

INTENSIVE FRENCH AND INTENSIVE ENGLISH: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

In this article we provide an historical overview and comparison of intensive English (IE) and intensive French (IF) programs in Canada. Comparisons are made in terms of the total time allotted to the intensive period, the selection of students, the number and types of schools offering the programs, the models of delivery, and type of pedagogy and curricula. The programs are also compared in terms of learning outcomes, follow-up programs, and teacher preparation/qualifications. Reasons for the success of both programs are given and discussed in relation to the rationales for their existence. In general, the programs appear to be very similar; major differences present in intensive French include the compacting of the regular curriculum, the role of reading and writing, the emphasis on accuracy and the use of more cognitively demanding tasks.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, nous donnons un aperçu historique de l'anglais intensif (IE) et du français intensif (IF) au Canada et faisons une comparaison entre ces deux régimes pédagogiques. Notre comparaison porte sur la durée de l'apprentissage intensif de la langue, sur la sélection des élèves, sur le nombre et le type d'écoles offrant ces régimes pédagogiques, sur les modalités d'organisation, sur les types de pédagogie et sur les programmes d'études utilisés. Notre comparaison porte également sur les résultats d'apprentissage, sur le suivi des élèves ainsi que sur la qualification et la préparation des enseignants. Nous expliquons pourquoi ces deux régimes pédagogiques (anglais intensif et français intensif) connaissent autant de succès en remontant à leurs fondements. En général, le français intensif et l'anglais intensif paraissent être très semblables; les différences majeures, dans le cas du français intensif, se rapportent à la compression des matières, au rôle de la lecture et de l'écriture, à l'accent mis sur la précision linguistique et au recours à des tâches plus exigeantes sur le plan cognitif.

In 1975, in the school district of Mille-Îles, north of Montreal, an experiment with intensive French was initiated. The program, inspired by the model of the *classes d'accueil* for children of new immigrants which had been initiated in 1969 by the CÉCM (Commission des Écoles Catholiques de Montréal), was for a 5 month period. The experience was begun with anglophone children in grades one and six. The next year, 1976, the implementation of intensive instruction in English as a second language for francophone students began in the same school district, Mille-Îles, and also in Greenfield Park, a community on the South Shore of Montreal (Billy 1980, 2001, and personal communication). In the experimental classes offered in these two school boards, students in grade 5 or grade 6 spent five months of one school year in intensive English (IE) or intensive French (IF), completing the grade level curriculum in other subject matter (mathematics, social studies, etc.) during the remaining five months. The experience with intensive French ended in 1980, in part because of the popularity of French immersion, and also because the school principal and the French specialist left the district at that time. In the 1980s, however, intensive ESL was offered by several more boards (Lightbown, Conan, Bolduc, & Guay, 1988). By 1993, many school boards were offering this approach to ESL in at least a few classes (Watts & Snow, 1993). Although there was some sharing of materials and ideas among school boards, the experiment in IE remained a “local” phenomenon; that is, no specific program, materials or teacher training was approved by the Ministry of Education of Quebec (MÉQ). Between 1986 and 1995, research on the learning and teaching of English in a large number of IE classes confirmed the success of the programs (Lightbown & Spada, 1994; 1997; Spada & Lightbown, 1989)¹. By 2000, interest in IE had become so widespread that the MÉQ

¹ Funding for this research was provided by federal (SSHRC) and provincial (FCAR) agencies and by

began to participate in discussions about how it might best be integrated into the school system more generally. In a *Plan d'action* for second languages, published in December 2001, the Quebec Minister of Education encouraged school boards to offer Intensive English.

The enthusiasm generated by intensive ESL in Quebec led to questions about whether such an approach might be implemented for French as a second language (FSL) outside Quebec (Wesche, MacFarlane, & Peters, 1994a; 1994b). A specific model of intensive FSL developed by Claude Germain and Joan Netten² was implemented in a three-year (1998-2001) experimental project in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). In contrast to IE, IF did not start as a grassroots movement, even though it had – and still has – strong parental support. Rather, IF was developed as a test of certain theories about second language learning. After an experimental implementation in NL in both rural and urban milieus, IF has been adopted as an alternate FSL program in NL³. In three other provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan) several pilot classes of IF started in September 2002. In Wales, intensive Welsh, based on the model devised by Netten and Germain (2000a), is being implemented for September 2004 and, in Belgium, it is likely that some classes of intensive Dutch will be implemented.

