soon formed.

I now outline the theoretical underpinnings of the methodological approach I used to explore, analyze and interpret the stakeholders’ experience of the program implementation.
Responsive Evaluation

Responsive evaluation, first developed by Stake in 1975 and later refined in 1991, suggests a wider focus for evaluation than the quantitative elements typically used to determine program effectiveness. It is based on “what people do naturally to evaluate things: they observe and react” (1975, p. 11). Stake explains that, in a responsive evaluation study, early attention is concentrated on the “activity, uniqueness and social plurality” of the program before determining those data gathering and interpretive schemes that might be useful for indicating program quality (1991, p. 78). Stake adds that, in a responsive evaluation study, the conceptual structure is an “issue list, an identification of high priority puzzlements and problems to enhance understanding” (p. 78, Stake’s emphasis). In this sense, the emergent issues themselves determine where continued attention should be focused.

Responsive evaluation is preferable to formal evaluations, according to Stake (1991), because it is more carefully responsive to the activity and contexts of teaching and learning. Its epistemological assumptions are based on the construction of reality in three ways: we respond to outside stimulation (external reality); we interpret that external reality (experiential reality); and we interpret both realities at their most complex level (rational reality). The second and third forms of reality are socially constructed and ever evolving as two or more people interpret what they experience and, through interacting, influence each other’s interpretations. The aim of research is to construct a clearer experiential reality and more sophisticated rational reality into understanding that can withstand scrutiny. Stake asserts that, rather than seeking to provide solid summary judgements of program quality, a responsive evaluator shares her understanding of “the thrusts and sweeps of the program, ... processes and products and relationships among them, ... needs, resources and valuing of stakeholders ... [and] standards of quality” (p. 83).

Fourth generation evaluation, as envisioned by Guba and Lincoln (1989) was inspired by Stake’s (1975) notion of responsive evaluation and, while adhering to similar
tenets, goes even further in advocating for the primacy of the diverse views of stakeholders, defined as individuals or groups that are put at risk by an evaluation. For the sake of brevity, I am using the term *responsive evaluator* in this study even though Guba and Lincoln use *responsive constructivist evaluator* to identify a researcher conducting fourth generation evaluation. Their research approach emphasizes responsive focusing whereby the decisions about information to be collected are based on stakeholder inputs. Stakeholder inputs are categorized as *claims* (favourable assertions about the program), *concerns* (unfavourable assertions) or *issues* (items about which there is disagreement among stakeholders). These, rather than preset questions devised by a controlling entity or the evaluator, become the focus of the evaluation.

A constructivist paradigm is appropriate because ontologically, it asserts that realities are constructed by those involved in the inquiry, both individually and in a shared fashion. Epistemologically, a constructivist paradigm indicates that the inquiry findings are created by the interaction between the observer and the observed. Methodologically, a hermeneutic-dialectic process “takes full advantage, and account, of the observer/observed interaction to create a constructed reality that is as informed and sophisticated as it can be made at a particular point in time” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 44). There are no “absolute” data but, rather, a continuous interplay of data collection and analysis throughout the inquiry via a hermeneutic-dialectic process. A responsive evaluator embarks on a long-term, interactive, negotiated process involving all stakeholders and the evaluator as they jointly construct and reconstruct understanding about a program. Control of the study, therefore, is shared between the responsive evaluator and the stakeholders. Voices are mixed, dominated at times by the evaluator and at others by the stakeholders, and there is a conscious reflexivity on the part of the evaluator (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Compared to traditional or more managerial-driven forms of evaluation, the roles of an evaluator have evolved in the following, more responsive ways:

- from technician to human instrument and data analyst,
- from describer to illuminator and historian,
from judge to mediator, enabling consensus-making,
from controller to collaborator,
from investigator to learner and teacher,
from discoverer to reality shaper,
from passive observer to change agent.

A case study format is most useful for evaluations in that it enables readers to learn about the case, develop understandings and see how those who participated in the study constructed their understanding (Greene, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Stake, 1991, 1995). A case study, as with responsive evaluation, is organized around issues.

Each stakeholder group engaged in various “practices” or ways of being and doing within that group. Dyson and Genishi (2005) describe a practice as having an “explicit emphasis on identity and ideologies (assumptions about values, ideas, and relationships between people)” (p. 8). The authors link practice to a study’s context and “extrasituational context” or the larger field of historical, economic and cultural forces (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992, in Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 8). This extrasituational context is not mentioned as explicitly in the evaluation literature, yet it played a prominent role in this study. Stakeholders made meaning of events and interactions within the Surrey IF program and were also influenced by global forces, market trends, federal language policy and politics, provincial funding decisions, and district and school implementation choices. All of these factors played a part in bringing stakeholders together and exerted an influence on the understandings that emerged from the study.

Dyson and Genishi (2005, p. 14) suggest “angling one’s vision” or changing the research lenses throughout the study depending on what is happening on site as well as the larger questions driving the study. Some of those larger questions are related to the notion that certain assets might accrue to some of the study’s stakeholders and not to others; that different groups would compete for particular assets or opportunities, or that policy or program ideals might be compromised or altered by the local context. Discussion related to these questions emerged in conversations with groups and
individuals and formed part of the discourse of all stakeholder groups. The dialogic processes involved in uncovering and constructing this understanding are described in the following section.

**A Dialogic Approach**

The essence of dialogue in evaluation is the reciprocal exchange and education among stakeholders about their diverse interests and values, toward legitimizing difference and equalizing voice. Dialogic evaluation then serves as a forum and force for democratization ... Each gathering is a potential site for dialogue, for the respectful sharing of views and values, the reciprocal teaching and learning about different perspectives and experiences, the effort to understand the Other and to thereby develop a stronger, more authentic relationship with her or him. From such strong relationships come strong programs. (Greene, 2001, pp. 185-186)

The processes in constructing and interpreting meaning are dialogic in nature and date back to Socrates. Case study methodology in general and responsive evaluation, in particular, endorse the social construction of meaning and subsequent sharing, negotiation and reconstruction of meaning. Responsive evaluation methodology proposes a hermeneutic-dialectic process aligned with Audi’s (1998) definition of hermeneutics as “the art or theory of interpretation that emphasizes understanding as continuing a historical tradition, as well as dialogical openness, in which prejudices are challenged and horizons broadened” (p. 378). This guiding purpose is embodied in responsive evaluation’s methods of gathering and analyzing stakeholders’ constructions as study data. Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend a circular approach based on the forming, shaping and reshaping of constructions within various groups and then the sharing of those reconstructions among groups in order that claims, concerns and issues emerge and become part of ever-growing and deepening circles. Outside sources of information are added to the process via documents, pertinent literature and the researcher’s etic framework, but these have no more weight than do the stakeholders’ claims, concerns and issues.

Evaluation involves communicating with people to find out about their experiences and sharing these understandings with them and with other groups, including
leaders and policy makers. According to Widdershoven (2001), dialogue is a constitutive element of evaluation and a process in which those practices being studied are changed as a result of participant understanding and interaction: “dialogue is itself the medium through which practices are created, sustained and modified” (p. 253). This transformative power requires being open to the “Other” in order to reflect on and critique one’s own as well as the Other’s understandings (Schwandt, 2001b). Openness is not always easily achieved where power relationships exist within or among stakeholder groups, especially in an evaluative context; however, every attempt must be made to legitimize all stakeholder perspectives, experiences and value claims (Greene, 2001).

It is rare that parents, teachers and school and district leaders come together in one conversation. More often than not, these groups meet to impart and receive information or address a problem and, in such contexts, they are usually cordial and often collegial, but they meet in a state of unequal authority and voice. Effective dialogue, according to Greene (2001), provides a context in which “role and status differences and ... protection of self-interests are replaced by interactions guided by reciprocity, appreciation of the worldviews and interests of Others, and a willingness to make space for Others’ concerns and agendas” (p. 183). It was difficult given my purview as a helping teacher and researcher to officiate a full group stakeholder meeting at which key claims, concerns and issues presented by representatives from all stakeholder groups could be aired in a spirit of open dialogue, even though such a meeting is one of the steps Guba and Lincoln (1989) include in fourth generation evaluation methodology. The methodology I used in this study was, therefore, an abridged version or, rather, the initiation of the larger process of responsive evaluation.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) advocate a hermeneutic-dialectic framework in which stakeholders and evaluator interact to create an evaluative product. The product is not a set of conclusions, recommendations or judgements but, rather, “an agenda for negotiation” of claims, concerns and issues that emerge from the process and are not resolved in the stakeholder interactions. The work of the evaluator is to facilitate
encounters whereby each group examines and, hopefully, comes to understand the constructions of all the others. The process enables each group to develop better informed and more sophisticated constructions and, in some cases, reach consensus on the various claims, concerns and issues. It offers an ambitious scope and sequence of research and negotiation, some of which was beyond my power to pursue with full circularity with all stakeholders. I did, however, adhere to it to the best of my ability in my work with teachers, teacher leaders and district leaders and, to a lesser degree, with parents and students. A simplified version of Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) “Flow of fourth generation evaluation” chart outlines the steps in a hermeneutic-dialectic process:

- identify stakeholders,
- develop joint constructions within each group,
- enlarge joint stakeholder constructions through new information and increased sophistication,
- sort out resolved claims, concerns and issues,
- prioritize unresolved items,
- collect information and adding sophistication,
- define and elucidate unresolved problems,
- select a representative circle of stakeholder representatives to shape construction,
- share a case study report,
- recycle the entire process.

(pp. 186-187)

The first four steps were undertaken during the first two years of the study, the next three were underway during the third year, and the final three steps have not yet taken place and are included as part of this study’s recommendations.

**Field Work**

The intent of the case study was to discover and give voice to the contextualized understanding of those closest to the program and its implementation. It was important
that jointly constructed knowledge claims be seen as empirically based representations and not as biased opinions (Greene, 2000). The purpose of interviews, focus group meetings, conversations and on-site visits was not just to gather data but to actively co-construct meaning. Interviews do this as a “linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent” (Schwandt, 2001a, p. 79). The context is invariably the “life world” of the person interviewed and his or her relation to it (Kvale, 1996). These encounters often involve stories that provide windows into an individual’s dynamic community and enable others to understand what is shared with them and what is unique to that individual (Greene, 2000).

My case study focused on the implementation of intensive French in the Surrey School District, British Columbia’s highest-enrolling district with 4300 teachers and 65,000 students, of which approximately 40 percent come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken (Surrey School District, 2006d). At the outset of the study, there were 99 elementary schools of which four started an intensive French program in 2004-05 and one started the program in 2005-06. The stakeholders were grouped as follows: IF students, their parents, IF teachers, non-IF teachers, future IF teachers, school leaders and district leaders. I also interviewed others who care about but are not as closely involved in the case, including a British Columbia Ministry of Education official, a Canadian Parents for French executive director, an intensive French program researcher from another province, a national language policy researcher, and three educators involved in coordinating or teaching intensive French in two other provinces. This case study focused on the five implementing schools between April 2004 and January 2007.

In an effort to build understanding about the program, interviews, unstructured meetings and structured focus group meetings were conducted with all aforementioned stakeholders. Each encounter related to the case, sometimes in a formal meeting and sometimes in informal exchanges. There has been almost no week since April 2004 during which I have not had contact either in person, by telephone or email with members
of the study. Responsive evaluation calls for such prolonged engagement and persistent observation in order to establish trust and uncover constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

One aspect of my work as a district researcher was to administer language proficiency tests and record the results (explained in more detail in Chapter 5). Assessment data, in the form of audio-recorded oral interviews and written samples, were collected from all IF students at various points during October 2004 to June 2006. I compiled the French oral and written proficiency results and shared them with teachers, district leaders as well as with the program founders who calibrated and analyzed the data and then added them to the national data set. I also assessed the English proficiency of a subset of IF students and a control group of non-IF students whose home language is not English and who have received English second language (ESL) instruction. I conducted oral interviews with the IF and non-IF ESL students in October and again in May during 2004-05 and 2005-06. The tentative findings about the positive effect of learning French in an intensive program on the English proficiency of ESL students are included in a separate report (Carr, 2007). These quantitative data were part of district leaders’ and my understanding of the case and, in general terms, a part of the collective understanding.

**Chronology of the Case**

What follows is the chronology of the case in terms of its history in the Surrey School District and then of my involvement in the case. As well, an accounting of the various types of data collected is included in chronological order. Throughout the study, I also researched a variety of language policy documents through archival and online research in order to understand the sociopolitical context in which the study was taking place.

I first learned of intensive French from the International Languages Helping Teacher just before she attended an IF summer institute in Montreal in 2003 to learn about the program. The district’s interest had been triggered at a French committee meeting in which the Canadian Parents for French Annual Report (2003) was reviewed.
The district leader whom I interviewed recounts her first conception of intensive French in Surrey:

I saw it being something different than immersion that could become a neighbourhood option for kids going to their ‘neighbourhood school’ but still having the choice to participate in a program that might not guarantee them a certain level of fluency by the end of high school but certainly give them way more of a jump start than the core French program. (Interview, district leader, May, 2006)

After the 2003 summer institute attended by the International Languages (IL) Helping Teacher, a District Principal and two French teachers, a report was made to the school board recommending exploration of the idea of implementing intensive French in Surrey. This coincided with the Dion (2003) announcement of the Federal Action Plan and meant that students entering the IF program in Surrey could contribute to increasing the number of bilingual graduates by 2013. As well, adding a new language learning option in a district that already offered many district and community-initiated programs of choice was consistent with Surrey’s way of operating: “The Board has always been interested in value-added, for lack of a better term, value-added differences between schools, particularly if there’s no cost to the Board and there is educational viability” (Interview, district leader, May, 2006). Choice and flexibility are, in fact, tenets of the provincial government’s New Era vision (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Six parent meetings were held during March and April 2004 and were attended mainly by parents interested in enrolling their children. It was during this period that my involvement in the study began. These preliminary meetings were held in the four geographical corners of the Surrey School District in schools where there was not an existing French immersion program but where there might be interest in a different way of learning French. Given that intensive French is a program of choice operated in neighbourhood schools, it means that students are generally not transported from another area. In order for a school to be able to offer IF, there must be sufficient interest and enrolment from within that school’s community. After six parent information meetings,
of which I attended two, the communities of four schools had sufficient enrolment to start
the program: two in the north of Surrey, one centrally and one in the south.

On April 29, 2004, I attended an intensive French presentation by the program
founders, Joan Netten and Claude Germain, to school and district leaders during which
expectations for the program, reports about implementation in other provinces, and
general information were shared. During May to July, the IL Helping Teacher and I met
for four afternoons to prepare for the coming year. We then accompanied the new IF
teachers to Montreal for a six-day summer institute run by the program founders. I was
seconded as an intensive French Helping Teacher for 20 percent of a full-time contract
(although this increased to 40 percent for seven months from December to June 2005).
My role was to support the implementation process by assisting teachers in their
classrooms, conducting student testing, liaising with school and district leaders, and
developing curriculum and assessment documents for the district and province. Table 2
shows a record of the meetings with teachers during July 2004 to January 2007:

Table 2.
Record of IF Teacher Meetings 2004-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 of Implementation, August 2004 to June 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 26, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 12 to 17, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 27, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 30, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 16, 2004 after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 5, 2004 after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 26, 2004 after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 30, 2004 (school day with release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 27, 2005 (school day with release)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 28, 2005 (school day with release)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year 2 of Implementation, August 2005 to June 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 31, 2005</td>
<td>Conducted full-day meetings to plan and prepared for Year Two with focus on literacy approach and follow-up program for second year of IF instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1, 2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 18, 2005</td>
<td>Meeting planned to discuss IF teaching and plan for reporting (Year 2 of program) was cancelled due to two-week teacher strike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 9, 2005</td>
<td>Shared and learned about the follow-up program; met with program founders and district leader; discussed issues and concerns; planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 26, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 19, 2006</td>
<td>Shared and learned about the follow-up program; discussed issues and concerns; planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 26, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of Year 3 of Implementation, August 2006 to January 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 24, 2006</td>
<td>Conducted full-day meeting to review instructional strategies; discussed follow-up program for Grade 6 and 7; planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 19, 2006</td>
<td>Conducted professional development session on literacy strategies in IF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(partial afternoon release and after school)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 19, 2007</td>
<td>Shared and planned for upcoming cultural events; discussed plans for new Grade 6 intake.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program stakeholders

The following groups were closely involved in the implementation of intensive French in Surrey. No attempt was made to differentiate individuals within groups, that is, to identify parents or teachers from one school or another. There were, of course, diverse views expressed within each group, and these were reflected in verbatim transcripts; however there was no association of individuals to schools. The groups involved in this study and the methods for gathering data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Intensive French Program Stakeholders and Methods of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder groups</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IF students</td>
<td>255 students of which 85 spoke a home language other than English (119 students in 4 schools during 2004-05 and 136 students in five schools in 2005-06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF parents</td>
<td>Parents of 253 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF teachers</td>
<td>9 IF teachers ranging in experience from 0 to 28 years in early and late French immersion and elementary and secondary core French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder groups</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IF teachers</td>
<td>One group meeting with the non-IF teachers in each of 2 schools was held in June 2005; attended by 8 teachers in each school. Individual interviews were conducted with 2 non-IF teachers in June 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 non-IF teachers in 3 IF schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future IF teachers</td>
<td>One group meeting and testing-training sessions was held in January 2005 and January 2006. An email questionnaire was sent in March 2006 to which all 6 teachers responded. Individual interview in January 2007 with Grade 8 teacher (Department Head) who will be teaching IF students in 2007-08.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Grade 8 teachers in four secondary schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School leaders</td>
<td>Individual interviews with 5 school leaders were conducted during 2005 and 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 school leaders in 5 IF schools (8 principals and 2 vice-principals) ranging in experience from 21 to 35 years (3 retired in June 2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District leaders</td>
<td>Individual interviews were conducted with 2 leaders. The IL Helping Teacher attended most IF teacher group meetings; we met about the program on a bi-monthly basis and communicated by email and telephone on a weekly basis. Individual interviews were held with the former Assistant Superintendent May 2006 and with the IL Helping Teacher in June 2006. The Directors of Instruction attended meetings with IF teachers and school leaders and met with the IL Helping Teacher and me on several occasions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 district leaders: a former Assistant Superintendent, the International Languages (IL) Helping Teacher, 2 District Directors of Instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial leaders</td>
<td>Individual interviews were conducted in person (British Columbia) or by telephone (other provinces) between May and August 2006. One meeting was held in December 2006 attended by district leaders and British Columbia Ministry of Education official.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One British Columbia Ministry of Education official involved in language policy and programs; 2 provincial level program coordinators (in 2 different provinces) who were active in IF implementation but have now retired or moved to another position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent lobby group leader</td>
<td>Individual interview was conducted in June 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Canadian Parents for French Executive Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF teacher from another province</td>
<td>Individual interview was conducted by telephone and via email in July 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One teacher involved in teaching IF in another province during its 3 pilot years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF program researcher</td>
<td>Individual interview was conducted by telephone and via email in July 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One university researcher who conducted a doctoral study of IF in another province</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National education researcher</td>
<td>Individual interview was conducted in July 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One university researcher who is directing the 2013 Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were collected in audio-recorded interviews and group meetings. I interviewed each of the five IF school leaders at least once, and three were interviewed two or three times. One meeting with school and district leaders took place in each of the three implementation years, and there was one meeting with all leaders and IF teachers in the second year. In all interviews, the school leader was the principal; however, in the
district meetings, one vice-principal attended as well. I interviewed two district leaders: the former Assistant Superintendent who was instrumental in raising awareness about and embarking on the IF program, and the IL Helping Teacher with whom I worked closely and who attended many of the IF teacher meetings. I interviewed individual IF teachers before, during and after involvement in the implementation: two teachers prior to starting the program, three teachers during the study and two teachers who left the program. Finally, I held one meeting with non-IF teachers in each of two schools at the end of the first year of implementation and followed up with two individual interviews with non-IF teachers in the same schools.