In this paper, we will describe some of the similarities and differences between IE and IF in terms of the following categories: (1) definition, (2) total time, (3) students and schools (4) pedagogy, (5) research on student outcomes, (6) models of delivery, (7)

SPEAQ (Société pour la promotion de l'enseignement de l'anglais, langue seconde, au Québec) and some Quebec school boards.

² This research has been supported by a grant from Canadian Heritage.

rationale for the intensive approach, (8) curriculum, (9) teacher qualification and preparation, and (10) follow-up at the secondary level.

Definition

IF and IE are similar in that they both require that a large percentage of one school year be devoted to instruction in the second language; however, no subjects are taught in the second language⁴. Because in the learning of a second language, one has to talk about something, topics from certain academic areas may be used for discussion purposes. However, this content is not evaluated in the second language classroom.

According to a working document produced for the MÉQ, in order for an ESL program to be considered “intensive”, it must have the following three characteristics:

1. The amount of time devoted to the learning/teaching of ESL must represent at least 30% of the school year;
2. The teaching time must be concentrated in intensive periods;
3. The program must consist of an enrichment of the MÉQ’s basic (or core) ESL program (MÉQ 1996).

For IF, it is recommended that:

1. The amount of time devoted to the learning/teaching of FSL must represent at least 30% of the school year; at least 25% of that time is during the first five months of the school year (September to January), which is the intensive period, while during the last five months students return to a regular core French program;
2. The teaching time is to be concentrated in intensive periods;

³ A copy of the curriculum guide *Intensive Core French* can be consulted or downloaded from the Web site of the NL government at www.gov.nf.ca/edu/sp/elem_corefrench.htm

⁴ In Quebec French-language schools, it is not permitted to teach school subjects in the regular curriculum (e.g. mathematics, science) in any language other than French.

3. The program consists of an enrichment of the basic or core FSL program.

Total time

The total number of hours allocated to the intensive part of the French program during the first five months of the school year is from 220 to 375 hours. In addition, during the last five months, students go back to their regular curriculum, which includes about 10% of teaching time for French. Therefore, the total number of hours devoted to French in the school year is from 260 to 400. In NL, the majority of the schools in the urban milieu offer instruction in French (intensive plus regular core) for 38% of the school year (i.e. approximately 340 hours); in the rural milieu, the majority of schools offer instruction for 34% of the school year, which represents around 280 hours. The average is 36%.

Over the entire school year, the total number of hours allocated to IE in Quebec ranges from 300 to 360 hours, (i.e. 30% - 44% of the school year). The average (37%) is similar to the IF program in NL (36%). However, there is great variety among the different schools and school boards as to what constitutes an intensive program. For example, at the *Commission scolaire de Montréal*, English must represent 40% of the time in the school year for a program to be considered intensive. In contrast to the IF program, it is extremely rare to offer English instruction outside the intensive period in the 5-month/5-month IE model. In other IE models, English is offered throughout the school year (see Models of Delivery, below).

Students and schools

Students in the IE programs in Quebec and the IF programs in NL generally start learning the second language in grade 4⁵. However, the number of hours per year is slightly less in English than in French: an average of 72 hours per year for English and 100 hours per year is recommended for French in NL.⁶ In other words, when beginning their intensive program at the grade 6 level, Quebec francophones have already had some school exposure to English (approximately 145 hours), and NL anglophone students have slightly more exposure to French (approximately 180). The amount of exposure to French is similar in Nova Scotia, but is different in the cases of Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. In Saskatchewan the pilot classes had no previous exposure to French, while in New Brunswick the students had greater exposure to French as FSL instruction in this province begins in grade 1.

The age of the students in the programs is similar. The majority of IE classes (85%) are offered at the grade 6 level, and the rest (15%), at grade five (Watts & Snow, 1993). These grades are at the end of elementary schooling in Quebec. In the three-year experiment with IF in NL, all classes were offered at grade 6, which also represents the end of the elementary cycle of schooling for this province. This is also the case in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. New Brunswick offers IF at grade 5; however, this grade for this province also represents the end of the elementary cycle of schooling.⁷ Therefore, with some exceptions, both IE and IF are offered at the end of elementary school, when the students are 10 to 12 years of age.

⁵ In Quebec, since 2002, English classes can be offered at the grade 3 level.

⁶ In many Quebec schools, students receive less than the recommended amount of exposure to English according to surveys regularly made by SPEAQ. Similarly, in NL the average is 90 hours per year (Netten & Germain, 2000a).