**Access to Program Stakeholders**

I had informal discussions with school leaders, non-IF teachers and IF parents from time to time during the nearly three-year study. District permission to conduct research with teachers and school leaders was granted by the Surrey School District and by Simon Fraser University’s Research Ethics Office in January 2005, although I conducted preliminary interviews, with teachers’ written permission, in November 2004 (Appendix A). My initial focus was the teachers’ process of understanding the new curriculum and its effect on their practice but, as the study progressed, I became interested in other stakeholders’ experience of the program as well. I was intrigued by the dynamics at work in each school as roles and assumptions shifted with or resisted the changing conditions. I was also curious as to why parents and their children had chosen to participate in the program and how they were experiencing it. In January 2006, I was granted District and Ethics permission to meet with students and parents to hear about their experience of the program.

I provided a letter to each IF teacher prior to interviewing them individually and before our first semi-monthly meeting advising them of my desire to record our interaction (Appendix A). Their anonymity was assured, and they were under no obligation to accept to be recorded. I sought access to parents and students by sending two letters to parents: one invited them to attend an evening focus group meeting and one
invited their child to attend a focus group meeting at school (Appendices C and D). A third letter was sent to the student inviting him or her to participate (Appendix E). All three letters, sent via the school principal, explained who I was and the purpose of the meeting. I outlined the four questions that would be asked, guaranteed anonymity and imposed no obligation to participate.

Throughout the study, the names of people and schools were not included in any transcribed text. Audio recordings were labelled by date, school and stakeholder group, for example, IF parents [name of school], March 29, 2006. In the case of individual interviews with teachers, district leaders and key interviewees, it is possible to recognize individuals; however, I referred to each by stakeholder role rather than by name or location. There is considerable risk when stakeholders place their claims, concerns and issues for others to see and know. I was guided by Stake’s advice (2000) about the proper conduct of qualitative researchers acting as “guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (p. 447).

The collection of data comprised many forms of communication including semi-structured focus groups, formal and informal group meetings, semi- and unstructured interviews, and informal conversations with the various stakeholder groups. The goal of these interactions was to understand how the program mattered to each group. I met with IF teachers formally as a group on a bi-monthly basis, sometimes during the afternoon (with district release) and sometimes after school. I invited and met with non-IF teachers on two occasions after school. Attendance at the meetings was voluntary, and the principal disseminated my invitation verbally or in written form (Appendix B). Individual teacher interviews followed the meetings if a teacher expressed interest. There was often a link between the two interactions, usually a concern or issue. Guba and Lincoln (1989) support the practice of transcribing, analyzing and sharing meeting or interview notes before meeting with the group or individual again so as to provide a record and make room for commentary. This was done in some cases though not where an individual interview occurred directly after a group meeting due to the time involved in transcription.
School and district leader meetings occurred less frequently (April 2004, November 2005 and November 2006) and minutes, rather than transcribed audio recordings, were kept. These three meetings were, of course, not the only interaction these leaders had during the study period, but they were the only occasions where all IF school leaders and district leaders were present; the first was pre-implementation, and the second and third occurred in the second and third years.

Table 4 outlines my interactions with each of the stakeholder groups. A more detailed account was maintained on a weekly basis. In the latter, a two-column format was used to record the activity conducted on a given day, where it took place, and who was present. On the right was a corresponding column that detailed the topics of conversations I had with various individuals or groups. Some of the latter were personal or emotional in nature, for example, a teacher sharing frustration about report cards or a concern about non-IF colleagues’ comments, while others were questions or a concern about the program.

Table 4.
Record of Communication and Research during IF Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr – Jul 2004</td>
<td>Attended parent information meetings.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with IF principals and program originators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met and planned with district helping teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2004</td>
<td>Attended 6-day intensive French training institute in Montreal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met and planned with IF teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep – Nov 2004</td>
<td>Met with teachers each month after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visited classrooms to assist, teach, observe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted English proficiency pretesting of ESL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted individual teacher interviews.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with teachers after school and during full-day meetings (with release).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted Oral Proficiency Interview training. Administered and oversaw interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb – Apr 2005</td>
<td>Conducted individual teacher interviews.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May – Jun 2005</td>
<td>Began teacher focus group sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met and planned with district helping teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared provincial curriculum document drafts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted school leader and non-IF teacher interviews.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted English proficiency post-testing of ESL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul – Aug 2005</td>
<td>Attended training session for IF - Year Two program in New Brunswick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted teacher inservice: one day for three new IF teachers; one day for returning IF teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep – Dec 2005</td>
<td>Visited classrooms to assist, teach, observe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted teacher meetings after school and during full-day meetings (with release).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted English proficiency pretesting of ESL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with district and school leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan – Feb 2006</td>
<td>Conducted afternoon teacher meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb – Apr 2006</td>
<td>Conducted parent and student focus group meetings.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted oral proficiency testing training and administer testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with teachers, school and district leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepared provincial curriculum materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted English proficiency post-testing of ESL students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul – Aug 2006</td>
<td>Conducted teacher in-service &amp; planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted interviews with parent lobby group leader, provincial leaders, language education researcher, IF program researcher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visited classrooms to assist teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with IL Helping Teacher, school, district and provincial leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted interview with future Grade 8 IF teacher.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* not part of my role in the district

A record of all visits was maintained electronically and in hard copy throughout the study. All print communications (including copies of some email correspondence), meeting agendas and notes, written classroom observations and transcribed meeting and interview notes were stored in binders. Audio cassette tapes of meetings, interviews and focus groups were collected, with the permission of those recorded, and stored away from the school district. Without knowing what would be significant, I looked at everything in the first year of the study. Dyson and Genishi (2005) describe this phase for a researcher as having the “luxury of looking through her own lens which is open to her interests, predilections, and particular skills. At the same time she works to keep the lens clear enough so the questions she begins to formulate ... grow out of what she sees and experiences” (pp. 38-39). For me, this collecting phase was constant and involved shifts in stakeholder focus, moving between parents, IF teachers, school leaders, students, and so on.
Interpretation Process

Stake (1995) analyzes a case by watching closely and thinking deeply about it. His primary task is to “come to understand the case ... [to] tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data, but those ends are subordinate to understanding the case” (pp. 76-77). The earliest tasks in this study were organizing the various case data, that is, field notes, interview transcripts, program documents, meeting minutes and researcher journal. First steps included reorganizing these data according to chronology, stakeholder group and emergent claims, issues and concerns. Notes about field observations, first impressions, interpersonal interactions (email or records of conversation) and my own reflections were interspersed among transcripts, meeting notes and program documents. As well my website (http://www.mmecarr.ca) became a useful location for storing and sharing a variety of curriculum and program-related documents I collected or developed.

In the beginning, I gathered a lot of information in an attempt to familiarize myself with the people and settings of the study and tried to discover what was and would be relevant to the study. It was difficult to differentiate then between that which was serving as contextual familiarization and that which was more theoretically significant. Early interviews and conversations tended to focus very much on the “how” and “what” of the new program as my questions and interest followed the developing contours of a new landscape. Stake (1995) emphasizes the importance of recognizing the difference between useful information questions and “load-bearing issue questions” (p. 34). The latter are the etic questions that I brought to the inquiry, but, in the beginning, it was primarily emic or case-specific issues that predominated.

New meanings about the study emerged from the early data through repeated instances of certain issues or concerns. I used an intuitive form of aggregation (Stake, 1995) to analyze the IF teacher, non-IF teacher and school leaders’ interviews and conversations, and a more categorical aggregation to analyze the focus group meeting transcripts and parent survey responses. I followed a sociological versus linguistic
tradition to analyze the texts produced by transcription; in other words, rather than
treating text as an object of analysis in and of itself, I treated it as a “window into human
experience” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 769). Wherever possible, themes induced from
the text were shared with stakeholder groups to assist the development of their
constructions.

Dyson and Genishi (2005) refer to an inductive process of analysis, grounded in
the data collected throughout a study, involving “uncover[ing] new spaces–new holes–in
the developing portrait of the case, which need to be at least tentatively filled in ... [so
that] new questions may take shape” (p. 81). This circularity was captured in the
hermeneutic-dialectic approach suggested in responsive evaluation and case study
analysis. In the earliest stages of applying this “circling process” (Guba & Lincoln,
1989), the intent was to uncover and interpret as many different constructions as possible
rather than to seek representative samples. It was important not to limit the scope of
possibilities as patterns emerged and impressions aggregated into themes. It was a
process of analysis to which Stake (1995) refers as “trying to pull it apart and put it back
together again more meaningfully–analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation” (p. 75).
This back and forth notion also applied to the repeated checking and reconstructing of
meaning with and within stakeholder groups. It was, in fact, the prolonged engagement
and substantial involvement in a study that characterized responsive evaluation and thus
constituted one criterion for judging its adequacy (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Persistent
observation, monitoring my own developing construction, and member checks to test out
interpretations with members of the stakeholder groups were necessary throughout the
interpretation phase of this study.

Lincoln and Guba (2002) judge craftsmanship in case studies using criteria such
as power and elegance, courage, openness, insight and emotional and intellectual
commitment:

The case-study-as-construction ought not to be a passive acceptance
and/or restatement of someone else’s construction [but should be] open to
negotiation and reconstruction. Its tentative, exploratory, and problematic
character should be clear to the reader. The case study itself should
propose actions that might lead to its own reconstruction or reinterpretation. (p. 209).

Many questions populated my head: the questions of the study, stakeholder questions, and those of potential readers, such as why they should care or believe me. The qualitative research literature is filled with different conceptualizations, reformulations and outright rejections of types of validity. The term itself, traditionally used as a quantitative construct, is associated with generalizability or the extent to which research done can be replicated with the same results. Maxwell (2002), Guba and Lincoln (1989), and others reject the traditional notion of validity as having little relevance in the study of individuals and the meaning in their lives, offering instead “understanding” and “authenticity”. Maxwell (2002) states that “validity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusion reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose” (p. 42). He explains that validity and understanding are relative to the context of the study and that, since there is no absolute truth against which the study account may be compared, it is possible that different readers will perceive the account differently. Guba and Lincoln (1989, 2000) concur that method validity is irrelevant in evaluation case studies because it is the processes and outcomes that matter. They propose a set of authenticity criteria based on ontological, educative, catalytic and tactical tenets that address the treatment of and catalysis to action of those with whom the researcher interacts. I was guided, therefore, by the following authenticity criteria advocated by Guba and Lincoln:

- fairness—all stakeholder views, perspective, claims, concerns and voices should be apparent,
- ontological and educative authenticity—a raised level of awareness in study participants and those who surround them,
- catalytic and tactical authenticity—the ability of the inquiry to prompt action on the part of its participants and of the researcher to train and assist them to act.
Stakeholder Questions

Some of the new spaces or holes created by the data analysis (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) emerged in the form of questions that, in turn, influenced the overall directions of the study. The questions of those groups closest to the case revealed not only pragmatic, program-specific concerns but also some of the deeper currents that I hoped to explore. It is the questions shown in Table 5 that pulled the inquiry forward and joined the larger questions already stated in Chapter 1; however, others emerged as a result of each group’s experience and some of our joint explorations of various concerns and issues.

Table 5.
Stakeholder Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>What will it be like to learn a new language? How will things change for me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>How will this program benefit my child? How will it influence his/her future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Lobby Group Leader</td>
<td>How does this program of choice fit in with other choices? What are the outcomes for children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF Teachers</td>
<td>How do I make sense of this new curriculum? What must I learn? What must I unlearn? Am I doing it the right way? Are the students learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-IF Teachers in IF schools</td>
<td>How will this program affect me? How will it affect my job? How will it affect my class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future IF Teachers in secondary schools</td>
<td>How will the integration of IF students in 2007-08 change the way I teach? What extra work or training will this entail?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaders</td>
<td>How will I make this new program fit in terms of staffing, timetabling, school culture? How will student learning be affected?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Leaders</td>
<td>What are the implications of adding another program of choice? Is it worth doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Leaders</td>
<td>How will Canada increase the number of bilingual graduates? What lessons can be learned from new programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>How can we build understanding about this experience? How will I give voice to the pluralist perspectives of all stakeholders? Why should teachers in other FSL programs care about the implementation of this program or the lessons we learn?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this chapter, I reviewed the methodological approach used in this study: a responsive evaluation conducted within a case study format. This approach was adopted to facilitate the development of understandings among study participants and generate understanding about the implementation of this program innovation. Responsive
evaluation is organized around issues and questions; these emerged during the study and became foci for further exploration. They are now discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.
Chapter 4.

Stakeholder Understandings – Part 1

In Chapters 4 and 5, the understandings of each stakeholder group are presented according to a framework of theoretical constructs established in Chapters 2 and 3. I analyze the experiences of the intensive French (IF) teachers, the IF students and parents, IF school leaders, non-IF teachers, future IF teachers and district leaders as shared in interviews, meetings, focus group meetings and written messages or questionnaires according to emergent themes of investment, competition and negotiation of program ideals. As well, and in keeping with the responsive evaluation methodology of this study, I present their understandings in terms of the claims, issues and concerns that were at the heart of many of our conversations. I begin by considering why different groups chose to participate in a new program and the nature of their investment.

Investment

It was evident even before the implementation of the IF program that certain stakeholders saw benefits in becoming involved, that is, by enrolling their children or applying to teach in the program. Not all IF students perceived these benefits at first, as it was the parents who made the initial decision in about one half of the cases, according to student feedback in focus groups, but most did after starting the program. Most school and district leaders acknowledged the added value of the program for the students directly involved but also noted the price some paid so that others could benefit from the IF experience. Bourdieu (1986) explains this equation: “Profits in one area are necessarily paid for by cost in another” (p. 253). Bourdieu’s (1977a, 1977b, 1986) notion of cultural capital and the resulting competition for resources when capital is unevenly distributed was useful in analyzing some of the dynamics in this implementation.
Stakeholders in this study competed for symbolic capital with immediate benefits and/or the potential for long-term gains.

**IF Students**

Students expressed a variety of reasons for entering the intensive French program in Surrey. Approximately one half stated in focus group discussions that their parents had made the decision for them; about one quarter stated that they had made the decision themselves and one quarter had made the decision with their parents. Some of the reasons stated were: wanting to learn a new language, choosing to follow in the steps of a sibling who had taken a different FSL program, seeking future advantages in high school, and so on. The first focus group question posed to students and parents in a letter inviting them to participate and again at the meeting was: Why were you interested in the program? Of the many reasons offered by individual students, each of the following was expressed by at least three students:

- want to learn a third or fourth language;
- like languages;
- always wanted to speak a second language;
- French is Canada’s second language;
- will help in getting a job, preparing for university;
- will help high school grades;
- able to move up faster in high school;
- will open up more possibilities for employment;
- follow others in the family, for example, sibling in French immersion;
- learn something new;
- like challenges;
- take an opportunity;
- be with smart kids in the program;
- friends were in the program;
- did not want to be in a Grade 4/5 split.

(IF student focus group meetings, February to April 2006)
Some of the reasons expressed show that the motivation to invest in the program was linked to short term self-interest, for example, staying with friends in the same class or to the acquisition of future resources, such as advances in high school and university and employment opportunities. Other reasons show an awareness of Canada’s linguistic duality and the value of acquiring the second official language. In all cases, students expected a “good return on [their] investment—a return that [would] give them access to hitherto unattainable resources” (Norton, 2000, p. 10). This return is part of an equation that Bourdieu (1977b) theorizes is inherent in all social transactions: students are, in fact, already competing for access to specific cultural and social capital in the form of knowledge and networking opportunities.

Students in the intensive French program perceived many more benefits than drawbacks to participating in the program; in fact, the only drawback mentioned by several students was that some of their friends were in a non-IF class. They pointed out that this was mitigated by the fact that they could still play together outside of class. The benefits related largely to a sense of accomplishment and of being equally or more skilled than their peers or siblings. IF students also spoke about future benefits in high school and beyond. One student whose home language is not English pointed out that learning French would facilitate future language acquisition: “I thought it would be fun to learn a third language and my Mom said once you learn another language it will be easier to learn other languages” (IF student focus group, February, 2006). The following benefits were stated by at least three students in one or more of the five schools where focus group meetings were held. These students had been in the IF program for either one year or two years.

- having a great teacher;
- able to help older sibling with core French homework;
- like being the smartest in the family;
- less homework for half the year, lots of prizes and coupons;
- being the only one in family who speaks French;
- being in a more challenging program;
• able to talk to a family member or friend who speaks French.
  (IF student focus groups, February to April 2006)

I met with 253 of the 255 students in five IF schools in focus groups sessions held in the IF class, with parent and student approval (Appendices D & E). In the IF classes of four of the schools, about half of the students spoke a home language other than French or English; in one of the schools, only about ten percent spoke a different home language. The home languages, in order of frequency in all five schools are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
IF Students’ Home Languages

81 Students

81 English
12 Punjabi
7 Korean
7 Cantonese
6 Mandarin
5 Tagalog
4 Vietnamese
2 Arabic
2 Croatian
2 Polish
2 Russian
2 Spanish
1 Dutch
1 Hindi
1 Iranian
1 Portuguese

The comment about adding French to an existing repertoire of languages is significant because the students themselves are aware of language as a desirable commodity, not only from a linguistic perspective but also in terms of increasing one’s chances in secondary school. The commodity is even seen by at least one student as having monetary value, that is “normally you have to pay [but] this is a free program” (IF student, Focus group meeting, February 2006).

A recent study by Mady (2006) explored the motivation of allophone students in FSL programs. Mady surveyed one hundred Grade 9 core French students in Ontario
who were anglophone (in applied and academic tracks) and designated ESL students. The ESL students were significantly more motivated than anglophone students in the applied track and as motivated as the anglophone students in the academic track. Mady reported that “the ESL students claimed responsibility to get a good education and get a job and saw French as a means to that goal” (p. 30). Mady also learned that the ESL students “invested in learning French in hopes of gaining a Canadian identity which, according to them, involved learning French” (p. 30). This link between language learning and identity construction has also been noted in earlier studies (e.g., Berron, 1998; Dagenais, 2003; Makropolous, 1998; Norton, 2000; Toohey; 2000).

**IF Parents**

I asked IF parents why they enrolled their children in the IF program and what they perceived to be the benefits and drawbacks. I sent a questionnaire to 255 IF families in May 2005 and 2006 (of which 120 were returned within one month), conducted one focus group meeting in each of three schools in February and March, 2006 (attended by a total of 16 parents), and interviewed one parent at each of two schools in February 2006. One of these two parents was the only attendee of one of the focus group meetings and agreed to be interviewed and audio-recorded. The other offered to stay after the focus group meeting at her school and agreed to be interviewed and audio-taped. In both cases, I shared the interview transcript with the parents.

I did not classify the transcribed interview and focus group meeting notes according to the home language of each respondent, nor could I classify the anonymous written questionnaire responses except according to content; however, I noticed several themes that related to home languages other than English. I noted who raised certain points during the focus group meeting and highlighted content or use of English in some of the questionnaire responses. The parents who had home languages other than English raised notions of linguistic capital, official language status and multilingualism, as shown in the following verbatim responses.
I do have a worry positively on my boy. Well basically his first language is Cantonese but he doesn’t speak Cantonese very well. He’s been speaking English since preschool so he classifies his first language as English. His second is Cantonese and he’s learning Mandarin, so French will be the fourth one. When he first started he said that he got mixed up with all four languages, but now he said that he works very well and he’s more eager to learn different type of language.

(IF parent focus group meeting, February 2006)

I make him go into that class. Because I learn French before and I said, ‘Well that’s cool. This is one of the official languages here. Why not go bilingual, I mean not bilingual … multilingual?’ So he oppose that. When I first said, ‘You have to go to that class’ and he said, ‘I have no choice, right?’ And I say, ‘Not likely’. So he doesn’t like it at first, but now he said that he’s so happy in this class.

(IF parent focus group, February 2006)

I enrolled my child in this program because Canada is a multicultural country so I want my child to have a good French speaking ability.

(IF parent questionnaire, May 2006)

Among all parents who responded, regardless of home language, there was a consistent rationale of acquiring capital, both linguistically and in terms of future advantage in high school and the job market. Mentioned as well were the academic and social benefits that might accrue from participation in the program. The following verbatim comments from IF parents were taken from questionnaires returned in May 2005 and 2006:

**Acquisition of One of Canada’s Official Language**

- She is taking this program because French is the official language of Canada.
- We enrol our child in this program because we want him to know two important languages.
- In order for my daughter to have an opportunity to learn French language and familiarize its cultures.
- We want him to learn and talk fluently in French since it’s Canada’s second language.
• I see a great deal of value learning a second language, particularly French, in a bilingual country such as ours where French is the second language.
• Canada is bilingual. This should be a mandatory class.

**Academic and/or Social Benefits**

• She is very shy. I felt it would bring her out a bit more with lots of class participation.
• This would give more challenge for my child.
• This will help my child in general develop at a higher level.
• This gives her a head start on being bilingual.
• The year put all of the kids on the same “playing field” with French. You did not have to be a straight “A” student to succeed.
• Taking this program now means exemption from Grade 8 French, leaving options for other subjects in Grade 12.
• In addition to learning the language, he will able to go to his local secondary school and to me that was important ... the whole social aspect of school. I felt it was one of the benefits of this program.

**Future Advantages**

• To allow him to quite easily attain the language credits required for university entrance.
• It’s like you will be more successful in life if you’re bilingual.
• We are planning to teach our child Spanish later. We thought that this program would help.
• This could be an asset later, depending on career choices.
• This gives her better opportunities in the future.
• The idea of being able to speak another language was a seller. Once you know one language, others are often easier to learn.
  (Questionnaires, IF parents, May 2005 and May 2006)

The reasons for investment in intensive French are consistent with those uncovered by research conducted in immersion programs by Olson and Burns (1983). They found that middle-class parents across Canada favoured the program because it was closely tied to
the symbolic and material benefits associated with the national promotion of the two official languages in employment sectors. In their study, moreover, enrolment in immersion was regarded by parents as an investment in multilingualism.

Surrey parents also expressed a desire to have their children involved in a second language learning program they deemed to be more effective than the core program. Some considered intensive French to be the “second best choice” to French immersion while others had consciously avoided an immersion program:

_A Better Program Option than Core French or French Immersion_

- As someone who had French from Grade 4 to 12, I find I still don’t know enough to converse. I thought this was a _better approach_ than making sure the students can conjugate a verb.
- We wanted a _program that would further_ conversational French without being total immersion. Our own experience in elementary school of the traditional 1.5 hours per week was not successful for becoming anywhere close to fluent in French.
- That was the _second best choice_ available as there is no French immersion program in the school.
- I saw this as an opportunity for [child’s name] to learn the language _younger_ and so perhaps with _more facility_ than I did.
- I believed the _best way_ for my child to learn a second language is to be consumed by the language and this intensive program offered this.
- I felt that learning French in this manner would be _better_ than what my older children had experienced.
- I would not have put him in an early immersion program because I don’t necessarily support that kind of a program. I believe in establishing the building blocks of the first language. I would have considered late immersion though, but that is not available in our area, so this was sort of the _best of both worlds_.

(Questionnaires, IF parents, May 2005 and May 2006, emphasis mine)

The perception of a better option was also noted by non-IF teachers who said that the intensive French program created excitement about the language even for those students not directly involved:
On the positive side, it has created real interest in the school about French. [The IF teacher] will come down to my class and just start speaking to the Grade 7s in French and they’ll try to rise to the occasion. They’re seeing some connection to their time spent once or twice a week with the French teacher. That’s so difficult. You go down there once or twice to learn vocabulary. They’re not learning the conversational French which [the IF teacher] brings to them, so they’re seeing where it can go. I see it as a real positive.

(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005)

One IF school leader noted the enhancement of self-esteem that accrued to being part of a special program in the school:

The other benefit is that it’s a very special place for these kids. They feel special; they’re in a program of choice. It’s almost like a little family. They become very tight; they know why they’re there and it’s not just that they’re here at our school, they’re part of this French family. There are also strong feelings of learning, being self-actualized, so I think the benefits are readily apparent to the kids themselves and to their parents. The other benefits are that they are shooting straight forward with their progress. They can see it. It’s a very real feeling of, ‘Hey, I speak French,’ so it’s very good for their self esteem.

(Interview, IF school leader, June 2005)

There was only one parent among 120 survey respondents (representing about half of all IF families) who did not believe that his or her child had benefited either linguistically or socially from participation in the IF program. I was not able to explore the academic history of this child because the parent questionnaires were completed anonymously. The concern expressed below also relates to the larger issue of stated ideals versus reality discussed in Chapter 5. It is very possible that this child may have experienced similar results had he stayed in the regular problem, but the parent stated that the pre-implementation claim that IF benefits all children had not been met in his or her case:

He has struggled during both years. His marks have not been good and I worry about this self-esteem. Claims that students with learning problems would not be at a disadvantage have not been realized. He does not speak favourably about the experience this year or last. He rarely uses French
unless we instigate it in some manner. In fact, he avoids it.

(If parent questionnaire, May 2006)

There were some comments that conveyed concern and anticipation about the follow-up program. As one parent said, “It’s exciting and sometimes difficult being in the ‘pioneer’ class. There has been some uncertainty about how the next two years will unfold” (IF parent questionnaire, May 2005). Indeed, this uncertainty about the program following the intensive year was expressed by members of other stakeholder groups, such as IF teachers, non-IF teachers, future IF teachers and school leaders, and is discussed later in this chapter.

Some parents expressed strategic reasoning behind the choice to enrol in the program, that is, the avoidance of a combined-grade (or “split”) class. In all schools where intensive French was offered, and will likely continue to be offered, IF students were placed in a single-grade class, and some parents saw this as superior to being in a combined-grade class.

**A Single-Grade Rather than Combined-Grade Classroom**

- My son would be forever in a smaller, split grade for the remainder of his elementary years.
- It would mean a straight Grade 5 class after previous 2 years in a split.
- I also felt that if he did not join this class, he would have to be in a split class for the next 3 years. I did not like the dynamics of split classes.

For these and likely some other parents, the benefit of avoiding a combined-grade class was worth as much as or more than the other benefits and opportunities.

**Opportunities**

Other stakeholders made observations about parents’ motivation to enrol their children in the program. Though I did not ask, the issue of motivation to participate was raised by one of the school leaders. The themes of acquiring linguistic capital and
securing future benefits were consistent with what the parents said of themselves however, other factors were mentioned, such as seeking a certain elite status, using the program to solve learning or social difficulties and securing opportunities for their children.

I don’t know how much of a correlation there is between this program and that greater reality. I don’t think it matters if you’re teaching Punjabi or Spanish or German. I think the benefit is in the second language and the brain development. Some of the parents might have that feeling. Some of the parents like the streaming and the exclusivity of it. Some of them think that their child will have opportunities because of the French and being in Canada with government jobs, national jobs, that French would give you more options in school and university.

Interview, IF school leader, June 2005, emphasis mine

We have a child entering next year who is Vietnamese. The child doesn’t speak Vietnamese fluently and doesn’t speak English fluently. The child is in Grade 4 now working somewhere between a Grade 2 and Grade 4 level and is going into the program so as to be able to use French in the family’s homeland. Another is the parent of a child who is hyperactive and does not do well in school .... It’s a case of ‘keeping up with Joneses’ and not letting an opportunity go by. Another parent, university-educated, very affluent, has a child who is English but couldn’t learn the father’s language ... just couldn’t do it. He’s painfully shy. I’m not sure there’s a teacher who has heard him speak, but he’s going into the program. As a parent who believes in education, how could they pass up this opportunity?

(Interview, IF school leader, June 2005, emphasis mine)

The notion of accessing opportunities via a second language program was explored in a study in Surrey, British Columbia conducted by Berron (1998). She interviewed three parents of Indo-Pakistani background to explore their reasons for enrolling their children in a French immersion program. She noted that the “parents' frame of reference is international rather than Canadian, and French is yet another language to add to the already existing bilingualism or plurilingualism of their children” (p. iv). Other findings included the fact that parents value education and the learning of languages and want their children to have the same advantages as those offered to the majority. The rationale, which forms part of Berron’s thesis title, is “When there is an
opportunity, take it!” As one district leader said about programs of choice, “To the extent to which some of those motives are questionable and are operative, it is their choice. Do they have a right to their choice? The BC government would say ‘yes’, and the Surrey District would say ‘yes’” (Interview, district leader, May 2006).

The securing of opportunities for one’s child as a reason for enrolling was reiterated by the provincial leader I interviewed for this study. She also noted the economic advantages of acquiring a second or additional language.

And I think that there will be over generations different reasons why first families, and then later children or students, make decisions to learn languages. Some will be economic decisions. Some of them in the past might have been influenced by Katimavik and the cross-Canada trains or Trudeaumania or Expo. Those things probably drove some parents or families into thinking about language learning and becoming global citizens and broadening their horizons to enrich their lives culturally, emotionally, intellectually as well as financially. There may be other people who think of the argument that learning a second language is really good for your brain; it’s the intellectual argument that it helps you in everything else, that might be the hook for some families. For others it is the economic imperative, the capital good.

(Interview, provincial leader, May 2006, emphasis mine)

Canadian Parents for French supports parental choice, the securing of opportunities for their children and the promotion of linguistic duality:

We represent parents who embrace the vision of linguistic duality and who really believe in the notion that Canadians should be bilingual at the very least if not multilingual. Most of our parents are not bilingual and they want to see for their children opportunities that they themselves did not have in terms of educational, cultural, social, sporting activities to learn French.

(Interview, parent lobby group leader, June 2006)

Canadian Parents for French also supports a wider view of language acquisition than simply following the national agenda of linguistic duality:

We would encourage parents who want Mandarin, Punjabi or any other languages in the school system to organize, and we’re happy to talk to them about our model and how to present to school districts and so on.

(Interview, parent lobby group leader, June 2006)
Such a statement makes sense in a province where the language policy is centred on the acquisition of “languages that are significant within our communities” (Ministry of Education, 1975, p. 4) rather than French per se. It is balanced by the fact that French is the second or other language most often offered by school districts and that the mandate for Canadian Parents for French is oriented to bilingualism: “The vision is very much around official languages” (Interview, parent lobby group leader, June 2006).

**IF Teachers**

Intensive French teachers committed themselves to be early implementers of British Columbia’s first IF classes by applying for teaching postings and engaging in initial training, ongoing in-service and the formation of a learning community. What prompted them to make this investment and what returns did they foresee? The nine teachers involved in the IF program from 2004 to 2007 had various reasons for applying to teach in the program, but all (except one who was new to teaching) expressed a desire to try a new method of teaching French and left other positions to apply for an IF teaching position. Four saw the program as a new start to careers already established in French immersion or core French. Two had prior experience teaching core French in another province, and four came to IF from a secondary school background. (There was overlap in these experience profiles, for example, one teacher had taught secondary core French in another province.) I interviewed one of the teachers prior to joining the program in its second year. This teacher longed for something different after many years of teaching French at the secondary school level and was encouraged by the potential for student achievement compared to the very limited outcomes in core French:

I’ve been teaching French 8 to 12 since I started and I’d always been interested in elementary, but originally it was an itinerant model and I didn’t want to do that. But, having done this for so long, I want to do something different. I’m pretty tired doing what I’m doing here. It [core French] is a faulty model, so that part’s really frustrating. So when I saw this, I thought, ‘I want a change. I want something different’. I still want to teach French. I love teaching French, but in secondary it seems to stay the same. There’s nothing new.

(IF teacher interview, May 2005)
One of the other secondary teachers who had previously taught at the elementary level and had moved away from teaching languages missed teaching French at the younger level. Her principal told her about the new program, and she considered it in light of her experiences in core and immersion programs:

I read up about it and was interested in the research results (mainly the level of fluency that children had achieved). My frustration with teaching core French had been that children didn't have enough instruction time to become fluent and the main disadvantages of French immersion seemed to be transportation issues and length of commitment. Intensive French seemed to address issues of both immersion and core.

IF teacher email correspondence, August 2006)

The hope that intensive French would provide a more effective way to teach French was present in many of the stakeholders in this study, including me. The desire to move in a different direction resonated in the actions of the IF teachers. Fullan (1993) points out that “moral purpose and change agentry [are] at the heart of productive educational change” (p. 8) and that the “building block is the moral purpose of the individual teacher” (p. 10, Fullan’s emphasis). All of the teachers in the first group were enthusiastic about the prospect of “doing better” in the name of French second language teaching, even knowing that to do so would involve work, time, commitment, collaboration and risk taking. This is consistent with the attributes of early implementers who are, as noted by Giles and Hargreaves (2006), “excited about the new opportunities for interacting with colleagues, engaging in risk taking and experimenting in their teaching with developing innovative ways to engage students more effectively in their learning” (p. 139).

I noted that almost all IF teachers articulated at one point their readiness to go beyond their comfort zone, to leave previous methods and contexts behind and embrace the new approach. One teacher shared at the summer institute in Montreal, August 2004, how fearful he felt about the coming year: “Sometimes I think I’m crazy to have signed on for this. But other times I have glimpses of what might be possible” (Research journal, August 2004). Fullan (1993) stresses the importance of this initial vision: “Personal purpose and vision are the starting agenda. It comes from within, it gives
meaning to work, and it exists independent of the particular organization or group we happen to be in” (p. 13).

IF teachers experienced tremendous professional and personal growth during the study period. The same teacher cited above, for example, stated one year later about IF: “I believe in this more than anything else in my whole career” (IF teacher, interview, March 2005). This may or may not have been an outcome that he or anyone could have expected at the outset of the implementation. There were other personal and professional advantages noted by the IF teachers. One appeal of applying to teach in the new program was the possibility for mobility to other districts, normally very difficult in the greater Vancouver area. Two of the nine teachers shared that moving to another district likely to implement IF in the future was a consideration in applying for the position. As well, one teacher reasoned that pilot program funding would provide certain advantages. It is typical for new programs to receive special start-up funding, and this was the case with IF in Surrey: “Being at the first level of implementation is usually a bonus because support structures (and the money to go with them) are often available” (IF teacher email correspondence, August 2006).

One teacher out of the group of nine IF teachers chose not to stay in the program and left after the first week. In our interview one month later, she shared a number of personal reasons for her decision. For her, the costs of staying in the program, even after having invested time (away from her family) for training, changing schools and setting up for the new program, clearly outweighed the benefits. In her words, “It didn’t click. It wasn’t the best for me and it’s not where I could do my best work” (IF teacher interview, November 2004).

I was curious to see if there was any consistency among the teachers’ background or years of experience. I noted a range of from 0 to 28 years of experience in elementary and secondary core French, primary and elementary French immersion, late French immersion and ESL instruction. The average level of experience among the original four IF teachers was 18 years. I then consulted Ministry representatives for intensive French in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, two provinces that had implemented the program
for three or more years, to compare the general characteristics of IF teachers. Surrey and New Brunswick’s school districts hired teachers with core French and/or French immersion experience whereas Saskatchewan hired teachers with experience in French immersion. Surrey attracted more experienced teachers than did the other two provinces, especially during the first year of implementation: an average of 18 years experience in Surrey compared to an average of 2.5 years in New Brunswick and 3.5 years in Saskatchewan. Looking at the first three years of implementation, however, the comparative ratio decreases: in Surrey, the three-year average of teaching experience was 9.6 years (range of 0 to 28 years); in Saskatchewan, 4.6 years (range of 0 to 15 years); and in New Brunswick, 4.2 years (range of 0 to 10 years). Four out of nine Surrey IF teachers are male compared with one out of 16 in New Brunswick and none out of 8 in Saskatchewan.

I concluded that there was no attribute related to background, experience or gender that was common to the IF teachers in three jurisdictions. I did note, however, within the Surrey group a strength of character or purpose as evidenced in the level of risk-taking in pioneering a new program and in the spirit of discussion in our learning community, especially during the first year. It is fair to say that this group of early implementers was made up of members with a strong sense of individuality, a feature Starratt (1996) refers to as common in innovation and important in helping a group reach its full potential.

**Future IF Secondary Teachers**

I worked with a group of six secondary (Grade 8 to 12) French teachers who are not yet teaching the IF students but will be working with them directly or indirectly in the future. They were invited to assist me in conducting the Oral Proficiency Interviews as part of the district’s ongoing assessment process. Five of the teachers, who are also Languages Department Heads, assisted me in February 2006 and one is a French teacher who assisted me in February 2005. The intent was not only to share the work of interviewing the IF students but also to begin to familiarize these secondary school
teachers and Department Heads with the existing and potential capabilities of IF students. I conducted two after-school training sessions with the teachers to explain the IF program. I shared some video footage from IF classrooms and explained the procedure and standards involved in Oral Proficiency Interviews. We practised conducting the interviews with each other, and then each teacher interviewed and evaluated a group of IF students. Once the interviews were completed, I invited the teachers to share their impressions and questions about intensive French. They responded by email with generally positive comments:

My impression was of amazement. I was truly impressed. The thing that came out in almost every case was the positive attitude kids had and that they enjoyed being in IF.

Considering they did not prepare at all for the interviews and had not been doing the intensive semester for a couple of weeks, they really rose to the occasion and were all able, in varying degrees, to have a true conversation in French. The best students spoke correctly and gave full answers - better than many of my French 11 students! Their vocabulary was richer than I expected. Also, I found they understood and were able to use rather complex language structures in many cases. Even the weakest students were able to understand much of what I asked. They couldn't give full answers but they did understand and could give simple answers which is wonderful! What a great gift for a weaker student. This must really boost their self-esteem.

Pretty darn good. Many of my Grade 10 students would be put to shame by these kids. What I like is that speaking French is not weird to them.

I would love to see this program all over Surrey. Moreover, I'm wondering if this could be done at the secondary level. Might as well reach for the stars!

(Email feedback, non-IF teachers, March 2006)

The Department Heads also had questions and concerns about the follow-up program related to how to integrate the IF students into the existing program and how to differentiate their approach to teaching them:

- What is their writing level going to be? How large a discrepancy will there be between this and their oral ability?
• Since we still assume that these kids will do the provincial exam if they choose and since the primary focus is on written work, what will their success level reflect?

• Academically, they will no doubt be very advanced in their French, but their social skills and, quite possibly, timetabling may prevent them from being fast forwarded into senior placement.

• What can we offer these students over a five-year period? Should we consider the IB [International Baccalaureate] or AP [Advanced Placement] program?

(Email feedback, non-IF teachers, March 2006)

The first cohort of IF students will enter Grade 8 in September 2007. As one secondary Department Head said, “We will be implementing a completely new [commercial core French] program next year, so there is a lot coming at us” (Email feedback, non-IF teachers, March 2006). The Grade 8 staffing for September 2007 has been tentatively established and, as of January 2007, only one of the six teachers has been identified as an IF teacher: it is the teacher who conducted interviews in 2005, and she plans to share the assignment with her regular teaching partner who is the Department Head (but is not one of the group who worked with me to conduct interviews). The allocation of grade responsibilities is normally decided in a collaborative process within each school’s Languages Department, so I interviewed the single Department Head who will be teaching a Grade 8 IF class to shed light on the decision to teach (or not teach) the IF class.

The Department Head explained that the question of who would teach the IF groups in Grade 8 and beyond had been raised at a recent district level Languages Department Head meeting. The general response was that there would be too much preparation time and additional in-service needed to justify the effort. When I probed why these reasons had not prevented her from choosing to teach the IF group, she said that she wanted to open up possibilities for these and other students and increase the profile of her Languages Department, one which already offers Advanced Placement (university-equivalent) courses and Late French immersion. Her vision for the IF group is that differentiated courses offered after Grade 8 will allow the cohort to stay together
and extend their learning in French, possibly in conjunction with students from other programs. For her, “there will be a payback for the time spent training and developing a new program” (Interview, Future Grade 8 IF teacher, January 2007). She could clearly see potential benefits for herself and her department by investing in the IF program.