In most schools, only highly motivated students are accepted in IE. Those who are ready to make extra effort, not only in English, but also in French and mathematics, are accepted into the IE classes. Furthermore, some schools restrict participation to students with above-average academic ability.⁸ In the majority of IE schools, functionally bilingual students as well as students with severe disabilities, students with a lower level of academic ability and low achievers are not usually accepted for participation in the IE program (Collins et al., 1999). Some schools, including one in which all students participate in IE, have a much more open policy, seeking only the commitment of the students and their parents to accept the challenge that results from the intensification of the grade 5 or 6 curriculum. Overall, there remain two criteria for participation: (1) that students have the ability to succeed in French and mathematics in a reduced time period and (2) that students are not already functionally bilingual.

In IF, all students in a school are encouraged to participate in the program. In urban school districts where selection occurs, it is normally random; in rural school districts, all students in a class participate.¹⁰ Low achievers, as well as students with severe disabilities, are accepted in the program. IF is based on the hypothesis that the development of ability in one language (L2) enhances the ability in another (L1). Thus, the curriculum for English and other subject areas can be compacted; no supplementary homework is recommended. All of the objectives of the grade 6 year are achieved, and the amount of homework remains typical of the grade level.

⁷ See article entitled *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

⁸ Note that “above average” does not necessarily mean “gifted” students. Motivation and willingness to make an extra effort seem to be more important than academic performance.

¹⁰ In IE, students often have to travel by school bus to attend their intensive classes because IE is not offered in all schools.

It will be seen that student achievement in both IE and IF have strengthened the argument for the inclusion of students who are academically challenged in intensive second language programs (Collins, et al, 1999; Netten, Germain & Séguin, 2002).

Pedagogy

In both IE and IF, a communicative approach, emphasizing interaction between students and teacher and among students, is used. By focussing on the exchange of messages and meanings, such an approach to L2 instruction is intended to help learners to “learn through doing, through activities where they are actively involved in using [the second language]” (Woods, 1997, p. 6). Furthermore, in both IE and IF, a project-based pedagogy is frequently used. However, in IE, project-type activities are often left to the initiative of the intensive teachers, while in IF, they are recommended in the accompanying *Guide* and during the IF teacher preparation sessions (Netten & Germain, 2000b).¹¹

There is no MÉQ program written specifically for IE. Over the years, individual school boards have produced materials for intensive classes based on the curriculum of the core ESL program. Initially, the creation of this material was done by a small group of dedicated teachers and pedagogical consultants. As more school boards offered IE, materials were shared.

Analyses of some of the IE pedagogical materials have indicated that while some are “highly structured” (Woods, 1997, p. 6), others “semblaient avoir été bâtis à la hâte, sans objectifs pédagogiques particuliers apparents” (Dussault, 1997,p. 73). As Dussault (1997) has observed, there is a great variety of practices and of themes studied across IE programs. For example, in one school board, themes are suggested, such as sports,

clothing, professions, seasons, etc. and, under each theme, some language functions are given. In another school board, no linguistic content (i.e. specific language structures or functions) is prescribed. In yet another board, some teachers use materials recommended for English language arts, that is, materials for teaching English as a first language.

In an evaluation of the teaching materials used in one school board, Weary (1987) concluded that “although the materials were stimulating and entertaining, they did not appear to be very challenging intellectually or academically” (Lightbown & Spada, 1994, p. 567). This was confirmed in a survey which elicited IE students’ opinions about the instruction they received. Although IE teachers try to focus on a student-centered approach, the majority of the students surveyed characterized several regular classroom activities as higher in enjoyment value than in learning value (Weary, 1987). Lightbown and Spada (1994) suggest that “this appeared to be due in part to the fact that the materials and procedures were essentially expanded versions of the materials intended for the regular classes that meet for short periods of time a few times a week. It also reflected the prohibition on teaching the curriculum content of the students’ current grade level in any language other than French” (p. 568). Nonetheless, as within all areas of education, there is variation in individual teacher’s classroom instruction and some IE teachers provide their learners with more cognitive and linguistic challenges than others.

In IF, a *Curriculum Guide* and a *Program Guide* are being prepared by representatives of French second language education in four provincial ministries of education.¹² Thus, there is less variety among the themes offered to the IF students than

¹¹ See article entitled *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

¹² The four provinces involved in the preparation of these documents are: New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. The *Curriculum Guide* and the *Program Guide* are based on draft versions initially prepared by Netten and Germain in cooperation with the four teachers involved

to the IE students. However, a great variety of choices is possible and encouraged within each theme: for instance, under *Les animaux*, one class can study wild animals while another class can study animals of the sea or invent fantasy animals; this diversity is encouraged in order to respond to the interests of the students.¹³ To ensure that the language used in these activities arises from the students' interests and interaction in class, no specific vocabulary or language structures are pre-set in the curriculum (Netten & Germain, 2000b). Communicative objectives for each unit are stated in terms of language functions.

Therefore, both IE and IF are based on a communicative approach to second language teaching and themes related to the interests of the students. In the case of IF, the objectives of the program have been developed from the provincial objectives for French at grades 6, 9, and 11, and the goals of the program have been specified in the *Curriculum Guide*. In 1996, the M^ÉQ established a working group on IE in order to establish outcome profiles comparing regular and intensive instructional models. For an overview, see Appendix A. It is interesting to note that these outcome profiles could also apply to IF students.

Research on student outcomes

In both IE and IF, assessment of oral production shows that students achieve a level of communicative ability that enables them to interact in the second language with some spontaneity and to initiate and sustain general conversation. IE students have achieved results on both oral production and listening/reading comprehension that are comparable to those of grade 9 or 10 students (Spada & Lightbown, 1989). IF students have achieved

in the first year of implementation. (See article entitled *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

oral results comparable to those of grade 9, 10 and even grade 11 students.¹⁴ In both IE and IF, students develop a high level of *communicative confidence* (Spada & Lightbown, 1989), readily finding a way around unknown vocabulary items or gaps in grammatical knowledge.

In addition, beneficial effects beyond second language skills have been observed in both programs. These include greater autonomy, greater degree of self-esteem and self-confidence, and greater cooperation and responsibility for their own learning (Spada & Lightbown, 1989; Lightbown & Spada, 1991).¹⁵ Some low achieving students in both IE and IF have improved their L1 academic performance after participation in an intensive L2 program: *There have been a number of anecdotal reports that students who have been in academic difficulty have not only succeeded in ESL but improved their French language school performance as well* (Lightbown & Spada, 1997, p. 342). As mentioned by an IE teacher who was interviewed by SPEAQ: *And for kids that do have some minor learning problems, it might be the first time they've really known success, because basically, everyone starts off on the same footing [...] No one is "doué". No one is "la bolle de la classe", because no one knows very much* (Woods, 1997, p. 7). Raymond and Bonneville undertook an 8 year study (1987-1995) in one school board to examine the long term effect of IE on the other subjects, mainly with "weaker" students. No negative effect was perceived (Raymond and Bonneville, 1995). The same phenomenon has also been observed in the IF project in NL: *Certains élèves considérés comme faibles en*

¹³ See article entitled *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

¹⁴ See articles entitled *L'évaluation de la production orale : critères et résultats* and *L'évaluation de la production écrite : critères et résultats* in this issue.

¹⁵ See article entitled *L'étude qualitative du régime du français intensive* in this issue.

anglais ont non seulement appris à communiquer en français mais ont également amélioré leur habileté à écrire en anglais (Netten, Germain & Séguin, 2002).

Models of delivery

One of the differences between IE and IF is the greater diversity of models of delivery of the IE program, compared to the more or less standard model in IF. According to a recent survey (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001), the three most frequently offered models of IE are:

- *5 month / 5 month intensive ESL model*, which represents approximately 338.5 hours (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001).
- *Continuous intensive ESL model 4 days / 1 day – 1 day / 4 days*, which represents approximately 310.2 hours (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001).
- *5 half-days a week*. In this model, a half-day is spent learning English, while the other half is spent learning other subjects, all year long.

Of these, the most frequently used is the 5 month /5 month model. This model differs from the 5-month IF model in two ways. First, it can be offered either during the first five months, or during the last five months of the school year. In IF, intensive instruction is primarily offered in the first five months. Second, ESL instruction is rarely offered outside of IE during that year. In the IF program, the time allotment for core French, where students continue with intensive French types of activities, is normally continued after the period of intensive French. Based on its theoretical foundations, mapping of the regular curriculum may be less viable in the first 5 months.¹⁶ Furthermore, it could be more difficult for the classroom teacher to switch to the L2 in the middle of the school

¹⁶ This question is currently being studied in several schools where the program is being given in the last five months.

year. After five months, students have developed the habit of communicating in the L1 among themselves and with their teacher. It is more of a challenge to ask them, in the second half of the school year, to start communicating in L2 in the classroom, if they continue with the same teacher.

In IE, it is less common for the same teacher to teach both the regular curriculum and the intensive ESL component. Teachers who have done so have not found this switch to be problematic if students are well-prepared for the change. A more typical pattern in the 5 month/5 month IE programs is that the teacher of the intensive component is assigned to school or class A from September to January and to school or class B from February to June.