**School, District and Provincial Leaders**

For school leaders, there was little or no choice to host the IF program. They committed to support the district program, the IF teacher and students, but had no control over the decision to house the program in their school:

Decisions are made outside with this program over which I have no control. I may move to another school, but the program will remain here. It is the district which holds information meetings about the program and that is how it is presented.

(Interview, IF school leader, June 2005)

I observed evidence of celebration of students’ achievements in the program and inclusion of the IF class and the new IF teacher on staff, but this was deemed by school leaders to be an expected part of their duties. I perceived that there were as many if not more costs, in terms of adjustment or disruption in their schools, as there were benefits. These costs are discussed later in this chapter.

The district invested in learning about the IF program more than a year before it was implemented in September 2004. The Board of School Trustees learned about the IF approach from a member of Canadian Parents for French in the spring of 2003. That summer, the District Principal, the IL Helping Teacher and two French teachers attended the Montreal IF six-day summer institute at a cost to the district of approximately $12,000 (course tuition, travel and shared accommodation). These educators shared what they learned with the Surrey School Board in the fall of 2003 who then determined the program to be educationally and financially possible and authorized the exploration of community interest through evening parent meetings. I interviewed a district leader about this early stage of IF’s implementation:
The Board made the decisions. For right or for wrong, the Board are the elected representatives of the community for the public school system, so that’s their role. So they take a philosophical stand or a policy stand about if something is educationally viable, and parents want the opportunity for their children and it’s manageable for us, meaning also fiscally possible, then we’re going to make it happen. Why wouldn’t we?

(Interview, district leader, May 2006)

The Assistant Superintendent applied for Federal and Provincial Government funding early in 2004 and was granted $300,000 to support the implementation of British Columbia’s first intensive French program. The rationale provided in the Provincial Action Plan was: “This project could then be implemented in more school districts in the following years. Surrey School District would provide leadership to other school districts” (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, Additional Funding). The funds were to be used to:

- adapt and enrich the BC curriculum for intensive French, including assessment rubrics and compacted curriculum samples;
- purchase learning resources in the early implementing schools;
- conduct research on the impact of IF on French and English competence;
- conduct professional development and in-service.

(Ministry of Education, 2004, Contribution Agreement)

This funding was granted with the understanding that certain resources, or “deliverables”, would be provided by the Surrey School District in return. The following resources were for the benefit of all school districts implementing IF in British Columbia and to be delivered between 2004 and 2008:

- provincial intensive French curriculum documents and assessment tools;
- program website;
- provincial leadership package with implementation information for other districts.

(Ministry of Education, 2004, Contribution Agreement)
British Columbia’s Ministry of Education clearly saw the value of investing in Surrey’s IF program implementation via its Official Languages in Education British Columbia Action Plan Bilateral Agreement. It granted funds “to support the steadily increasing demand for programs of choice” and to “enhance what has been neglected or overlooked (core French, new approaches, following up on the beginnings of intensive French)” (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, Preamble).

The offering of intensive French as a new program of choice was welcomed by many but not by all. There were objections by some in the early days of pre-implementation, not so much against the intensive French program, but about any program of choice. A small group of teachers attended one of the six parent meetings held during March 2004. Their intention was to discourage implementation at their school. The district leader I interviewed responded to these objections first by speaking of the desire of many for equality for all rather than choice for some:

It speaks to a fundamental belief that some teachers and principals have that school is somehow a ‘leveller’ and we all need to be doing the same thing. And there are lots who don’t want any programs of choice. Some educators really resist that in the system because what they believe for kids is that we’ll all be great if we just all do the very same thing.  

(Interview, district leader, May 2006)

In a later interview during which we discussed some of the emergent issues in the implementation, she provided further contextualization for how the Surrey School District and its Board consider programs of choice within a public school system that must compete with the private system.

Speaking of choice, the school district is also concerned about competition from the private schools. Part of the rationale for choice within the public system is to offer parents options within the public system to keep the public system strong. The Board tries to always offer equitable opportunities, such as an optional band program for all students at Grade 7, which takes extra staffing. This defense of the public system is an ongoing tension for the Board …. Without a strong public system, we are in danger of a two-tiered system between public and independent systems.  

(Interview, district leader, January 2006)
Competition for Resources

The “practical, goal-seeking activities of individuals” referred to by Carrington and Luke (1977, p. 100) were in evidence in this study, articulated by IF students and parents in focus group meetings and a written questionnaire. Other forces were operative that were less oriented to the aforementioned benefits and more aligned to the struggle for capital in the form of additional or future advantages. Not only did IF students and parents take part in a program of choice that met their stated expectations—or goals for investment—they also anticipated these benefits:

- My child will be exempt from Grade 8 French, leaving options for other subjects in Grade 12.
- If he did not join this class, he would have to be in a split class for the next 3 years.

Although the combined-grade class exemption did occur for all students in this study and will likely continue to be the case for the intake year (Grade 6), there is no guarantee that the Grade 7 year will always be configured as a single-grade class. In other jurisdictions where IF is the only option at Grade 5 or 6, combined-grade classes do occur, and schools adjust their timetables in the follow-up years.

For the secondary school program, a variety of options are tentatively planned for the coming years, including having IF students take a course called intensive French 8 that comprises core French 10 material infused with IF instructional strategies and is delivered entirely in French. IF students will be able to explore another language or elective course in Grade 9, take core French 11 in Grade 10, core French 12 in Grade 11, followed by the possibility of advanced placement courses in Grade 12. It is also possible that IF students could join late French immersion students in an elective course offered in French at some point after Grade 8. Much will depend on numbers of students and course timetabling in secondary schools.

The benefits for IF students sought by their parents, such as the acquisition of a second or additional language in a program of choice rather than a core program,
avoidance of combined-grade classes, and extra options in high school, as well as those expressed by IF students, such as being in a superior peer group, were bought at a price. Other stakeholders spoke about the effects of the IF program on resources they valued: the non-IF teachers described the changes to the existing school culture and their working conditions (class competition and job stability), school leaders described challenges in staffing and scheduling, and district leaders echoed those staffing challenges on a broader scale. The competition for resources was experienced by all stakeholders with some deriving benefit at the expense of others.

**Equity and Stability**

The addition of the IF program in four schools meant the displacement of one teacher in each school. When the jobs were posted in May 2004, it was possible for all Surrey teachers to apply, but the successful applicants came from other schools and caused displacement of one teacher in each IF school. The subsequent placement of the new IF teachers added more pressure than might have been the case had a natural vacancy in the school preceded the IF appointment. The displacement of a teacher was not a welcome event and, as one non-IF teacher stated, created some resentment towards the new program:

> When we were told about the program, we were also told we’d be losing a staff member, which sets up a situation in the school where you already feel resentful towards the program because the person we lost had been here for two years.

*(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2006)*

One IF teacher described the reception she received as new teacher of a new program:

> My staff have all been very nice since the very beginning, but they made it clear to me that they didn’t agree with the program being in their school. They said, ‘It’s nothing against you, but we weren’t included in the decision making. It was just, ‘Here it is. Deal with it.’ So they weren’t too thrilled about IF being in the school. They said, ‘Hi,’ but I was the French teacher and that was pretty much it.

*(IF teacher meeting, October, 2004)*
In one school, the animosity was more overt because the presence of the IF class meant that the other Grade 5 class was combined with another grade. The IF teacher was told, “You know, your taking this position means that I will never have a straight [Grade] five again” (IF teacher interview, November 2004). The value of teaching a single-grade class was expressed by many of the non-IF teachers with whom I met. They also described the change in class composition, emphasizing that, while they did not question the value of the IF program for the students directly involved, they did believe it created inequity.

And if you’re going to learn French, it’s probably the best way to do it. It’s almost like moving someplace where they’re speaking it 100% everyday other than the Math I guess. I would recommend that, if they’re going to carry it on, then all Grade 5s should go through that program. If they’re going to do it, make everybody do it and then it would be more equal. You wouldn’t have this class discrimination stuff. Everyone in Grade 5 gets this program, just like the old swimming program. When you got to Grade 5, everybody went swimming. When you get to Grade 5, everyone’s going to do the French. It would all be equal.

(Non-IF teacher meeting, May 2005, emphasis mine)

The balance between concern for equity for students and equity for working conditions was tenuous, especially during the first year of implementation. Further, the existing school culture—a valued resource—was jeopardized by the IF program despite what one district leader had hoped:

We thought the staff wouldn’t react badly because this isn’t immersion; these are your neighbourhood kids, you get to keep your kids, this is just good for your kids and brings no harm to you. So, in terms of the culture of the intensive French, what it brings with it, and how it’s going to interact with the existing culture, I saw it as virtually undisturbative.

(Interview, District leader, May 2006)

In fact, non-IF teachers were vocal about the unequal distribution of students and teacher workload. I met with two groups of non-IF teachers (eight teachers in each school). In both schools, most members of the group had worked together for between 5 and 10 years with a principal who had been there for at least 5 years. Statements made by teachers such as, “We’ve always had very equal distribution of students in our
classes”, “No one ever feels s/he has more to handle than anyone else on staff”, and “When there’s a bad year, we all suffer together” were telling. They showed that teachers were treated equally in terms of class composition, that this mattered to them, and that their sense of workload was linked to the types of learners found in their classes. There was a solidarity implied by shared suffering that did not begrudge the fact that students in their classes had learning difficulties but, rather, showed the acceptability of an equal distribution of the burden. Related to this stance were comments made about the inequity of workload among Grade 5 to 7 teachers as a result of the program: “One teacher in each of Grades 5, 6 and 7 has or will have all of the top achieving students and very few of the problems” (Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005). They also show the valuing of parity; no one should have a better or worse lot than anyone else. The non-IF teachers expressed concern about the challenge of addressing all students’ needs in classes where there was a higher percentage of students with learning difficulties:

NonIFTeacher1: I’d like to talk about the impact on the other Grade 5 class. I have all the beginner ESL students, between my class and the other Grade 5 teacher. We get every new student, we have all the Special Education children, we have all the children with learning disabilities, and a class of 30. There has been absolutely no allowance for the fact that we have high needs classes. No additional support. It has been a difficult year.

NonIFTeacher2: And splits. Let’s talk about splits. They will always fall to the other teachers.

NonIFTeacher1: I know what’s in it for the kids in intensive French. What’s in it for the other 65 kids in Grade 5? What losses do those kids incur? We can only spread ourselves so thin.

(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005)

This profit and loss equation was clearly articulated by non-IF teachers not only in terms of the students involved but also the teachers themselves. Grimmett and Neufeld (1994) describe a similar struggle experienced by teachers in a changing educational context as one requiring “great effort and exertion for teachers … concerned with the enhancement of student learning (as distinct from the work comfort of school practitioners)” (p. 3). Non-IF teachers found themselves in a dilemma of believing they knew what was best for their students and feeling less able to provide it. They saw this reduction in efficacy and job satisfaction in a very rational and personalized way; this new program was exacting a
price they did not believe they or their students should pay. Once again, equity was seen as a key item to be protected when a program of choice meant, in one teacher’s words, that “one person has the cream and we get the dregs”:

NonIFTeacher1: I don’t have a problem with the French program, but how can we make it more equal for the other classes?

NonIFTeacher2: Well you’ve got people who are either going to transfer out next year from their grade level or transfer before the group gets to their grade level because it’s going to be the same thing every year. Why wouldn’t you transfer? You’re going to get the same circumstances.

NonIFTeacher1: I think it takes a huge commitment from the staff as a whole. We’ve seen the effect on the other Grade 5 teacher dealing with special needs kids, non-verbal autism, low level ESL kids who don’t speak English, etc. It becomes a common, shared program. We all take our turn at teaching this particular class or teaching the Grade 6 class which may seem more desirable and it becomes something which unites not divides staffs.

NonIFTeacher3: Here’s a consideration. Whoever gets the class of Grade 5s from this year in a Grade 6 class finds themselves in a privileged position because they’ve got the cream of the crop. It’s very hard to be on staff where you know one person has the cream and we get the dregs. And that causes resentment. We’re a very tight staff. That throws up all sorts of red flags. It’s going to very hard to sit down in the staff room with somebody and know that they’re enjoying their year, they got good kids and you’re struggling with the type of classes [Name] and [Name] got this year. This is worrying. It’s going to happen in Grade 7 too. The resentment that could build up on a staff could change the school culture. It can change the way people feel about their work.

(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005)

These comments are not atypical of non-program teachers in the implementation of programs of choice. Olson and Burns (1983) interviewed English-track teachers in dual-track French immersion schools in Ontario and recorded the following: “‘Each year the French gets better and the English worse’ and ‘We regular English teachers get stuck with the dregs.’ Some regular English-track teachers are openly bitter towards immersion for these kinds of reasons” (p. 12). More recently in New Brunswick, a Pricewaterhouse Coopers Report on French Second Language found “empirical evidence of informal streaming which created an increased demand for resources in the core program” (New Brunswick Teachers’ Association [NBTA], 2001, p. 1). The following
year, an ad hoc Committee on French Second Language recommended that the NBTA not support the piloting of intensive French (NBTA, 2002). The piloting took place in any case and, in 2005, New Brunswick Department of Education Consultant, David MacFarlane, reported:

The NBTA was originally opposed to this pilot program because of its potential ‘streaming’ effect in that it may become one more option in our system that teachers and administrators need to juggle— in addition to our current early and late immersion as well as the regular program. NBTA would like to be part of future discussions relating to this pilot program. (New Brunswick Provincial Curriculum Advisory Committee Minutes, 2005, p. 2)

Non-IF teachers in Surrey were, therefore, not the first to experience the effects of streaming as a result of the IF program. They suggested some possible compensatory measures to offset what they perceived as losses incurred by the addition of IF to their schools:

- At the moment at the IF entry level, we don’t have heterogeneous groupings. Could those class sizes be smaller and an extra teacher be hired at that level to lower the class size to compensate for the higher need of students, skills, abilities?
- What about extra prep time for the teacher who has the other class?
- What about extra learning assistance time for those higher needs students?
- Is it possible to share the teaching of that grade? Could teachers take turns taking that grade?
- Make it for everyone in Grade 6.

The other concern expressed by non-IF teachers in the first year was the impending displacement of a second teacher caused by the Grade 7 follow up program. This ceased to be a concern by the second year of the implementation because the school and district leaders decided to change the entry point of IF to Grade 6. In the first two years of implementation, during which students began the program in Grade 5 and had a daily hour follow-up program in Grade 6, the IF teacher delivered the program to both groups, teaching the daily hour of Grade 6 French while the Grade 6 teacher taught Math
in English to the Grade 5 class. It was anticipated that an additional teacher would then be hired to deliver the Grade 7 follow-up program. If the school did not have a bilingual teacher at the Grade 7 level (all but one did), it would mean staff displacement. The non-IF teachers were vocal about the very real threat to job security.

What about the Grade 6 and 7 situation? That’s an hour of French a day. Someone’s going to get bumped out because none of us speaks French at that level. Who goes? The one with the lowest seniority? And that’s just so unfair that this program has to push and shove people out of the way in order to have its needs met.

(Interview, non-IF teacher, June, 2005)

Not only were individual jobs in jeopardy, so too was the stability of a certain way of doing things in a school. The existing culture of the IF school was seen as a resource the non-IF teachers wanted to protect.

NonIFTeacher1: We were told that at least one more person would be going because, as we implemented along the way...that's caused a high level of stress, especially for X as she is the low person on our staff.

NonIFTeacher2: Yes. When you teach at a school like this which is a very good place to work, people aren’t going to want to leave.

NonIFTeacher1: It's on my mind all the time. With each new group added to the program, I wonder, “Where am I going to go? Will I go back to an inner city school where I feel I’ve already done my time?” It’s stressful. It affects my health.

NonIFTeacher3: It’s come over to our hiring procedures. We jokingly say to the powers that be, ‘Make sure this new person has less seniority than ‘X’ years.’

NonIFTeacher1: We’re joking, but it’s something we worry about. The longer you’re here, the more you want to stay.

NonIFTeacher4: We’re a really strong, focused staff. It’s hard to think about losing somebody because this program was imposed on us. I’m a Grade 7 teacher. I’ve been told that when the program comes to Grade 7, the person with the least seniority at Grade 7 will have to move to a different grade. That’s me. I’ve been at this school the longest of the Grade 7 teachers but I have the least district seniority. I love Grade 7, and being told that I won’t be able to keep teaching there because of this program is a hard thing to swallow. Everything in Grade 7 here is here because I had a part of building it.

(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005)
School leaders were also worried about the impending staffing challenge and raised the issue at a meeting of school and district leaders in November 2006. The district leader, in consultation with the IL Helping Teacher, decided to change the IF intake year from Grade 5 to Grade 6 because it would be more sustainable for schools and pose fewer staffing challenges for the following reasons:

- Teacher shortages in skill areas are already being felt. It is not easy to find a fully bilingual teacher who is also desiring to go into this new program, switch schools, and so on. With the present model we need two of these per school. In my opinion it is better to spread this rare resource over more schools and give more children the opportunities of learning French effectively.

- Research indicates that achievement results and overall growth in French are greater in Grade 6 because of the more advanced level of cognitive development. In the final analysis, linguistic outcomes in the graduation year would be the same over time.

- Cost of hiring and training new teachers is $5000 average per teacher. If we stay with the present model, and the new Grade 7 teachers have to be trained as well, we will be doubling our costs and efforts.

- It is important that we consolidate things here so that the program can be delivered effectively, have the potential to be implemented in new schools and still be cost-effective.

  (H. Horban, personal correspondence, January 27, 2006)

The district leader notified IF parents, IF teachers and non-IF teachers of the change in intake year in January 2006. This change was well received by non-IF teachers and school leaders. Parents wishing to enrol their children were obliged to wait until September 2007 and IF teachers were required to change grades and delay teaching the intensive French semester for one year.

**Staffing**

The IL Helping Teacher referred to the challenge of finding a fully bilingual teacher for each IF school, calling this person “a rare resource” (H. Horban, personal correspondence, January 27, 2006). This challenge was also articulated by school leaders:
You have to have the most excellent of teachers. They have to be really committed and dedicated. It’s not like another class; it’s ‘in here early, leave late’. They’re creating curriculum. It’s all oral. It’s like teaching a primary class, but there’s so much to be covered. Unlike a primary class, this is in a different language. It’s very demanding, so the teacher is key.  
(Interview, school leader, June 2005)

Germain and Netten (2004) underscore the challenges of finding the right kind of teacher to teach IF: “il n’est guère facile de trouver des enseignants prêts à modifier leur façon d’enseigner pour se plier aux exigences des démarches d’enseignement propres au français intensif” (p. 405). While the findings of this study indicate that there is more of a reciprocal relationship between teacher practice and program pedagogy than this statement suggests, it is true that staffing this program is a challenge due to the limited supply of bilingual teachers. The same issue prevails in staffing French immersion programs, as has been noted by Canadian Parents for French (2003, 2004, 2006a), and is increasingly prevalent in British Columbia.

There are also concerns, as expressed by one IF teacher, that hearken to others recorded in the French immersion literature pertaining to the extra pressures involved in teaching in a program of choice: increased scrutiny by parents, lack of materials at an appropriate linguistic and cognitive level, and the physical demands of a highly communicative, interactive program. One IF teacher also raised the concern that the IF class would always be full due to the desirability of the program.

I have this concern that my numbers are going to start and stay at 30 and the other numbers in the school are not. If this program takes off, how are you going to find teachers? How are you going to find people to take classes that are guaranteed to be 30?  
(Interview, IF teacher, March 2005)

The teacher also felt that, given the special, interactive nature of the IF program, class sizes should be more in line with primary class limits of 25 students: “I think it should be treated as a primary program. It is primary methodology for at least half the year”  
(Interview, IF teacher, March 2005). It should be noted that class sizes are determined by each school district and generally adhere to the provincially established ceiling of 30 students for Grades 5 to 7 regardless of program.
I encouraged the IF teacher to express this concern at the first full-group meeting held in April 2006. It was, in fact, the only meeting attended by IF teachers, school and district leaders during the study period. The discussion focused on issues and concerns such as staffing and, to a lesser extent, student transfers. There were questions about establishing time limits after which students should not enter the program. This led to discussion about when a class could be considered full. The IF teacher raised the concern expressed above:

**IFTeacher1:** My concern is that we have one whole class now, one tired teacher who is looking at having two full classes for French for next year.