In IE, there are many models used. Because there are different experimental models of IE, school boards can take some initiative and be creative in the design of time frames. Below are a few examples of other models of IE:

- 8 hours per week x 10 months
- 2 hour a day x 4 days
- 10 hours a week (2 hours a day x 5 days)
- 1 week English – 1 week subjects
- 2 days English - 2 days other subjects.

A comparison of the learning outcomes in two versions of the 5 month model and the 8 hour per week model indicated superior results for students in the 5 month models (Collins et al., 1999). However, the number of hours in these two programs was not exactly the same: as much as 400 hours in the 5 month / 5 month model, and around 300

hours in the 8 hours per week model.¹⁸ This study also included students from an IE school where all students are in grade 6 and do the intensive program (Lightbown & Spada, 1997). It is assumed that these students had additional exposure to English in school activities outside the ESL classroom. Furthermore, in some of the 5 month/5 month groups, selection criteria limited access to the program to students with high academic ability¹⁹. Also, there is no specific indication as to differences in the type of pedagogy used by the teachers involved, which could also have contributed to differences in outcomes (Collins et. al., 1999; Netten, 2001).

In IF, the 5 month / 5 month model is generally used, and the first five months are highly recommended as the best time to offer the intensive program. During the last five months of the school year, when students go back to their regular curriculum, they are still offered their regular number of hours in their core French program, which represents as much as an additional 40 hours of instruction, in order to maintain their French. The main reason for this structure is that, according to the theoretical foundations, which focus on the transfer to other subject-matter of cognitive processes acquired during the intensive period (see below), it is more difficult to implement the mapping of the curriculum when the intensive period is given during the last five months of the school year.²⁰ Although the overall instructional philosophy in IE is based on theories of communicative competence, there is no general structure that characterizes all schools

¹⁸ The study was originally designed with the understanding that the total time of exposure was to be the same for the “full year/half day” groups and the 5 month/5 month groups. The fact that there was a difference in total time was not known until the study was well under way.

¹⁹ This was not the case for students in the IE school.

²⁰ See articles entitled *Theoretical and Research Foundations of Intensive French* and *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

and all classes. Decisions about the selection of particular IE models, choices of materials, and the selection of students and teachers are based primarily on organizational and administrative considerations. For this reason, there is a greater variety in the models of delivery.

Rationale for the Intensive Approach

There are five theoretical foundations for the IF model implemented in NL.²¹ As discussed in the article on the theoretical foundations of intensive French, the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1979) serves as the rationale for the mapping of the English language arts program. Due to the cognitive development associated with the learning of a language, either first or second, certain intellectual abilities develop which are available for use in either L1 or L2. Transfer can occur from L2 to L1 as well as from L1 to L2. For instance, once a student has learned to use the writing process in L2, no additional time is necessary to re-learn this skill in L1. Furthermore, language is used for the same types of intellectual processes, generalizing, reasoning, etc. This is why it seemed possible, at least in theory, to reduce by 50% the time normally devoted to L1 in one school year. Compacting of the curriculum in English language arts means that there is no systematic teaching of L1 during the first five months of the school year, in the IF model. Some supplementary reading of English novels is recommended; book reports are submitted to the teacher who evaluates the work. Many language arts curriculum outcomes are met through the reading and writing activities of the intensive French program.²²

²¹ See article entitled *Theoretical and Research Foundations of Intensive French* in this issue.

²² See article entitled *Developing the Curriculum for Intensive French* in this issue.

As already discussed in the article on the theoretical foundations of Intensive French, the mapping of the other subjects is based on Vygotsky's view of intellectual development. Contrary to this Vygotskian view, school subjects are typically conceived of as separate compartments of knowledge as if there were no links among the subjects. Most of the time, students are expected to re-learn processes they have already acquired through the study of another subject. In an examination of cognitive processes common to different subjects (e.g., inferencing, generalizing, hypothesizing, comparing) Netten and Germain observed considerable overlap, suggesting that some reduction in the time allocated to subject matter instruction would probably not have significant negative effects for learners (Netten, Germain et Séguin, 2002).. The assumption is that because the learning of a second language involves the development of similar cognitive processes, most subjects, such as science, social studies, health, and personal development, can be reduced or not offered during the first five months of IF. This is why the approach has been referred to as “transdisciplinary” (Netten & Germain, 2000a; Germain and Netten, in press)²³.