**DistrictLeader:** Okay, so the issue then is less about the child adjustment and more about the numbers?

**IFTeacher1:** Well equally, both.

**IFSchoolLeader:** Well, it's a really good question, but you know, numbers work both ways. That initial number goes to 30, but you could have kids moving out by Grade 7. Attrition over a couple of years could take that same class down to 24. There's a give and take. Kindergarten is a prime example of that. There are the years of 44 and there are the years of 36. So, there's an ebb and flow; it's just situational. And every once in a while you could see it going to the 30 but it's all about the kids really. If the kid can do the program, the parents buy into it, I think they should have the opportunity.

*(IF multi-group meeting, April 2006)*

These comments show the different perspectives of each speaker. The IF teacher wants smaller class sizes to ensure increased interactivity and not feel overloaded while the school leader wants to accommodate students and parents in the school community. One could argue that both are concerned about optimizing opportunities for students. It should be noted that the attrition to which the school leader referred did occur. In the first year of implementation, three of the four classes had 30 students enrolled; in the second year, one class had 30 students; and in the third year, no class had 30 students.

In a meeting with district leaders and a Human Relations director, we discussed future staffing possibilities for French immersion and intensive French. They explained that French immersion teachers leave French “because of burnout” and asked, “How do we make these programs of choice for teachers?” *(Meeting, district leaders, May 2006)*.
It is a question districts need to address in order to retain trained bilingual teachers in all of its language programs.

**Sustainability**

Intensive French is one of seven programs of choice in Surrey and, as such, competes for school space, start-up funding, specialized staffing and support. The IF program will move from pilot to established program status in 2009, and the question now is whether it is sustainable in the long term. IF is delivering on the Surrey School Board’s Policy goal to offer quality programs of choice, but, as the policy notes, “the ability of the Board to be responsive to such goals is nevertheless dependent on favourable economic factors and the availability of space” (Surrey School Board, 2003, Policy 8320). Other language programs, for example French immersion and Punjabi, have also established themselves in district schools (17 and 5, respectively), each with its own invested stakeholder groups. Some of the reasons why other language groups invest in language programs of choice, according to the Ministry of Education official I interviewed, are the following:

- maintenance of home language and culture,
- access to exams, awards and scholarships,
- connections to business opportunities in other countries,
- rights similar to those offered other second languages.

(Interview, provincial leader, December 2006)

Some of these reasons differ from the reasons IF parents enrolled their children except in so far as future benefits are concerned. There is debate about whether school district second language programs should teach second languages or maintain home languages or whether the “rights … offered other second languages” are or should be equal to those afforded Canada’s official languages. What is clear is that British Columbia’s Language Policy (1995) does not stipulate French as the only second language to be studied.
Programs are established in schools where there is community interest. In the case of intensive French, informational parent meetings were provided and, if there were sufficient numbers of registration, a program was offered (as happened in five schools) or not (as happened in two schools). For most programs in Surrey, including intensive French, this process of demand and supply prevails and will continue.

The financial resources needed to sustain IF in a school are the same as any other FSL class after the first year of implementation. For the Grade 6 intensive year, regular funding is provided by the Federal Government, administered by the Provincial Government, at a rate of $17 per student for supplies and learning resources plus $15 per student for library resources and $20 per student for cultural events (that is usually administered centrally by the school district). Staffing for the program is calculated based on student enrolment so does not represent additional cost to the district. The only extra funding required of the district is during the start-up year of the IF program in a new school for initial French resources and IF teacher training if new teachers replace trained ones. Each of the five new IF schools received $5000 for these purposes from the Provincial grant (not from regular Federal French funding), and that amount should reduce by approximately $2000 when initial IF teacher training is offered in British Columbia rather than in Québec. This is planned for the summer of 2007.

As the program moves forward, it will engage a new set of stakeholders (in September 2007): the secondary school teachers who will receive the IF students, their school leaders, and new groups of IF students, parents, teachers, and school leaders in as yet unidentified new IF schools. A neighbouring school district is also planning to implement the program in September 2007, so a corollary set of stakeholders will be interacting with the Surrey group, and so on. It will be increasingly important to review and refine clear, student-centred goals for the program as IF students move through the school system. Recommendations for creating and maintaining dialogic structures within districts are offered in Chapter 6.
Summary

Each stakeholder group’s understandings were shaped by its response to the claims, issues and concerns generated during the implementation. Some of the IF program claims about inclusivity and lack of disruption were not corroborated by the findings of this study: non-IF teachers and school leaders experienced distress due to class streaming and potential teacher displacement. The benefits afforded IF students and teachers were, therefore, offset by drawbacks to other groups. Fortunately, the need to displace a Grade 7 teacher was obviated by the district’s change in IF intake year, and class composition imbalances reduced after the first year.

The dialogic processes inherent in responsive evaluation enabled stakeholders to develop their knowledge in an evolving way, informed by their own and others’ shared understandings. The perspectives of non-IF teachers were legitimized through the group meetings, the sharing of transcripts and the taking forward of their concerns to meetings with school and district leaders. There was, unfortunately, no multi-level forum to which non-IF teachers were invited, but their interests were nonetheless considered in the decision to change the intake year from Grade 5 to Grade 6 and in the ongoing discussion about class streaming. For the school leaders, their concerns were shared informally only; however, semi-annual district-school meetings are now taking place as a forum for dialogue that bodes well for future organizational learning.
Chapter 5.

Stakeholder Understandings – Part 2

Negotiation of Ideals

Negotiation was evident in a number of areas of the study, most notably in integrating a new curriculum and pedagogical approach into existing teacher beliefs and practices and, more broadly, in fitting a new program of choice into district and school contexts. There was also the juxtaposition of ideal and real states, for example the national ideal of linguistic duality meeting Surrey’s multilingual context and the linear view of curriculum implementation as execution of program principles versus a negotiated approach integrating the beliefs and practices of the IF teachers.

Linguistic Duality

The Federal Government’s ideal of linguistic duality is predicated on certain assumptions related to Canadians’ collective identity and view of social cohesion. The expected outcomes of the Official Languages Support Programs include: “All Canadians recognize and support linguistic duality” and “Social cohesion in Canada is increased” (Canadian Heritage, 2003c, p. 3). I asked various stakeholders if or how this view of Canadian identity fit within the Surrey context and if or how they felt the IF program was linked. One school leader noted, “I don’t know how much of a correlation there is between that greater reality and this program” (Interview, IF school leader, June 2005). I would go further in saying that the ideal as stated—while true to the Federal commitment of fully recognizing the two official languages—provides only a partial view into the Canadian identity. Beynon, Dagenais, and Mathis (under review) explore social cohesion and identity in more detail and suggest that “social cohesion cannot be viewed as a steady
ideal’” and “participation in the Canadian nation does not require relinquishing diverse linguistic and cultural affiliations (p. 4).

Based on the information shared by IF parents and other school leaders, it is fair to say that French and English bilingualism was valued by these Surrey parents, however, it more accurate to say that the addition of French to a repertoire that includes English and, in many cases, another home language, was seen as adding value to a child’s present or future capital.

The idealistic Federal policy based on promoting Canada’s two official languages was shaped at both the provincial and local levels by contextual factors related to the implementation process. First, French is only one, not the only, second language option open to British Columbia students in accordance with the provincial Language Policy (Ministry of Education, 1995). Second, the Federal Action Plan goal of doubling by 2013 the proportion of young Canadians who know both languages (Dion, 2003, emphasis mine) has been modified in British Columbia to significantly increasing the number of students who have a working knowledge of French as a second language by 2009 (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, Preamble, emphasis mine). Even though the two levels of government are coordinating their efforts to “provide new impetus to linguistic duality in the country” and “improve the quality of existing programs in … and increase participation in these programs” (Canadian Heritage, 2006b, Agreement), the targets are not the same.

There is also a difference in views on measuring outcomes of the two Action Plans. I interviewed the Ministry of Education official directly involved in the Council of Ministers of Education Canada negotiations to understand how the goals of the provincial Action Plan would be implemented and measured. She confirmed that, while the federal and provincial goals of promoting second language learning were compatible, there were differences in how each province implements those broad goals. She also explained that, in British Columbia, the approach to education is not as centrally administered as in some provinces:
A very small Ministry of Education sets policies and directions and funding allocations, but almost all of the activities happen out in the districts. And that’s in every field, not just in second language. There is a strong curriculum and a strong assessment program that matches it. This is not a new way in BC; this is the way things have been for over a hundred years with a very small bureaucracy.

(Interview, provincial leader, May 2006)

When asked about how British Columbia would coordinate its measurement of a “working knowledge” of French with the Federal goal of “know[ing] both official languages”, the Ministry of Education official pointed out that quality as well as quantity must be considered, but two factors had impeded this process. There was a delay in signing the British Columbia Action Plan Bilateral Agreement protocol that resulted in a shortening of the first five-year plan to four years and there were no national standards for measuring language proficiency:

There was going to be no way that it was going to get to those outcomes in that time period, and we hadn’t even agreed on the outcomes .... We have no fear in BC of outcomes; we know how to measure them, but we have not yet defined on a pan-Canadian basis what it is we are going to measure.

(Provincial Leader interview, May 2006)

Some groups are more optimistic than others about the attainability of either Action Plan’s goal. The parent lobby group leader I interviewed was blunt in explaining why she thinks the goal is unattainable, criticizing not only how core French is implemented in British Columbia but also the lack of accountability in defining functional bilingualism:

Carr: How realizable do you think the 2013 goal is?

ParentLobbyLdr: Not at all. We don’t have a definition of what bilingualism is, so it’s hard to even speak about that goal without understanding what it is we’re trying to achieve. Let’s imagine that we did for a minute have an idea of what that goal meant. To achieve that goal, we’re going to have to go way beyond the numbers of children we have in immersion. We’re talking about having 50 percent of all the graduates being bilingual. It’s a huge number of kids in core, and we know that core is failing kids, so to my mind there’s no way we’ll even come near reaching that goal in 2013 if ever.

(Interview, Parent Lobby Group Leader, June 2006)
I did not explore the extent to which this larger view was held by my study’s stakeholders since most are focused on the IF students that will likely be among British Columbia’s and Canada’s bilingual graduates.

The following IF program claims were problematized by various stakeholders during implementation: IF is an inclusive program, IF does not disrupt a school’s culture or organization, and IF implementation is a matter of following the curriculum guidelines and pedagogical principles. Each is examined separately. The third claim was explored in greater depth and within a teacher learning community.

**An Inclusive Program**

One of the claims made by IF’s researchers is that all students can participate in and benefit from the IF program: “Il s’adresse à tous les élèves, quelles que soient leurs aptitudes, leurs habiletés ou leurs motivations: tous les types d’élèves peuvent en tirer profit” (Germain & Netten, 2004a, p. 405). This message, based on research findings from Netten and Germain’s (2004c) three-year IF study in Newfoundland and Labrador, was communicated to parents prior to program implementation. As well, previous studies of intensive English in Quebec had shown that “all types of students are apparently capable of benefiting from intensive programs” (p. 267).

For the vast majority of students in Surrey’s IF program, the claim of inclusiveness was valid. All students in the appropriate grade of each IF school were welcome to take part. For two students out of 255, however, the program proved too challenging: one was an ESL student functioning at a low English proficiency level who transferred out of the IF class to a non-IF class after one month (October 2004) and one was a student with special needs requiring an individual education plan who transferred to a non-IF class after one year and one month (October 2006). For at least one student with learning problems, whose parent worried about the effect on his or her child’s self-esteem as a result of being in the program (reported in Chapter 4), the program did not meet expectations. Other students, including ESL learners or those with special needs, participated and benefited from the program. There were, however, fewer diverse
learners in the IF classes than in the non-IF classes, especially during the first year of implementation.

For one school leader, the notion that IF is suitable for every child did not match his experience of certain types of learners:

And, despite what other jurisdictions are saying, it’s not a program for everyone. It definitely isn’t. For instance, the boy who won’t talk …. I have two boys who won’t talk: one is an A+ student, talented and gifted. I have another boy who struggles in English and will not talk. How is he going to demonstrate fluency in French? He’s not a risk taker. He’s slow. It’s the parent who is motivated, not the student, to be in this program.

(Interview, IF school leader, June 2005, emphasis mine)

This school leader also questioned the added value of learning French for certain ESL learners:

Well, this program is being sold as if it’s the best program ever and there are no cautions. ‘This is a program for everyone.’ But you and I both know that, if you haven’t mastered your first language, you shouldn’t be starting on a second language. If you’ve mastered and are adept with your first language, a second language is great; it will make you even stronger in your first language. I think that’s what the research says. If you’re stuck between mastery of your first and second languages, as some of our Asian kids are, then they shouldn’t be attempting the third language because it will mean being dysfunctional in all three languages.

(Interview, IF school leader, June 2005, emphasis mine)

This view that the learning of French by ESL students is questionable is supported in some of the French immersion literature only in so far as those students have little competence in their first language and/or English (e.g., Turnbull, Lapkin, & Hart, 2001). A recent study by Mady (2006), however, shows that recently arrived ESL students perform successfully in French second language classes and, in fact, outperform unilingual Canadian-born students in a number of measures. Mady also cautions that “challenges to their [ESL students’] inclusion are based on administrative beliefs” that “may be founded on myths” about language learning (p. 171).

As part of my work for the school district, I tracked the English and French performance of Surrey’s IF students for whom neither French nor English is the first
language. I tested all ESL students in each IF class who had ever received ESL pull-out instruction (22 students in 3 of the 4 IF schools in 2004-05 and 24 students in 4 of the 5 schools in 2005-06) and an equal number of ESL students at equivalent English proficiency levels in the non-IF classes of the same grade. The tests were conducted individually in October 2004 and in May 2005 to assess oral and written performance in English. The same procedure was repeated the following year with students who entered the program in 2005. A considerable difference in growth occurred in the areas of oral language and broad language ability of ESL students in the intensive French program compared with their peers in the regular English program (Carr, 2007).

It was also part of my district duties to oversee and conduct assessment of the French performance of all of Surrey’s IF students. Individual oral interviews were conducted according to the national IF guidelines with all 120 students in February 2005 and with 111 out of 135 students in February 2006. All interviews were audio-taped, and interview results, as well as sample sets of audio cassettes, were sent to the program founders. A report of the assessment data was also submitted to the Surrey School District. In the first year, 71 percent of all students enrolled in intensive French met, fully met or exceeded expectations for oral performance. In the second year, 81 percent of students tested met, fully met or exceeded expectations. These levels are defined as follows:

- Meeting expectations: able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances; able to survive basis survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements,
- Fully meeting expectations: able to show some spontaneity in language production and to initiate and sustain simple dialogue,
- Exceeding expectations: able to show considerable spontaneity and to initiate and sustain general conversation.

A formal written assessment was conducted with all IF students in February 2005, also in accordance with national IF guidelines. All writing samples were sent to a central evaluation centre in Quebec, La Société de la gestion du réseau informatique des
commissions scolaires (GRICS). The oral and written performance results for Surrey were consistent with those in other provinces, as noted by Netten and Germain (2005):

According to the empirical data that have been collected, the communicative ability of IF students at the end of Grade 5 or 6 is similar to that of core French students at the end of Grade 9 or 10. For writing, students in IF are able to produce a narrative composition of several paragraphs in a manner similar to Quebec Francophones at Grade 3.5; accuracy is similar to results for Quebec Francophones at Grade 3 and fluency similar to results for Grade 4 Quebec Francophones. Testing of oral and written production has also been undertaken in five other provinces, and results are similar in all provinces in both urban and rural milieus. (p. 185)

**Emerging Program Inequities**

Germain, Lightbown, et al. (2004) report that IF should not cause disruption within a school: “Response to IF programs has also been overwhelmingly positive. They do not entail any disruption in school organisation because each Grade 6 class remains intact” (p. 425). Intensive French differs from other programs of choice in that students do not come from outside the school community (unless there is room in the IF class after local parents have registered their children). In principle, there should be no change to the school population. As one district leader stated: “These are your neighbourhood kids. You get to keep your kids. This works. It is truly inclusive and it is only five months” (Interview, May 2006). While the class numbers were not altered by the addition of an IF program, class composition in all schools was adversely affected for non-IF classes. The resultant streaming created inequities for non-IF teachers and raised implications for school leaders:

**IFSchoolLeader:** Streaming means that the one or two classes on either side of the IF class have all of the low incidence students: handicapped, Special Education Assistants in there, low-functioning ESL students, children needing learning assistance. All kids with any needs are in the non-IF classes, so that’s a problem for the other teachers.

**Carr:** Did this occur as a result of counselling to the parents to keep their special needs children out of the program or has this been a natural streaming effect?
IFSchoolLeader: That's just natural. Why would you put your child whom you know has needs into a program that's going to be accelerated and require someone that's pretty independent, self-motivated?

(Interview, school leader, June 2005)

The results of streaming were experienced by non-IF teachers in a universally negative way; they described not only how it affected them personally and professionally but also how it affected their students. It was the main topic raised by non-IF teachers at two meetings held in June 2005:

The streaming of the top level kids out of the other classes is my concern. It means that the other kids in the other classes are not benefiting from having those bright lights in their classroom. We know that having those bright kids can raise a class of otherwise low students. They can inspire them ... make them a better group of kids, and those bright ones are now gone for the 3 years. And next year, the same thing is going to happen. So if you teach above Grade 4 and you don’t speak French, you’re teaching the bottom all the time; all the behaviour problems, all the learning problems, the low ESL, the special needs.

(Meeting, non-IF teachers, June 2005)

In the first year of implementation, the degree of streaming was significant. In one school, for example, the IF class had no special needs students, two students requiring learning assistance, two allophone students who had received ESL service in the past but no longer required any, and seven identified gifted students. The non-IF class had no gifted students, six students requiring learning assistance (two of whom had an individual education plan), two high-functioning, three medium-functioning and six low-functioning ESL students (Ministry of Education, 1999), and one special education assistant in the classroom. Variations of unequal class composition were experienced in the other IF schools during 2004-05 as well. In the second and third years of implementation, however, this unequal distribution became less pronounced, that is, there were slightly more diverse learners in the IF classes and slightly less in the non-IF classes. It should also be noted that, in all but two cases of diverse learners in the nine IF classes during the study period, students did make progress and suffered no ill effects in their learning as a result of participating in the IF program.
The experience of streaming is consistent with other jurisdictions, as Germain, Lightbown et al. (2004) reported about intensive English (IE) classes in Quebec: “Problems have also arisen where access to IE is restricted to the most talented students, leaving other classes with a greater number of students who experience academic difficulties” (pp. 424-425). Germain and Netten (2001) also found that one school out of eleven in their first two years of implementation in Newfoundland and Labrador experienced streaming. Non-IF teachers in that school objected to teaching classes comprised predominantly of less capable students, and the school withdrew from the pilot project as a result, despite the researchers’ recommendations: “nous avions insisté sur le fait que, selon nos hypothèses de recherche, ce genre de programme devait s’adresser à tous les types d’élèves et non seulement aux meilleurs” (p. 228). It should be noted that in both examples, schools pre-selected the students to participate in the intensive program. This type of student screening has not occurred nor is it recommended in British Columbia.

Predictions were made by non-IF teachers and some school leaders after the first year of implementation about the continued effects of streaming:

I may not be teaching this year’s IF class in Grade 6 year next year but may instead be given the class with the students with severe learning, ESL, or behavioural problems. Is this something the intermediate staff has to look forward to: alternating between teaching an unreasonably difficult class or the IF group?