Curriculum

Another difference between IE and IF is related to the learning/teaching of the four language skills: 1) listening, 2) speaking, 3) reading and 4) writing. In keeping with the curriculum goals of core ESL in Quebec elementary schools, the focus is on listening and speaking in the majority of IE classes, with a few exceptions²⁴. Some reading and writing are regularly done in all schools, but these skills are not stressed in most classrooms. Teachers tend to reproduce in their intensive classes the model for core ESL with which

²³ It is to be noted that mathematics is not compacted during the intensive period, nor is physical education or music. These latter subjects tend to be taught by “specialists” in NL.

they are familiar, spending more time on the same types of activities. However, it is very difficult to know precisely what percentage of time is devoted to each of the four skills, due to the great degree of autonomy of the school boards.

Great importance is given to reading and writing in IF classes, in order to facilitate literacy development and the transfer of cognitive processes from L2 to the L1 and to other subject areas. There is a focus on oral production, but an integrated skills approach is fundamental to the success of the program. Thus, reading and writing are included from the beginning. In IE, the focus is on oral production, and teachers tend to use a second language teaching approach that gives a minor role to literacy-based activities. In IF, while second language teaching methodology is taken into account, teaching is also oriented towards a language arts approach that is more typical of L1 instruction. Students follow an extended reading program, keep a journal in the second language, and write creatively -- developing stories, poems and other literary forms as part of their intensive learning experience. The adoption of an integrated language arts approach to the teaching of the second language is an essential part of the enrichment of the IF curriculum.

IE and IF also differ with regard to the emphasis placed on different language abilities. While there has been a focus on both fluency and accuracy in IF,²⁵ in IE the focus has been almost entirely on fluency. One exception to this is one of the original school boards where a highly structured version of IE was implemented, using a modified audiolingual format (Billy, 1980) with an emphasis on accuracy. Normally, IE students achieve a high level of fluency in English, but accuracy in oral production is still a

²⁴ For an example of a program with greater emphasis on reading, see White & Goulet, 1995.

concern; there are persistent problems with a variety of morphological and grammatical features. Observations in IE classes in the 1980s and early 1990s indicated that little attention was given to language forms either through direct instruction or corrective feedback (Lightbown & Spada, 1990, 1994). In most IE classes, there is little grammar teaching or error correction, except for mistakes in vocabulary (Lightbown & Spada, 1994). There is research evidence that some English features “are acquired more successfully when there is some focused instruction *in addition to* the rich communicative interaction which is typical of these classes” (Lightbown & Spada, 1997, p. 339).

The research project in IF was designed to seek a balance between accuracy and fluency²⁶. With core French, at the grade 6 level, students are often accurate but not fluent. With French immersion, research has shown that students are often fluent but not accurate (Knaus & Nadasdi, 2001; Lyster, 1987, 1994; Rebuffot, 1993). IF was conceived of as a sort of mid-way between these two options, as far as accuracy and fluency are concerned. In other words, students are challenged not only to be able to communicate, but to communicate with some degree of accuracy. Research evidence based on the assessment of nearly 600 students (N=587) shows that students are fluent, in oral and written production, with a high degree of accuracy, even if results are still somewhat lower in accuracy than in fluency (Netten, Germain & Séguin, 2002).²⁷

²⁵ See *Introduction* to this issue as well as the article entitled *Theoretical and Research Foundations of Intensive French*.

²⁶ See *Introduction* to this issue.

Teacher qualification and preparation

Teacher preparation is another area where IE and IF differ. In the province of Quebec, most teachers of IE are ESL “specialists”. However, there is no specific preparation given to teachers before beginning an intensive program. This explains, at least in part, why teachers tend to continue to focus, in the majority of situations, on oral production, neglecting reading and writing, as is the case in core English, due to lack of time. Thus, for the most part, it is left to the teachers and the program specialist in particular school districts to adapt their methodology to this new reality.

As for IF, it is seen not only as an enrichment of the core French classes, but as a program with its own theoretical bases. Therefore, some specific teacher preparation has been given to all teachers involved in the program. At first, the teacher preparation was given by the researchers, in a series of in-service teaching sessions. A Summer Institute is given at UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal), organized by the researchers, in cooperation with provincial departments of education in order to ensure that every teacher involved in an IF program receives adequate preparation, both in theory and in practice.

Another difference is the fact that, in the IF program in NL, teachers are primarily classroom generalists who are also prepared to teach French.²⁸ They have experience teaching the regular curriculum as well as experience teaching French. They are sufficiently fluent to be able to conduct their classes in French, but most are not francophone and do not necessarily have native-like command of French.

²⁷ See also articles entitled *L'évaluation de la production orale : critères et résultats* and *L'évaluation de la production écrite : critères et résultats* in this issue.

As far as pre-service teacher preparation is concerned, there is still no program offered in any university, to prepare future French teachers to teach in an intensive program. However, since the implementation of the new four-year teacher preparation programs, Quebec universities have offered courses or units within methods courses, specifically preparing ESL specialists to teach IE.

Follow-up at the secondary level

Once the intensive program is completed, in both English and French, several options are offered for continuation of the study of the L2. In the *Implementation Guide* published by SPEAQ (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001), four different types of possible follow-up for IE are described:

- The *concentrated model*. The usual time allotted to ESL, that is, 100 hours a year, is concentrated over 5 months²⁹.
- The *accelerated model*. The regular MÉQ curriculum is completed in fewer than the usual five years of secondary school. “Students may then take an English Literature class, an English Language Arts class, or a local English program” (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001).
- The *enriched model*. The content of the ESL curriculum at the secondary level is enhanced through enriched activities.
- The (English as a second language/Language Arts) *ESL-LA model*. This advanced program can be started at any of the five secondary levels, and is intended for

²⁸ In New Brunswick, because of provincial regulations about the teaching of FSL, teachers of IF may well be French specialists with limited knowledge of the overall grade 6 curriculum. These teachers will have greater similarity with those teaching IE in Quebec.

²⁹ It is more or less similar to what has been designated as « block scheduling » in FSL, in the Carleton School Board of Education experiment in 1993-1994 (Lapkin, Harley & Hart, 1995).

“students who already master the objectives of the regular curriculum or can attain them in less time than the average student” (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001).

However, for many students coming out of IE, there is no special follow-up program at the secondary level; they follow regular core ESL.

In the IF program in NL, four options are offered to grade 7 students who have completed an IF program.

- *Enriched core French.* This model is similar to the *enriched model* offered in ESL to francophone students: more French reading and writing activities, more cognitively complex tasks, and more interesting and complex “additional activities” (found at the end of Units) are proposed to students.
- The *late immersion* option. This option exists in some school districts, mainly in urban areas. It consists of students starting an immersion program at grade 7, that is, taking nearly all subjects (in a total immersion program) or many subjects (in a partial immersion program) in the second language.
- The *early immersion* option. This is a variation of the previous option: students join classes, in grade 7, in which students already have studied in a French immersion program since kindergarten. This option is available to a small number of students on an individual basis.
- *Regular core French.* This option is the one available to students for whom the school district has not yet provided any other avenue. In some cases, students maintain their motivation and interest in French; in others, motivation is affected negatively. Skill development, however, is not affected as negatively as anticipated (Netten and Germain, in preparation).

Two other options are being considered by the school districts involved:

- *Extended French*. In this option, the regular core French program would be offered at grade 7, with the addition of one subject (possibly two) taught in French³⁰.
- *Expanded French*. This model, which already exists in the NL school system, is a variation of the previous option, but it is only offered at the grade 10 level.

With regard to the follow-up issue, there may seem to be a major difference between IE and IF because of the status of the target languages. Francophone students study English, which is the majority language in Canada and North America; anglophone students study French, which is a minority language in Canada, although it has official status. Some type of follow-up is crucial in order to maintain the language learned in a school situation, especially for a minority language. It is likely that, without any specific type of follow-up, IF students would have difficulty in maintaining their level of French, in the absence of any strong motivational factors in their milieu. On the surface, the situation for English may appear to be different. English is a majority language, and one might predict that there would be more motivation among francophones to maintain and use it, because the language is perceived as an important cultural and economic tool. However, in the context in which most IE students live, English is not pervasive. None the less, although both IE and IF students have the possibility of watching television or listening to the radio in their second language, the choice of programs and stations available in French outside Quebec is much more limited than those available in English

³⁰ This type of option cannot legally be offered for ESL in Quebec, as it would imply the teaching of a school subject in English to francophone students.

for francophone students in Quebec. Contact with speakers of the second language is usually rare for both groups (Spada & Lightbown, 1989; Lightbown & Spada, 1991).

Dussault (1997) compared the oral communication of three groups of IE students at the secondary level. He found that students who had an appropriate follow-up program at school had greater proficiency when they reached the final year of secondary school than those who had not received any special follow-up (See also Lightbown and Spada, 1991; Raymond and Bonneville 1995; and Simard, 1995). However, Dussault also found that, even without any type of specific follow-up, IE students were superior in oral production³¹, at the end of secondary school, to students who had experienced only the core program. In other words, they were able to maintain a higher level of English proficiency, due most probably to a level of autonomy in ESL learning that they had achieved while participating in IE at the grade 6 level. This autonomy likely gave students both the motivation and the resources to seek opportunities to continue learning and using English. Indeed, in their follow-up study of IE, Lightbown and Spada (1991) found that the single strongest predictor of students' proficiency in English was the amount of contact they had with English outside of school. Students who had experienced IE tended to report more out-of-school contact with English than students who had not had IE.