(Interview, non-IF teacher, June, 2005)

Fortunately, as mentioned above, the effects of streaming have lessened with each year of implementation. This is consistent with the experience of other jurisdictions (Netten & Germain, 2004c).

**Enacting Program Principles**

Germain, Lightbown, et al. (2004) underscore the importance of teacher training in IF principles and pedagogy “to ensure that every teacher involved in an IF program receives adequate preparation, both in theory and in practice” (p. 421). Netten and
Germain (2004b) also emphasize that following the IF curriculum guidelines is “necessary to ensure that the major principles of the program remain intact and that the desired outcomes are attained in all the classrooms where IF is implemented” (p. 307).

The IF teachers in this study adapted their pre-existing practices to incorporate IF pedagogy and also their beliefs and assumptions about second language teaching and learning in general. Certain tensions arose as teachers attempted to understand and adhere to the “IF way”, the way of teaching intensive French articulated in five guiding principles (Netten & Germain, 2004d) and outlined in the IF Interprovincial Guide (Netten et al., 2004). Their role in implementation went beyond executing a curriculum and pedagogy in which they had been trained to negotiating those elements against their personal practice knowledge (Clandinin, 1985). The transcripts from many meetings and interviews during nearly three years showed that teachers interpreted the new curriculum according to what they believed to be true about how language should be taught and their own sense of plausibility (Breen et al., 2001; Prabhu, 1987).

I bore witness to the teachers’ experience of implementing and coming to understand a new approach to teaching French. Eisner (in Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) holds that “experience is the primary agency of education ... experience is slippery; it is difficult to operationalize; it eludes factual descriptions of manifest behaviour. Experience is what people undergo, the different kinds of meanings they construe as they teach and learn, and the personal ways in which they interpret the worlds in which they live” (p. ix). Experience is central to understanding, and listening to what people say is equally or more important to interpreting teachers’ understandings than watching what they do. Had I simply observed teachers in their classrooms without coming together with them individually and in groups, I could never have done more than glimpse into their personal practical knowledge. This special kind of knowledge, according to Clandinin (1985), comprises theoretical and practical knowledge, subject to interpretation according to the teacher’s background and personal characteristics. It is also viewed as “tentative, subject to change and transient, rather than something fixed, objective, and unchanging ... and embodies a dialectical view of theory and practice” (p. 364). This
knowledge may be discovered in the teacher’s actions and through conversation and also in the methodology used to uncover evidence of this knowledge. It was necessary, therefore, to combine classroom observation and conversations in order to understand teachers’ classroom reality and illuminate facets of their personal practical knowledge.

I was guided by several assumptions about implementing innovation and the nature of curriculum. Curricular innovation and the theory that supports it are often presented in “neat unproblematic packages” (Nunan, 1992), and there is a history of perceiving teachers as delivery agents of someone else’s curriculum. Rather than adopting innovations without question, Nunan suggests that teachers engage actively with the underlying theories “to contextualize research outcomes against the reality of their own classrooms” (p. xi). Not only do teachers need to engage actively with theory in this way, they must selectively adopt and test it—thus using their classrooms as experimental sites. It is in this spirit that IF teachers grappled with the challenge of implementing the new approach. There were tensions in disrupting existing practice to incorporate or corroborate IF instructional strategies. For some teachers, this meant “unlearning” some pre-existing strategies; for some, it meant relearning or replacing existing strategies; and for others the IF approach reinforced what they knew instinctively. One teacher describes, in retrospect, this juxtaposition of prior and newly incorporated knowledge to her practice:

It was new for me to present new concepts to students without using writing to reinforce it at the same time. I thought that students would be less stressed by new concepts if they had the written forms to go along with it. What I found is that the writing distracts them as they read using English phonetics. When they learned the French words without seeing how they were written, their pronunciation was far better than when they read the word at the same time they were learning it. Once they had learned the correct pronunciation and had practised it, most still pronounced correctly when they read the word later. Another approach that was new to me was using literature at such an early stage to teach a second language. I was worried about overwhelming them with too much unknown grammar and vocabulary. However, students didn't seem to mind not understanding a lot of the story as long as they got the gist of it.

(Email correspondence, IF teacher, August 2006)
Such observations demonstrated that IF teachers not only approached the teaching challenge with a desire to learn and enhance their practice but also brought with them a good deal of personal practical knowledge. And therein lay the seeds of one of the earliest tensions in trying to find the IF way because, even though teachers were not implementers of a rigidly constructed curriculum, they were nonetheless delivering a well-conceived, well-researched program with clearly articulated guiding principles. Teachers had also been trained by and were in semi-annual contact with the program founders, so there was not the same distance that is often the case in curricular implementation. Teachers sincerely wanted to understand and implement the IF way while respecting their own sense of how best to teach a second language based on their prior teaching and learning experiences.

I interviewed two provincial leaders and an IF program researcher who had been involved in the IF training program and implementation of IF in their respective provinces. Their comments about the IF way reinforced one of the findings in my study, that is, the summer training in IF theory and pedagogy provides an important and necessary initiation into the approach. Without it, teachers tend to apply the other methodologies from core, immersion or French first language programs. Even with training, however, not every teacher understands or embraces the approach right away:

Two of the initial group of teachers did receive IF training but it was misunderstood. The ones who didn’t understand the pedagogy or didn’t get the training were floundering and using strategies that they were either familiar with in immersion or in a French first language context. The two that did get the training were core French teachers and relied on their core French instincts rather than the pedagogy that was promoted because they didn’t really get it.

(Interview, Program researcher, July 2006)

The initial training, therefore, provides a starting point in the teacher learning process, but time and negotiation are needed to make sense of the IF approach within the context of each teacher’s personal teaching beliefs and practices.

You know, we absolutely followed what we understood to be the truth about intensive French at that period of time based on the training we got
in Montreal .... It isn’t straightforward. It isn’t ‘just follow the guide and do it like this’.

(Interview, Program researcher, July 2006)

Any knowledge about the IF program is partial; it is not the domain of one party, not even the founders of the IF program. It is developed within communities of practice engaged with learning about IF from a theoretical and practical perspective:

It was a work in progress and it was going to evolve and it was a program that we were going to learn as we went. We were convinced that the program had a strong base, that it was pedagogically sound. There were definite positive features, but it needed some tweaking.

(Interview, IF program researcher, July 2006)

Where there is mentor-teacher as was the case in Surrey and in the two other provinces where I conducted interviews, the learning process included those mentors. This was certainly the case for me in Surrey and, as well, for others in similar roles:

The first couple of years I would say we weren’t as loyal to the approach; that was partly because I didn’t know as much about it either. So it’s been about developing my knowledge base and seeing what it looks like in the classroom and every year I got a little better at that.

(Interview, provincial leader, August 2006)

Much of what has been written about the failure of widespread innovation (e.g., Ben-Peretz, 1990; Cuban, 1993; Fullan, 1991) is based on the forced innovation of rigid curriculum wherein “teachers are merely ‘instruments’ for achieving the intentions of curriculum developers” (Ben-Peretz, 1990, p. 6). These conditions do not apply as strictly in this study because teachers volunteered to teach in this pilot program, and the nature of the IF curriculum is not “teacher-proof”. To the contrary, the teacher is integral not only to its delivery but also to much of the form it takes. It is the pedagogical theory and instructional strategies that define IF’s curriculum and approach rather than a prescriptive guide. This is very much in keeping with Aoki’s (2005a) view of teaching as “in-dwelling between two curriculum worlds: curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived” (p. 163). It leads to the second assumption guiding my interpretation of the IF teachers’ process, that is, the notion that curriculum and implementation are not separate realms. One of Aoki’s (1994) many contributions to how teaching and curriculum are
viewed is his notion of interspaces or the spaces of possibilities between students, teachers and curriculum. Aoki (2005b) advocates for “situational praxis” whereby teacher and students dialectically shape the classroom experience:

Within the perspective of praxis, the presence of Curriculum X in the classroom situation can be seen as a penetration into the lifeworld of the teacher and students. This penetration can be seen as an event that can occasion interpretive activities, efforts at sense-making of Curriculum X. Teachers and students can be seen as co-actors acting with and on Curriculum X, as they dialectically shape the reality of classroom experiences embedded in a crucible of the classroom culture of which they are a part and in which they have inserted themselves. (p. 121)

In this way, the students’ and teachers’ experiences contribute to the curriculum-as-lived. Theory and practice are viewed dialectically rather than in a traditional, linear connection where practice is simply the execution of theory and the teacher a theoretical instrument. The learning community established in this study also served to disrupt the linearity of theory to practice by calling into question and reflection so many of its early steps together. The resultant tensions are not to be avoided, according to Aoki, but rather “appropriately attuned ... such that the sound of the tensioned string resounds well” (cited in Pinar, 2005, p. 65). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) also support a blending of the two worlds of “theoretician” and “practitioner” which they define thus: “A practitioner does curriculum; a theoretician thinks about it” (p. 87). They suggest that what is needed is a process of “reconstruction” in which one disrupts one’s habitual ways of responding to curriculum and rebuilds one’s practice via reflection. We think about our action and act based on what we think. It is this dialectic that is evidenced in many of the comments, stories and interactions of the IF teachers and, indeed, in the reflective processes within the learning community.

**Establishing Rapport**

An element that emerged in the earliest interactions among IF teachers was the concern about affective features in their teaching and the impact of the new approach. As mentioned earlier, the fact that instruction was delivered only in French (except during Math and, in some cases, a subject delivered by a specialist) meant that teachers worried
about how to establish rapport with their students. During our first meeting after school in September, the teachers talked about how they addressed student frustration at not understanding everything that happened in class. All had students use a daily monitoring chart in their journals to record on a relative scale how they were feeling, for example, from overwhelmed by to confident about the day’s activities. Smith (1991) supports the fact that social and affective factors, for example, creating a supportive classroom environment, are of central importance to teachers’ decision-making. Lewis (1995) underscores the importance of attending to “the experiential and social needs of the students, and nurtur[ing] participation in a supportive learning environment which value[s] risk-taking on the part of the students to use the language” (p. 157). Teachers and researchers in other Canadian IF classrooms also reinforce the importance of attending to the affective needs of their students (Collins, Stead, & Woolfrey, 2004; Kristmanson, 2006). At our first meeting, the teachers talked about the challenges of trying to establish rapport in French:

IFTeacher1: You need to show concern about the children; you look after them. That’s what it’s all about. It’s not about the curriculum.

IFTeacher 3: That’s true. It’s about caring about the kids.

IFTeacher2: You have to develop that relationship in a language that, for the first little while, they don’t have any idea what you’re saying. You can’t tell them, so you have to show them that you care about them.

(IF teacher meeting, September, 2004)

In many classroom visits, I observed teachers going to great lengths to make students feel safe and encouraged to take risks in learning French. Each teacher had various schemes for reinforcing the use of oral French and praised students’ efforts to participate in class. As the teacher reports below, this required that IF teachers be vigilant about attending to students’ affective needs all the time.

IFTeacher: It’s so important, comical even, that this room is a very safe place for these kids … very positive. They are applauded, thumbs up all the time, everybody is fantastic and wonderful. It takes a high level of energy to keep that up all the time.

(IF teacher interview, February, 2005)
Other factors that were not unique to the IF program but pertinent to working with a new program in a new class in a new school, such as class composition, ordering learning resources, concerns about how other teachers were perceiving the program, and so on, were discussed in the early meetings. Ever present in each meeting, though, was the sincere individual and collective desire to deliver the IF curriculum and pedagogy according to IF’s guiding principles.

**Language Learning Rather than Content Learning**

Many of our early meetings focused on sharing how teachers experimented in their classrooms with what they had learned at the summer institute. Netten and Germain (2004d) advocate a task- or project-based approach using cognitively challenging tasks that are transdisciplinary rather than linked to specific subject areas. This was clear to the IF teachers in most areas, but questions arose about those areas of the school day that took place in different locations, such as the library, gym or computer lab. The *IF Interprovincial Guide* (Netten et al., 2004) stipulates that “it is imperative that students use French in the [IF] classroom. It is also essential that the teacher speak only in French” (p. 57). The following excerpt shows how the question of teaching subject matter in French was handled by one teacher and how the district leader (the International Languages Helping Teacher) and I tried to assist:

IFTeacher2: I was thinking about computers; I’ve been struggling to do computers in French, but they don’t understand a lot of the words .... So, we’re doing computers in French. They want it. And they’re allowed to speak English if they don’t know how to say something.

IFTeacher3: But that’s not in line with IF. We’re not supposed to teach content.

Carr: I don’t think it is so much that there not be content but that the focus be on linguistic development. The question, I think, is ‘How are they developing linguistic competence by doing that in French?’

IFTeacher2: Well, they’re learning vocabulary so, in computers, we now know how to add addresses, create an address book, then email people with a message in French and copy it to me. And we have a class conference page where we post messages. I make sure most of that is in French.

DistLeader: I think the only issue is not that they’re wanting to do computers in French; it’s more about what it is that the kids are responsible for. The whole idea of intensive French is the language competency, learning
French, is not that they are learning everything that they would be tested on, for example, all their computer knowledge in French. Do you see the difference?

(IF teacher meeting, November 2004)

In this excerpt, the IF teacher, district leader and I offer our interpretation of what we believe to be appropriate given our understanding of one aspect of the IF way, that is, the importance of focusing on linguistic development rather than subject matter content during the five-month intensive phase. This is part of IF’s task-based approach designed to facilitate the use of cognitively demanding tasks, as explained in the *IF Interprovincial Guide* (Netten et al., 2004): “It is the type of task that students are asked to undertake, not the subject matter, that determines to a certain extent the cognitive development that takes place” (p. 14). Throughout the first year, there were a number of schedule adjustments to be made to accommodate delivery of certain subject specialties in English, such as Band or Physical Education, but also each teacher’s idea of when a short session in English was warranted. The following exchange occurred during the last meeting of the first year when teachers discussed how they would include some English instructional time in the second year.

**IFTeacher2:** I used the hour a day of Math to bring up some classroom management issues this year. That was our safety valve. Next year, I’ll be teaching the enriched French to the Grade 6s, so I’ll need to use CAPP [Career and Personal Planning] to do the same thing with the 5s. We have a huge curriculum that is very language based; it’s sensitive content at times. You need to do that in English. I’ll use a half hour for the curriculum and the other half hour for discussion time.

**IFTeacher1:** I’ll use some time to debrief and for class meetings.

(IF teacher meeting, June, 2005)

It should be noted that Math is not compacted and is delivered in English for one hour per day all year. This means that, in principle, the rest of the day during the five-month intensive semester should be delivered in French; however, this occurred in only one of the five classes. French instruction during the intensive semester in five schools ranged from 65 percent to 80 percent of the school day. English instruction occurred during Math in all schools and one or more of Physical Education, Library, buddy class
activities and/or drama activities in some schools. Each IF teacher reported the percentage of French instruction to the district, and I provided this information when submitting the oral and written assessment data to the program founders.

The first year afforded the IF teachers the time they needed to put into practice the guiding principles they had learned about in the summer institute and were still in the process of learning. During part of every meeting or interview, we returned to one or more of the guiding principles. Some, such as facilitating task-based learning, using interactive teaching strategies, and following a literacy approach were adopted easily, probably because these were already familiar through first-language and core and immersion second-language teaching. Other principles continued to provoke discussion and uncertainty, such as authentic and spontaneous communication and proceduralization of language.

**Authentic and Spontaneous Communication**

Authentic language use is the first of IF’s five guiding principles. French is used as the means of communication, and implicit knowledge of forms and structures is developed through the use and reuse of language in literacy-based activities. Students are introduced to a limited number of structures and forms in order to communicate. As Netten et al. (2004) attest, “In this way, students proceduralize the language needed to communicate and are able very quickly to participate in authentic communication in a spontaneous way” (p. 10).

In our earliest conversations, teachers grappled with the term “authenticity”. They referred to the importance of using French as the language of the classroom and incorporating authentic documents (texts and media created for and used by francophones) in order to create a French world within the classroom. They also focused on the *IF Interprovincial Guide’s* (Netten et al., 2004) recommendation that the IF classroom be a “rich language language environment” where students “spend time using the linguistic features of the language” (p. 9, Netten et al.’s emphasis). Breen (1985) expands these ideas and proposes that the use of texts and language are only partial in
authentic teaching and learning: “the learners’ own contributions, the activity of language learning, and the actual classroom situation are also constituent elements within this process” (p. 61). Teachers problematized this concept and returned to it often in our discussions. As one teacher said, “I thought I understood what authenticity was until this year. I used the term when teaching in immersion, but now I know that it’s not real unless it’s real to the kids (IF teacher meeting, June, 2005). The following excerpt from the first year of implementation show how teachers were making sense of authentic communication at different levels.

**IFTTeacher1:** I see communication becoming more authentic. I’ve said, ‘You can’t ask dumb questions but rather questions that really need answers (not ‘what colour is your rock?’)’. They have to be meaningful questions that you really want to know the answers to. This was the first time yesterday I’ve heard meaningful questions, for example, students brought rock collections and the question was, ‘Oh, where did you find your favourite rock?’, ‘My Dad gave it to me’, ‘Does your Dad have a rock collection?’, questions like that.

**IFTTeacher2:** Where do they get that vocabulary? How do they put that together?

**IFTTeacher1:** They say ‘où est-ce que ton père [comment dit-on ‘found’ en français]? I say ‘a trouvé’ and they repeat ‘où est-ce que ton père a trouvé ta roche préférée?’

**IFTTeacher3:** They know passé composé?

**IFTTeacher1:** They use it everyday! They don’t actually know it, but they know how to use it. They know what it sounds like. They’ll just stop and they’ll say ‘comment dit-on?’ and then I’ll tell them and then they’re off on their way. Yesterday with their questions, it was the first time I felt it was authentic, like truly authentic.

**IFTTeacher3:** This brings to mind another thing that I keep trying to accomplish and not very successfully ... creating those sorts of activities within the curriculum that provide a structured environment in which to practise speaking and to keep it in French.

(IF teacher meeting, January 2005)

I interviewed IF Teacher 3 shortly after this meeting to probe more deeply into the idea of structure and practice she raised in the group meeting. We planned a shared morning of teaching where each would observe the other. We were hoping to discover if and how authentic and spontaneous communication was facilitated and whether there were certain instructional patterns that were more effective than others. I made notes
during the lesson about how she divided the time among direct instruction, pair work and group interaction, noting how oral language was developed with the whole class and monitored individually or in pairs. There was a song to warm-up, some direct teaching focused on topical vocabulary and language structures to prepare students to engage in interaction, opportunities for pair work during which she circulated and interacted, a return to direct teaching to explain the group task, and then time for a group oral and written task. During our post-lesson interview, the teacher explained her rationale for structuring the lesson as she did.

**IFTteacher:** I use the term ‘purposeful instruction’. Every moment you have with the students, there’s a real purpose. There’s very little time for activities without a direction, without a purpose. It’s that structured approach.

**Carr:** Would one of the structures you use with a new topic be brainstorming?

**IFTTeacher:** Yes, for the language. You get the vocabulary from the kids and then you ... well, what I found difficult was teaching them the variety of structures that was offered in there. I preferred to stick with a more streamlined version and so, what my kids know, they know really well, but they don’t have a lot different ways. Some of my more advanced kids do because I’ve consciously thrown them in.

**Carr:** As they’re ready?

**IFTTeacher:** Yes, and I do a fair bit of practice before they get to a project just because once they’re off and running on a project, they have to have the framework. And it takes a high level of energy to keep everyone motivated all the time, trying to find opportunities to get through them all, give them all a chance to practise. We know from core French, it’s whole group, then half a group, then pairs. It’s an area I struggled with because what I saw this summer was, ‘Oh yes, have a one-on-one conversation.’ But I’ve got 30 kids! That would take me two days to get through that. So I would do that a couple of times and then we would take those key structures and do them with half the class, just to give them practice, getting the sounds engrained in the brain.

*IFT teacher interview, February 2005*

In this case, the teacher has a very clear idea of how and why she teaches as she does. Her decision-making is based not only on the context of her teaching but also on beliefs that have developed over many years of experience in core and immersion. Clandinin (1985) and Smith (1991) suggest that knowledge gained from experience and beliefs plays a central role in teacher decision-making. Smith states that “individual
decisions are not made in isolation but as part of a broader decision-making web which takes into account previous curriculum and lesson level decisions as well as ongoing contextual and student-related factors” (p. 248). She notes that these decisions become part of an organizational framework that guides subsequent lesson planning. In lessons I observed in this teacher’s class later in the year, I noticed a similar pattern of activity to which, in a post-lesson interview, the teacher referred as “guided practice”. Again, she clearly articulated the how and why of her teaching and was consistent with her individual decision-making framework of structured, purposeful instruction.

**Development of Procedural Knowledge**

Another area where teachers developed individual and group understandings was the notion of procedural knowledge. Teachers learned about proceduralization of implicit knowledge during the summer institute, in reading a number of articles (Netten & Germain, 2004a, 2004b, 2004d) and in the *IF Interprovincial Guide* (Netten et al., 2004). In intensive French, correct language structures are introduced as needed in each theme, then used and re-used in interesting and cognitively demanding authentic communicative activities. In this way correct language structures are learned implicitly and are proceduralized (p. 16). This notion is based on Paradis’ (2004) neurolinguistic theory that “implicit linguistic competence is acquired incidentally, stored implicitly, and used automatically .... Competence (know-how) is subserved by procedural memory, as opposed to knowledge ("knowing that") which is subserved by declarative memory” (p. 61). Teachers interpreted this in very different ways from how and when to treat language forms and structures to direct teaching of grammar rules. The following excerpt shows one teacher’s interpretation of this concept:

I was very interested in what [the program founders] called ‘procedural knowledge’, the idea that the structures are introduced when they are needed, and constantly reinforced, so that they eventually become proceduralized in their brains, and become automatic. They also talked about how you had to proceduralize the structures orally before you introduced them in writing. I think this really avoids the tendency I saw in French immersion students to think of what they want to say in English,
translate the words into French, then write it out using English grammatical procedures and syntax.

(IF teacher email correspondence, August 2006)

Other teachers grappled with how and when to introduce forms and structures while keeping the focus on authentic communication. In a number of cases, teachers linked different classroom experiences to a common concern which is something Breen et al. (2001) discovered in their study of teachers’ principles and classroom practices. In fact, of 63 practices, based on two principles, observed by the researchers and identified by the teachers, only eight practices representing each principle were similar. The authors concluded that, within collective patterns in relationships between shared principles and practices, there is considerable individual diversity. The treatment of form and structures, to which the teachers referred as “teaching grammar” was one such area for the IF teachers.

IFTeacher3: Yeah, your question was about grammar. Do you remember when we heard at the summer institute, ‘If you see a student who really needs something, you deal with that one’. And I was thinking, ‘Yeah, you just do little mini-lessons all over the place. Yeah, give me a break.’

All: Yeah.

IFTeacher3: But, you know, that’s happened. I’ve got this girl in particular who’s questioning …. She’s seeing, she’s finding patterns. She’ll come up to me and say, ‘Madame, je ne comprends pas. Pourquoi est-ce qu’il y a un ‘s’ ici et il n’y a pas un ‘s’ ici?’ So I very quickly gave her a little conjugation lesson. And she said, ‘Oh, I get it. Je comprends’.

IFTeacher1: That’s perfect teaching.

IFTeacher3: But no one else has ever asked that question.

Carr: Maybe they’re not ready to learn that.

IFTeacher4: I do grammar. I had to. A lot of my students were getting really confused. They were so used to ‘je, je, je’ that when they came to ‘nous’ and ‘vous’, they were confused, and so I spent … I’m still working on it … and I’ve found that they’re really improving. They know now that when we’re talking about ‘we’ they say ‘nous’ and they know how to conjugate them … obviously only in the present tense. We’re just working with the ‘er’ verbs right now. They know that the majority of them end in ‘e’ or ‘es’.

IFTeacher2: Is everyone doing grammar?

IFTeacher1: You need to in order to ...
DistrictLeader: It's part of the program.
IFTTeacher2: It's not. It's not in there.
Carr: Actually, do you remember when [teacher from NL] demonstrated in the program video how to correct writing? He wrote out a sentence and then he drew attention to certain words. That kind of work should be part of the writing process.
IFTTeacher4: I've started, and we're getting into 'avoir' and 'être'.

(IF teacher meeting, November 2004)

This exchange shows that teachers’ understanding of introducing forms and structures and learning about developing procedural knowledge was varied and at an emergent stage, fitting into their frames of prior experience and practice knowledge. Some months after this meeting, I returned to these ideas in an interview with one of the teachers. This excerpt provided a glimpse into her personal theories and some of their roots.

IFTTeacher: It's a spectrum. The lines aren't drawn the same, I don't think. I see IF as being really much more core French because I'm always thinking, 'What are the structures that these kids need to know to complete this task?' So that's my direct teaching. It's not very subtle either. They need those structures to hang their hats on. Those are the hats. I'm always conscious of that. Anyone can do vocabulary. It's how to use it, and for that you need the structures. That said, it's different from core French in that I think I can count on one hand the number of grammar lessons I've given. When I have given a grammar lesson, it's been about 30 seconds long. It's very interesting.

Carr: And on an as needed basis?
IFTTeacher: Absolutely. And I've never done that before. No, that's not true. When I taught Grade 6 late French immersion, I would get a sense of what the needs were and I would do some grammar teaching around that idea, but it was more of a formalized grammar lesson whereas this is more like, "Whoa! on the fly"

Carr: But, this isn't immersion.
IFTTeacher: Definitely not. In immersion, you're teaching subject areas. French is a vehicle for learning content, but in IF French is the content. Immersion French is the means to and end; in IF it's everything. It's the means and the end.

(IF teacher interview, February 2005)
At the last meeting of the first year of implementation, teachers returned to the notion of proceduralization of language, noting that, while learning had certainly been observed during the intensive semester, other learning was not observed until much later. Teachers understood how they had influenced the internalizing of language within some students, but there were surprises in others. Again, the importance of oral use and re-use of the language before reading and writing was emphasized.

**IFTTeacher2:** There’s a lag time with proceduralization. My weakest students ... all of a sudden they said something in the month of May and I realized, ‘They’ve got it!’ We haven’t touched it in quite a while, but they suddenly get it. It has to simmer.

**IFTTeacher1:** There must be some process, some synaptic process that takes longer than we ever thought. For those of us who have learned our second or third language, how many times have we had that ‘Aha’ moment?

**IFTTeacher1:** They all click at different times. And sometimes when you don’t think they’re paying attention, they actually are.

**IFTTeacher2:** Well, here’s an example. I gave an assignment that the kids weren’t quite ready for. Here’s how I knew. They wrote a composition, a story, and as I was going through their papers helping with editing, I felt like I was back in French immersion because I just don’t get this kind of work in IF. You don’t get translating or sentences that make no sense whatsoever. In IF it’s more structured, it’s teacher-directed, teacher-led and all the communicative activities are done within a framework. The oral practice is guided. They are writing down what they’ve already said and you can tell.

**IFTTeacher3:** Yeah, I’ve noticed there’s almost no translating either.

**IFTTeacher2:** And that’s how the grammar shows through. They may not know what ‘allé’ means or ‘suis’ or even ‘je’, but they know that they say ‘Je suis allé’ because we say it every morning with Calendar: ‘Qu’est-ce que tu as fait hier?’ ‘Je suis allé’. They just know it because they’ve used it, they’ve heard it. They’ll even try out loud, ‘J’ai allé...Je suis allé’ and realize that ‘Je suis allé’ is the only one that sounds right. They might write ‘j’aime’ as ‘jem’ but they know it’s ‘j’aime’. They don’t know the rules, but they know what sounds right and what it means.

**Carr:** The ‘j’aime/jem’ error is one you correct in writing though, right? They’ve internalized that language from using it orally. You just need to point out how it’s written.

**IFTTeacher2:** Those moments are really important to analyze. I’ve noticed some interesting things as we wind up the year. They’ve internalized some of these structures in ways that surprise me.

(IF teacher meeting, June 2005)
The observations made by teachers during the first year of implementation evince a deep level of engagement with the IF theory and curriculum and subsequent student learning. This engagement, defined by Lewis (1995) as “the act of involving oneself, of interacting with the learning experience, of becoming a participant” (p. 145), is evident in the transcribed excerpts. The lack of consensus among IF teachers as to the how and why of some of IF’s guiding principles is consistent with the diversity of operationalizing theory reported by Breen et al. (2001). IF teachers may not have been ready to articulate a collective understanding of the issues but did share their personal decision-making schema. Prabhu (1992) suggests that variation and even conflict among theories are as prevalent among teachers as among specialists advocating for specific methods and theories.

Even after two years of implementation, the negotiating of what is comprised in the IF way and how best to achieve its tenets in each teacher’s classroom continued. Their grappling with the guiding principles showed that teachers were trying hard to embrace a new conceptualization of their practice and to fit it into their organizational framework (Smith, 1991) or sense of plausibility (Prabhu, 1987; Breen et al., 2001). According to Prabhu (1992), teachers’ theorizing about an approach according to their own established ways of teaching a second language demonstrates an identification with theory and an intellectual stake in their practice. Prabhu posits that “to experience such a process of exploration is to experience professional growth as a teacher—to learn a little about teaching and learning from every lesson” (p. 239). Teachers tested their personal practice theories as well as those related to IF in their classrooms and, in so doing, subjected their theories to confirming or disconfirming tests. In the latter case, theories were reinterpreted and retested. Aoki (2005) refers to such work and growth moving between the curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived as “pedagogic reaching”, and I believe this aptly captures what the teachers have experienced.
The Teacher Learning Community

The teacher learning community formed quite naturally shortly after the four original IF teachers were hired and subsequently attended the IF summer institute in August 2004 in Montreal. Our tentative first steps, characterized by Lave and Wenger (1991) as “legitimate peripheral participation”, involved entering a new community in addition to the other communities in each of our lives. We committed to becoming IF teachers and learners and did this together with similar groups from other provinces. The summer institute involved lectures, seminars and demonstrations by the program founders and a small group of experienced IF teachers and coordinators from Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. In keeping with Wenger’s (1998, 2006) conceptualization of communities of practice, the identity of our teacher community was defined by a shared interest in and commitment to the IF program that evolved over the study period. We developed a shared repertoire of resources through frequent interaction, conversations, and individual classroom implementation and curricular negotiation that was shared with the group.

A dialogic interaction developed among group members very early on that included an openness to share the highs and lows of what we were all experiencing. A number of factors may have contributed to this open atmosphere, that is, the fact that we were all teachers (including the IL Helping Teacher even though she acts as a district leader) and we were all coming to know this program from a somewhat common point of departure. As well, there was a pre-existing level of familiarity and mutual respect within the group based on the fact that many had worked with at least one other member in the past, and I had worked with most before. Agreements and differences of perception and opinion were noted from our earliest meetings to the present, and these were incorporated into our way of working together. The transcripts show that consensus was often not achieved; however, this was neither the objective nor necessarily a desired outcome (Beairsto, 2003). Following Isaacs’ (1999) metaphor of dialogue as a container, a setting was created in which listening, speaking one’s voice and shared meaning could be contained.
The theoretical content of the first training session, the six-day summer institute in Montreal, produced much discussion regarding the guiding principles and how the program differed from our past experiences in core and immersion programs. The lack of practical or methodological training at the institute concerned most of the IF teachers:

Well, we could have read a lot of it in the book. Much of what we heard was reiterated in the guide. The point of the program is to be communicative, yet the way it was shown in Montreal was so traditional.... It drove me crazy because I’m a cooperative learning enthusiast and it was not communicative. The theory is in the book; what we needed was the practical.

(IF teacher interview, October 2004)

Lave and Wenger (1991) warn that “learning as internalization is too easily construed as an unproblematic process of absorbing the given, as a matter of transmission and assimilation” (p. 47). In other words, when the emphasis is too strongly placed on dissemination without equal attention to processing and negotiating what is being disseminated or on the learner him/herself, it is difficult to effect learning. The excerpt above was representative of the reaction of IF teachers in this study and, as well, in at least two other jurisdictions. One provincial leader stated that the summer training was “very top-down, very theoretical” and, moreover, that “it was misunderstood” (Interview, provincial leader, July 2006). Another shared that, without practical follow-up, the theoretical lessons did not go very far: “Demos and discussion and lots of participation is the best model” (Interview, provincial leader, August 2006). The dilemma for program founders and others hoping to provide a consistent conceptual grounding in IF during a single inservice session, albeit five or six days, is how to provide the necessary theoretical background, explain the pedagogical rationale and instructional strategies and allow the necessary negotiating and processing to facilitate preliminary internalization of the content.

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) differentiation between a “teaching curriculum” and a “learning curriculum” is useful in considering the summer institute and how its content and delivery could better serve new IF teachers. Lave and Wenger’s teaching curriculum “supplies—and thereby limits—structuring resources for learning [, and] the meaning of
what is learned ... is mediated through an instructor’s participation by an external view of what knowing is about (p. 97). A learning curriculum, by contrast, is based on addressing questions of learning within a learning community. It is impossible for such a community to develop and address questions of practice in only five or six days; however, if some time were dedicated to pedagogical experimentation and reflection during the institute, it might catalyze a process that could be continued and extended during the subsequent implementation process.

Teachers met with the IL Helping Teacher and me later in August for two days to debrief what we had learned at the summer institute, to check understanding of the guiding principles and to plan for September. It was difficult at this early stage to fully imagine how the pedagogy really worked. The teacher with late French immersion experience felt she had a good grasp of this new methodology, calling it “pure language teaching ... unencumbered by curriculum demands”, but others saw the units in the IF Interprovincial Guide (Netten et al., 2004) as not offering the kind of teacher support to which they were accustomed. Implementing the new curriculum and pedagogy pulled into question their beliefs and assumptions about second language teaching and learning as they searched for and engaged with the IF way.

Wenger (1998) refers to engagement in practice as “both the stage and the object, the road and the destination” and learning not as “a static subject matter but the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice” (p. 95). The teachers’ practice became, therefore, a context for learning about practice. A support structure of semi-monthly after school meetings and meetings during the day with release time provided the venue for developing a learning community, and understanding the IF way became our earliest and ongoing focus. The emergent themes noted throughout the meeting and interview transcripts, in the order in which they surfaced, were establishing rapport, facilitating authentic and spontaneous communication, attending to student learning and evaluation, and developing proceduralized language knowledge. Over the two and a half years, there came to be some consensus about what authentic and spontaneous communication looked and
sounded like and how to facilitate it in IF classrooms; however, the notion of developing procedural knowledge of language challenged teachers’ beliefs and practices and became a controversial topic within many of our conversations.

The social relations within the learning community evolved in ways that meant some “newcomers” became “old-timers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991), that is, were able to acquire resources, advance their learning and contribute to the group’s learning, while others did not. Just as Toohey (1998) found Lave and Wenger’s (1991) conceptualization of “moving from being an outsider to being an insider” (p. 63) too simple a way of describing participation in a community of practice, so too was longevity in the IF program a sufficient measure of who became a powerful insider in the IF teacher community. Most of my understanding about these social relations developed through casual observation of group interactions, group email correspondence (on the district intranet), off the record comments, and noting when teachers joined or left the community, that is, were hired or transferred.

I observed that those who were able to appropriate the community’s resources (understanding or insights related to IF) possessed one or more of the following qualities: were verbal, had considerable teaching experience, took risks with their teaching, spoke French confidently, and/or shared their resources and ideas with the group. The powerful members of the community engaged more fully in discussions around IF pedagogy, invited guests and colleagues (including me) to observe and give feedback about their teaching, and demonstrated a high degree of commitment to the program and the community.

Those teachers who remained on the periphery were limited in their acquisition of community resources and knowledge: “The social structure of the community of practice, its power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). For a variety of reasons, some teachers did not readily engage with the community or contribute their ideas, chose not to join in group class events, or did not seem to embrace the IF approach. Over the nearly three years of meeting and interacting with a total of nine teachers, I noted that, at different times, two
groups of two chose to collaborate on projects with their classes and so met and shared more frequently—in a sense, creating another community—and three, in particular, used the group as a means of sharing and developing their insights about IF pedagogy. A recent message from one of the “peripheral” teachers shows his desire to move to a more central place in the community.

It would be nice to know what the other teachers are doing in their classrooms with IF, what works for them what doesn't .... Maybe the others are ticking along just fine, so they may not feel the need to do this. (Email, IF teacher, January 2007)

Even though this teacher has been part of the community for more than one year, he has found that “inside was not a place wherein participants moved inexorably toward fuller and more powerful participation” (Toohey, 1998, p. 64). The ongoing leadership challenge will continue to be to provide time, space and invitations to participate for those willing and able to make the journey.

Summary

Intensive French program tenets were problematized by IF teachers individually and within the teacher learning community. Teachers worked together to unravel and reapply some of the IF guiding principles as they came to understand them through classroom practice. They embraced some elements of the theoretical learning they had undergone in the summer institute and challenged others, for example, authentic and spontaneous communication and procedural language knowledge. In the process, they underwent deep reflection and reevaluation of their beliefs and practices as second language teachers. Working in a learning community, we discovered “what is real, what is useful and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps)” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 168).

As Lave and Wenger (1991) found in their studies of apprenticeship and Toohey (1998, 2000) noted in her studies of classroom communities of practice, there are often power relations and “conditions for legitimacy” that supercede the degree of experience
along “learning trajectories”. This occurred in Surrey’s teacher learning community as some came to occupy strong and powerful positions within the community and others remained peripheral in their participation.
Chapter 6.

Conclusions and Implications

The implementation of intensive French (IF) in Surrey, British Columbia has taken place at a significant point in the history of national and provincial policy and the field of second language education. The timing and location of this study was opportune for examining the implementation of this new approach in a particular sociopolitical context that both favoured and disfavoured progress toward Canada’s long held ideal of linguistic duality. The dream of strengthening national unity through official bilingualism was reawakened by the 2013 Action Plan’s goal of doubling the proportion of bilingual graduates, and while there is no question that grand visions can catalyze powerful action, it is important to consider the many variables that interact when idealistic programs are implemented in real contexts.

Policy statements and narratives, by design, simplify complex realities. While it is necessary to have clear and compelling goals in order to inspire action, one must not always accept the underlying assumptions without question nor overlook the diverse contextual milieu in which policies or programs are implemented: “The stabilizing assumptions of policy makers ... substitute for the rich diversity of people’s historical interactions with particular environments” (Leach & Mearns 1996, in Sutton, 1999). It is important, therefore, to problematize that which has been offered as policy or programmatic “solutions”. I have attempted to do this by critically examining the implementation of intensive French in Surrey, British Columbia through a number of theoretical lenses.

By looking at the implementation of policy goals and program innovation in terms of investment, competition and negotiation, I disrupted certain assumptions, for example,
that people invest in programs for predictable reasons, that everyone benefits when an innovative program is implemented, or that implementation is a linear process.

Olson and Burns (1983) describe how implementation of a program linked to the Federal bilingualism ideal was influenced by contextual factors:

When a program such as French immersion is implemented, the process is often undertaken with some general, often ambiguous, goal such as national unity in mind .... As implementation progresses ... these abstracted goals take on a life of their own in context. The fit of original intent to practical policy ends may therefore be accomplished willy-nilly by politics or happenstance, with only a marginal relationship to the program's original goals. Economic realities, demographics, vested interest groups, local biases, and so on transform original intentions into new intentions with a life of their own. (p. 9, emphasis mine)

In Surrey, the “new intentions” have been shaped by factors uncovered in parents’ and students’ stated reasons for investment in the IF program and go beyond those reported in the aforementioned study. IF parents sought these opportunities for their children too but also wanted future access to benefits and choices in high school and beyond. The “original intentions” of learning Canada’s official languages have, in fact, been upheld in the implementation of IF as evidenced in the comments of some Surrey’s parents and students. In the case of allophone parents in particular, the stated link between learning French and enhancing one’s Canadian identity contributes to the body of research conducted by others who have studied allophone participation in FSL education by students of diverse origins (e.g., Berron, 1998; Dagenais & Berron, 2001; Mady, 2006).