It would be premature to assume that the IE findings could be generalized to IF³². However, there is some promising preliminary evidence. Students who did not receive any particular follow-up were interviewed and tested (Netten & Germain, in preparation).

³¹ Students were only tested in oral production.

³² After the completion of their three-year research project on IF (1998-2001), Netten and Germain (in preparation c) have undertaken another three-year research project (2001-2004) in order to study to what

In the interviews, students expressed concern about their ability to maintain French language competence. However, the tests indicated that they had maintained greater ability to use the language than they had thought. Those students who remained motivated to learn and to use their French were the ones who tended to maintain greater proficiency. Nevertheless, where there is little reinforcement for the second language outside of the school, an appropriate follow-up program is essential to maintain motivation and increase substantially proficiency gained in the IF classes.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence that intensive exposure to instruction in the second language gives results that are superior to those obtained in core programs. Research conducted in both IE and IF also indicates that an intensive approach is effective for students with a range of academic abilities (Collins, et al. 1999; Lightbown and Spada, 1991; Netten, Germain & Séguin, 2002; Spada and Lightbown, 1989). Furthermore, there is evidence that interactive methods of teaching enhance the development of the second language by permitting students to use and experiment with the language in authentic situations. Because of the more sustained conversational activities in the classroom due to the increase in both total time and in intensity, students have the opportunity to engage in more spontaneous language use than is the case for those in core programs. This type of language use is crucial in developing communicative skills in the second language, but does not guarantee that students will achieve accuracy as well as fluency. Research supports the benefits of the inclusion of form-focussed instruction within the interactive approach (Lightbown & Spada, 1994, Netten, 2001). Results from the IF program also

extent and under what conditions IF students have maintained their level of competence in French achieved at the grade 6 level.

support the hypothesis that the use of a language arts approach to the teaching of the second language, and the use of cognitively demanding tasks, can further enhance the levels of proficiency achieved (Netten, 1983; Netten & Germain, 2000a).

Response to IE programs has been enthusiastic from most participants -- teachers, students, parents, administrators. There has been some resistance to and criticism of the programs; some critics have expressed concern regarding possible loss of French language skills or of students falling behind in their subject matter learning, even though no research has validated such negative effects. Some resistance has also come from teachers in schools where an intensive program is perceived as disrupting the arrangement or the structure of the school. 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. Also, there is some concern that teachers could be hired for their language expertise, leaving more senior teachers on surplus lists (Lightbown & Spada, 1997).

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. However, some concern has been expressed that, as a result of implementation of IF, new teachers will be hired for their expertise in French. In addition, some educators and parents are hesitant to accept that academically challenged students can profit from IF.

Future Research

The focus of this paper has been primarily on a comparison of the history and development of IE and IF programs. Both have been successful in permitting students to achieve considerable communicative competence and confidence in their L2. Ongoing

research will provide more information about the extent to which students in both programs perform on their academic subjects in L1 following a period of concentrated focus on L2 learning. Although we have touched on general aspects of students' language learning, it is difficult to compare outcomes across programs. Future research can be designed to collect data that would facilitate such comparisons. In addition, comparisons of student outcomes with those obtained in French immersion will also be of interest. Many other interesting research questions about the pedagogical practices (particularly with regard to the balance between fluency and accuracy), teacher preparation options, and the effects of different types of follow-up programs can contribute to the enhancement of these educational innovations that have already generated so much enthusiasm.

APPENDIX A

Overview of outcome profiles in the regular and intensive instructional models

at the end of elementary school

COMPETENCIES	REGULAR INSTRUCTION	INTENSIVE INSTRUCTION
TO INTERACT ORALLY	The student uses language limited to class situations and familiar topics	The student uses a wide range of expressions and vocabulary in various situations. He/She expresses himself/herself with ease and confidence
TO REINVEST UNDERSTANDING OF ORAL AND WRITTEN TEXTS	The student reuses the information from short and simple oral and written texts to carry out meaningful tasks	The student reuses the information from more complex and varied oral and written texts to carry out complex meaningful tasks
TO WRITE TEXTS	The student is able to write a variety of well-structured texts to fulfill meaningful goals	The student is able to write a variety of original well-structured texts in a wide range of meaningful contexts

Excerpt from *Implementation Guide* (MÉQ, RCCPALS & SPEAQ, 2001).

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