Just as British Columbia’s Language Policy has broadened the notion of linguistic duality to include other languages, the rationale for learning French as a second or additional language encompasses many more benefits than contributing to national unity or validating the French fact in Canada (although I do not discount these as important outcomes). The effects of globalization and this province’s sociopolitical and multicultural context have meant that, while Canada’s official languages are valued, so too is the study of other languages as a matter of choice. The notion that languages are now viewed less as symbols of national identity and more as economic commodities
(Heller, 2001; Makropoulos, 1998; Olson & Burns, 1983) has been reinforced by the findings of this study.

Bourdieu’s (1977b, 1986) conceptualization of social structures and the struggle for position and capital was useful in understanding some of the dynamics of this implementation during almost three years. The unequal distribution of benefits among the IF program stakeholders in Surrey meant that the advantages for some represented costs for others: the IF students and parents sought and achieved benefits, the IF teachers experienced both costs and benefits, and the non-IF teachers experienced costs that were substantial in the beginning but reduced as the IF program evolved.

The IF teachers in this study challenged the view that participating in early training and following curriculum guidelines would ensure that the program’s guiding principles would be executed and the intended outcomes would be achieved. They recognized that experimentation and reflection were needed to integrate the new pedagogy into their own practice. Teachers also needed time and a structure in which to negotiate the program tenets and assimilate its theoretical and pedagogical principles. The establishment of a teacher learning community and the study’s responsive evaluation methodology were particularly useful in providing time and space for dialogue and meaning-making.

What then are the implications for second language teaching and learning in general and intensive French program implementation in particular? What are the implications for teacher learning?

**Implications for Second Language Teaching and Learning**

A number of organizations (e.g., CASLT, 2004; CPF, 2004; Canadian Heritage, 2004) have focused on the potential of intensive French to contribute to the Federal Government’s 2013 Action Plan goal. Criticism of core French in Canada (e.g., CPF, 2006a; Netten & Germain, 2004a, 2004c, 2004d) and in British Columbia (CPF, 2007) has once again heightened interest in a better way to teach French as a second language.
This criticism was also present in the 1980s and prompted Stern’s (1982) conceptualization of the National Core French Study. Implementation of the Study’s curriculum and recommendations was inconsistent across the country, however, for a number of reasons outlined in the thesis.

IF takes its place in the evolution of second language education research and practice. The tenets of earlier approaches, most notably the multidimensional curriculum described in the National Core French Study (CASLT, 1990), are seen in intensive French, but, as has been shown in Chapter 1, the IF program has moved further along the second language education continuum by focusing more explicitly on certain instructional strategies grounded in literacy-based learning, transdisciplinarity and neurolinguistics. Just as French immersion produced a breakthrough in how second languages had hitherto been taught, so too has intensive French. Many of the same conditions that contributed to French immersion’s early success, such as parent lobby group involvement, a solid research base, and a link to the Federal bilingualism ideal are operative as districts and provinces implement intensive French.

It is important, as different jurisdictions consider the IF program, that it not be seen as a panacea to FSL program challenges. Another well-conceived and widely-endorsed approach, embodied in the National Core French Study, was perceived as a “solution”, but it nonetheless met barriers to full implementation. Further, IF should not be considered a radical departure from other FSL teaching approaches, such as core and immersion. It is, rather, one approach that has built on the tenets of others, incorporating elements based on additional theory and practice, and emerged as an option with great promise. Stern’s (1974) caution against dogmatism: “every few years something new is ‘invented’ and the practice of the day is contemptuously rejected” (p. 244) should be heeded today.

MacFarlane (2005) notes that “if intensive French continues to expand, all FSL teachers will need to understand this program since they will likely meet graduates in follow-up classes” (p. 18). I would go further in saying that teachers in all FSL programs would be well advised to learn about and incorporate key elements from IF’s
pedagogical approach and instructional strategies to enhance their teaching practices and outcomes.

**Implications for IF Program Implementation**

A comprehensive definition of the essential conditions and factors will facilitate implementation in new contexts. This definition can be updated as necessary following additional research. (MacFarlane, 2005, p. 19)

I offer the following recommendations that have emerged from Surrey’s implementation, noting that they are highly contextualized and not necessarily generalizable to other jurisdictions. They do, however, provide illustrative examples drawn from one context over time. I also suggest implications for further research.

*Teachers need time and dialogic structures to negotiate IF’s curricular and pedagogical tenets.*

IF teachers approached the challenge of implementing a new approach with a good deal of courage and aplomb. As pioneers in British Columbia, they applied for positions in a program that had no history in this province and relatively little in the country. They engaged with the curriculum and pedagogy on different levels throughout the study and lived with the tension of disrupting their existing practice and beliefs about second language education and embracing or challenging the new approach. By willingly participating in a teacher learning community, they were active in articulating their experience, listening to others’ and moving toward a deeper understanding. Lewis (1995) studied a similar implementation effort in Surrey and noted the importance of such engagement:

Much is heard in educational discourse about teachers’ abilities to adapt and be flexible in the face of educational change. What does this really mean? Being flexible and adaptable is a dangerously passive stance without developing the ability to ask critical questions, to see tentative answers and to be reflexive about one’s own practice. (p. 163)
The IF teachers actively engaged in a process of learning and growth as they came to, and continue to, understand the program in which they played an integral role. One cannot underestimate the “pedagogic reaching” (Aoki, 2005) and professional growth they have undergone and will continue to experience. The depth of engagement and reflection as well as the ability to articulate personal theory and practice, contributed a great deal to the teachers’ and my understanding of intensive French. In fact, I believe that these qualities were as equally valuable to understanding as years of teaching experience. Breen et al. (2001) found that more experienced teachers became more entrenched in their beliefs about teaching, and yet this view was not supported in my study: the majority of teachers whose comments were cited in this study had taught from 10 to 28 years. Involvement in the program has been transformative for some: “IF has revitalized my career” (IF teacher meeting, November, 2004) and “I believe in this more than anything else in my whole career” (IF teacher interview, March, 2005).

Teachers spoke about the value of bringing “conflicting ideas and interpretations” into the group meetings (IF teacher, email correspondence, September 2006). Their first contact with the program was a theoretical overview followed by immersion in practice. Knowledge of the program shifted for all involved, so there was value in reflecting on, talking about and rethinking the master story and the daily stories (Aoki, 2005). We returned often in our discussions, and still do, to IF’s guiding principles as a checkpoint but, after almost three years, the framework has grown to encompass some of the understandings generated by the IF teacher group. An example of the latter is the still-gelling understanding of how and when to infuse grammatical concepts into one’s teaching. The meeting excerpts show how teachers grappled with unlearning, learning and relearning as they juxtaposed their own teacher practice knowledge with the program’s theoretical principles.

It is clear that one training institute, no matter how pure its content or effective its format, can do no more than initiate a teacher into the principles and pedagogy or the “IF way”. There may be, as Billy (1980) described, “une pédagogie déterminée”, but each teacher will and must fit it into his or her framework. An IF program researcher who had
studied a two-year implementation in another province summarizes how IF teachers in that province understood the IF way:

I’m not sure there is one IF way. It’s kind of like multiple intelligences. You have certain teachers who are more kinesthetic in their approach, others who handle things visually. Everybody has things that they can do more naturally and others they really have to push to integrate …. It’s about trying to develop the various dimensions. (Interview, IF program researcher, July 2006)

Teachers in this study infused the IF way into their practice and, at the same time, contributed praxis-based understandings to the IF knowledge base, in part through the learning community and in part through this study.

Other IF stakeholders need dialogic structures to co-construct understanding of the program and to work through claims, issues and concerns as they emerge.

The responsive evaluation methodology that guided this study was useful in supporting stakeholders’ early steps in the implementation process. The full hermeneutic-dialectic process advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1989) was not completed during the study period, although jointly constructed understandings were developed and certain issues and concerns clarified. Mixed stakeholder group meetings involving IF teachers and school and district leaders have occurred infrequently but should continue. Ideally, a representative circle of stakeholder representatives should be formed as the program moves to a multi-level phase (elementary and secondary) in September 2007. The mandate of this group would be to continue the process of constructing and reconstructing knowledge about the program.

This study articulated some of the implications of program implementation for stakeholders not directly involved with the IF students and program. Non-IF teachers lived with considerable ambiguity during the first year and a half of implementation due to perceived losses of equity and stability. Although I was able to provide a structure in which to vent their concerns once during the study and shared these with school and district leaders on several occasions, it was not until those leaders met formally in November 2005 that a decision to change the intake year occurred which, in turn,
assuaged the non-IF teachers’ concern about stability. If the advice expressed by the district leader below had been heeded earlier, it might have mitigated some of the ill-feelings that coloured the first year of implementation.

I think we could have done a better job in the initial informing of the teachers and of the schools and making the program known out there before we implemented. I think you have to do some initial work to make the program known in that school or in that zone. People need to understand the program before they adopt it in their school. (District leader interview, June, 2006)

It is impossible to know if earlier consultation would have changed the path this implementation took. Similarly, if every eventuality affecting every stakeholder had been considered, the program might never have started. It is challenging to find the right balance of communication before and during implementation projects.

There is a parallel between this study’s findings pertaining to program effect on stakeholders and those of Olson and Burns’ (1983) study of a French immersion program implementation, that is, a perceived threat to non-program teachers’ security and sense of equity. The authors underscored the need to plan in order to mitigate the effects on school culture of change and unforeseen effects: “changed ecology and happenstance again come into play … and planning is the remedy … to ensure that, while our programs may change the ecology of the school and community, what results is an environment which is both humane and serviceable to all” (p. 13).

**Implications for Teacher Learning**

The social construction of knowledge was key to developing understandings about this program and its impact on the Surrey School District. The teacher learning community did not start as many communities do. Often, learning is “a process whereby newcomers to a community participate in attenuated ways with old-timers in the performance of community practices” (Toohey, 1998, p. 63). While this became the pattern of learning and interaction in the teacher learning community when some teachers left and others joined, we all began as neophytes in this implementation.
Wenger (2005) maintains that the value of communities of practice is widely accepted, but the challenge is “how to cultivate them intentionally” (p. 12). He suggests that, even though it is paradoxical for organizations and communities to coexist, “they need to learn to recognize each other and function together in ways that let each do better what each does best” (p. 16). Some of the ways a school district, for example, can support a teacher learning community is to provide time and structure. Structure could include mutually-developed guidelines and expectations for knowledge-sharing, assessment data collection, and consultation with colleagues and experts. Fullan (2003) emphasizes the latter two features, stating that professional learning communities “must be infused with high-quality curriculum materials and assessment information about student learning” and “be continually tested by external ideas or standards about best practices… [to] help ensure that the process isn’t too insular” (cited in Sparks, 2003, p. 55). Similarly, teachers in learning communities need to know that their collective voice matters. Consultation with other stakeholder groups and/or other jurisdictions would both validate and enrich their work.

When asked if a learning community would have formed without some intervention by the district or me, one teacher responded:

I think we would have formed a teacher learning community without the guidance of the district, but it would have been purely email-based. We were all feeling so overwhelmed that I doubt we would have got together. It really helped for us to meet and share our frustrations and interpretations of the program. We often had conflicting ideas and interpretations, so it really helped having a leader in the group to tell us it was OK to think differently from each other. (Email correspondence, IF teacher, September 2006)

Wenger (2005) advocates that mutual commitment is required whereby the organization is committed to engaging and supporting learning communities and the community commits to becoming partners in strategic conversations that lead to stewardship of its own developing knowledge resources. Leadership in such a context is facilitative and participatory in making time and space for such communities, providing a firm yet flexible structure, and contributing and valuing their knowledge-building endeavours.
Implications for Further Research

The questions that lie ahead for Surrey and other jurisdictions implementing intensive French include the following:

- What pathways or models are effective in maintaining and enhancing IF students’ learning in the later years of the IF program?
- Are the initially hoped-for benefits articulated by IF students and their parents realized? Are there unanticipated advantages or disadvantages?
- Do the initial concerns articulated by non-IF teachers and some school leaders lessen as the program evolves? How can these concerns be addressed?
- What are the long term effects of the IF program on English as second language students’ learning in French and English?
- How will the teachers’ learning be sustained and developed?
- How can IF pedagogy and instructional strategies be imparted to and implemented by teachers in other FSL programs?
- How will the IF program evolve as a result of interaction with different groups of stakeholders?

Two conditions are necessary if Canada is to reach its 2013 Action Plan: the implementation of intensive French programs in jurisdictions able to provide the necessary resources and structures and a careful consideration of the lessons that can inform and enhance other French second language programs.
A Personal Note

It is likely already evident that I wish, as Stern (1983, 1984) and Netten (1993) did, that Cinderella (core French) still makes it to the ball.

I was a core French student from Grades 8 to 12 who then majored in French and German at the University of Victoria. At the end of my third year of university, I could dissect 19th century novels in three languages, describe in French any number of details about L’Académie française but could not converse with ease and had never interacted with a Francophone in a setting other than a classroom. I decided to apply for a French bursary in 1973, thanks to the Official Languages in Education Program, and spent my fourth year at l’Université Laval. Choosing not to take the Baccalauréat pour non-francophones (BANF) courses and opting to rent a room with a French family in Sillery, I sought an authentic experience and ventured into post-FLQ Québec speaking like “une vache espagnole”, as I was told. It wasn’t the easiest year of my life, but it solidified my love of all things French and a particular fascination for French-Canadian culture.

I was hired as a core French teacher in 1976 in the Coquitlam school district in British Columbia. With no methodological training, I moved along a pedagogical continuum that started with grammar-translation and games, delivered in 20-minute lessons from a cart, to an awakening to communicative-experiential teaching with the National Core French Study. The next period was enriched by years of working on curriculum and professional development with teachers, publishers and various organizations. Thirty-one years later, I am still passionate about the idea of sparking a love of French among my students and, now, of educating student teachers to do the same.

Intensive French has allowed me to deepen my learning about second language pedagogy. It has changed the way I teach French. I am grateful for this learning and hope that others will apply the lessons intensive French has to offer to their French teaching in whatever program context they find themselves.
REFERENCES


Appendix A.

Letter to IF Teachers
Requesting Permission to Audio-Record Meetings

November 2004
[name], Intensive French Teacher
Surrey School District

Dear [name],

This is to inform you of my doctoral research and invite you to participate in sharing your understanding of the program and process of implementation. My area of interest for the dissertation is the complex and changing relationship among teachers, students and curriculum as influenced by teachers’ individual theories and ways of practice. As well, I hope to explore how collaborative connections among teachers and other stakeholders exert an influence. I hope that this knowledge will be instrumental in uncovering the ‘how’ of implementing an innovative program being pioneered in British Columbia by Surrey teachers.

We are already working together in this change process, and I look forward to continuing the journey together. My goal in these early stages is to respectfully record your thoughts about curriculum, the implementation process, the adjustments to practice and any reflections you may have. This may involve an interview with guiding or open-ended questions to learn about your individual context. It will involve recording and transcribing one or more of our group meetings as we explore issues related to pedagogy and curriculum. In all cases, anonymity is assured—it is the process of reflecting and collaborating, not the linking of results with individuals, that will be of value—and all transcripts will be reviewed by those who participated in the conversations. You may opt out of the research project at any time.

I anticipate studying this implementation process during its first two years if not longer. This early stage is extremely important in telling the whole story.

Wendy Carr
Appendix B.

Letter to Non-IF Teachers
Inviting Them to Attend a Focus Group Meeting

MEMO

TO: STAFF
FROM: GLEN
RE: Wendy Carr & Intensive Core French
DATE: June 7, 2005

Wendy Carr has been in the school several times this year researching and monitoring the Intensive Core French program. She is a Coquitlam teacher currently on LOA while she completes her doctorate at SFU. She has also been contracted by the Surrey School District to research and report on the efficacy of the ICF program.

She has interviewed me but she would also like an opportunity to interview any staff members that are interested in providing their thoughts about the program and its effect on our school – good or bad.

She will be in the library on Thursday after school with refreshments for any one who is willing to meet with her.

If you could let me know I could let her know how much to bring,

Thanks,

Glen
Appendix C.

Letter to IF Parents
Inviting Them to Attend a Focus Group Meeting

February 13, 2006
Re: Intensive French Focus Group for Parents

Dear Parent,

We are interested in holding a focus group meeting at your school for parents whose children are enrolled in the intensive French program. The meeting is intended to help further research being conducted on this program. We would like to explore some of the reasons why parents and students chose to participate in the program. Some of the questions we are considering are:

1. Why did you choose to enroll your child in this program?
2. What do you see as the benefits or drawbacks for your child?
3. What appealed to you or your child about the idea of learning French?
4. What positive and/or negative experiences has your child had in the program?

Wendy Carr, an elementary French teacher who is also a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University, has been contracted by the Surrey School District to assist in conducting research on the intensive French program. She has been working with teachers and students in the program since it began and will be conducting the focus group meeting. Approval to hold these focus group meetings has been granted by Dr. Sharon Cohen, Assistant Superintendent, Surrey.

Your attendance is completely optional, and all identities and school affiliations will remain anonymous. Participation or non-participation will not have any effect on your child’s grades or his/her evaluation in the class or the school.

The time and location for the focus group meeting is: Wed., March 1st at 7:00 p.m. in the library. Coffee, tea and snacks will be served.

We hope you will consider participating.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
Principal, XYZ Elementary
Appendix D.

Letter to Parents
Requesting Permission for Their Child(ren) to Participate in Focus Group Meeting

February 13, 2006
Re: Intensive French Focus Group for Students
Dear Parent,

We are interested in holding a focus group meeting at your school for students in the intensive French program. The meeting is intended to help further research being conducted on this program. We would like to explore some of the reasons why students were interested in participating in the program and how they are experiencing it. Some of the questions we are considering are:

1. Why were you interested in this program?
2. What do you see as the potential benefits of learning French?
3. Have you had any positive or negative experiences during the program?

Wendy Carr, an elementary French teacher who is also a doctoral student at Simon Fraser University, has been contracted by the Surrey School District to assist in conducting research on the intensive French program. She has been working with teachers and students in the program since it began and will be conducting the focus group meeting. It would take place during school time, and students’ participation during the focus discussion would be voluntary.

Your child’s attendance is completely optional, and all identities and school affiliations will remain anonymous. Participation or non-participation will not have any effect on your child’s grades or his/her evaluation in the class or the school.

The focus group meeting will take place on Wed. afternoon in Mr X’s classroom.

We would like to request your co-operation in allowing your child to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Principal, XYZ Elementary

If you do not wish your child to participate in this study, please sign below.
I do not wish my child to participate in the focus group meeting about intensive French.

__________________________  ________________________________
Date                     Parent's signature
Appendix E.

Letter to IF Students
Inviting Participation in Focus Group Meeting

February 13, 2006
Re: Intensive French Focus Group for Students
Dear Student,

As a student in your school’s intensive French program, you are part of a new program for Surrey and British Columbia. I am interested in finding out what you think about it.

I am a French teacher and also a student doing a doctoral program at Simon Fraser University. I have been working with and studying intensive French in Surrey for 2 years. I would like to hold a focus discussion group with students to talk about the following questions:

1. Why were you interested in this program?
2. What do you see as the benefits of learning French?
3. Have you had any positive or negative experiences during the program?

The discussion will take place during school time in the library, and you are welcome to attend or not to attend as you wish. Either way, there will be no effect on your grades whatsoever. Nobody’s name or school is recorded; it is the ideas expressed that are important for research.

Your thoughts will be of interest to other people considering intensive French for their school or school district.

A separate letter is being sent to your parents to explain the focus group so that you can discuss the idea with them.

Sincerely,

Madame Carr