

They're Just not That Into it: Adolescent Reading Engagement in French Immersion

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria, 2007
Bachelor of Education, University of Victoria, 2008

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

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Middle school French immersion teachers often report that they have a difficult time engaging their students in second language reading. This research used a constructivist, critical, and pragmatic approach to case study to explore middle school French immersion students' perceptions of themselves as readers of French and of their experiences with reading in French. The research sought to understand, through thematic cross-case analysis, which themes appear most prominently in student accounts of their experiences with reading in French. Four major themes were identified: choice, assigned work, understanding, and interest. Additionally, the research sought to identify which instructional strategies might be most effective in promoting student engagement in reading in an additional language. The findings suggest a need for highly differentiated instructional models that emphasize teaching students how to assess a text for its appropriateness to their interests and reading level and providing students with ample time for free, independent reading.

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Dedication

For Ali and Poppy.

Chapter One: Introduction

"It is clear enough that free curiosity has a more positive effect on learning than necessity and fear." (Saint Augustine)

How I Come to this Research

Four things bring me to this research: first, my own personal narrative as a reader; second, a love of language that I seek to share with as many people as possible; third, being raised by an academic mother involved in action research for social change; and fourth, my experiences as a French immersion teacher.

I did not read easily as a child but my mom allowed me to read whatever I liked, mostly Nintendo Power magazines and comic books. I don't ever recall being told that that was not reading. When I think back on my youth, I realize just how much reading I did while playing complex, involved, role-playing video games. Eventually I started reading Eric Wilson mysteries for children, later moving on to fantasy and sci-fi classics such as *The Hobbit*, and I now enjoy reading a wide variety of texts (including comic books). I was sensitive, even as a kid, to the fact that some forms of reading were held up above others as more sophisticated, advanced, challenging, or enriching. Donna Alvermann (2002) refers to this phenomenon as a privileging of academic literacy or book literacy over other forms of literacy, especially in schools. I did not feel these pressures at home, though. My mom, herself an academic, read newspapers and novels and academic literature, while I read MAD magazine and played video games, without ever being made to feel that what I was reading was in any way inferior. My own history as a reader has sensitized me to the needs of students not initially engaged in academic literacy.

As a French immersion student, I learned to love language. I don't remember, though, having any exceptionally positive experiences with reading in French. My passion for French and, later, for language in general, came more through oral - and, to a lesser extent, written - communication. I often did well in French public speaking events and was selected as co-Master of Ceremonies for our French immersion graduation ceremony. I didn't start enjoying *reading* in French until my early twenties when I chose to sign up for a free conversational French group through Alliance Française.

Throughout my life I have benefited from bilingualism through enriching travel and conversational opportunities as well as the privilege of *choosing* my career. It is my goal to more effectively share this passion with others and promote bilingualism. I do not want reading to act as a barrier preventing students from appreciating language in general. Quite the contrary, I recognize that it is a most valuable tool in the acquisition of a second language and students can benefit greatly from a positive relationship with reading in a second language. And the research literature suggests that it's not necessarily explicit instruction in reading by the teacher that's most important. Krashen (2003) and Day and Bamford (1998) all argue that the most effective model of second language instruction is one in which students are provided with *time* for independent reading, free of assignments and strings.

My mom is a university Social Work professor involved in action research for social justice. Her work with the Women's Faculty Caucus, the UVic Family Centre, and grandparents raising grandchildren in BC have taught me the transformative

potential that critical action research can have for society and one's practice. I see the link between improving my practice as a teacher and empowering students with knowledge that will help them advocate for themselves and meet challenges later in life. I believe that this research will help, on some level, to do that. If I can, through my research, develop reflective habits as a teacher and become more skilled as an instructor and motivator of reading, I can pass on to a new group of adolescents every year tools that will encourage them to appreciate diversity and multiculturalism (Genesee, 1999), travel, meet interesting people, pursue a greater diversity of careers, and be confident.

My practice as a French immersion teacher is in need of transformation. My undergraduate education is in Anthropology and Environmental Studies. My Education degree focused on secondary Social Studies (History and Geography) instruction. I completed a certificate program in teaching French immersion before ever stepping into the classroom. I do not have any formal training as a Language Arts teacher and the training I received as a second language (L2) instructor came at a time when I had no life experience to anchor those lessons and concepts. I need to get better at my job.

In the first week of school, I announce to each of my Français Langue classes that we'll be going down to the library so they can pick out a book for silent reading. Some students groan. Invariably, someone asks (in French): "Does it have to be in French?" to which I always reply: "Oui." More students groan. I am reminded daily that many of my students do not enjoy reading in French. The materials are too hard, old, boring, childish, or otherwise uninteresting. Anecdotally, I have some idea

of why the most vocal among them are not engaging with second language reading but I want to better understand specifically why – what trends exist across the group - and what I can do about it.

It has become apparent to me that I as teacher do play an important role in students' enjoyment of reading in French, not only as instructor but also as a sort of facilitator. They have the facilitation and guidance of their teachers for only so many years. Eventually, my students have to become independently reflective learners. I want them to learn to read for themselves, to be internally motivated to do so and to have the tools necessary to problem solve on their own. I hope that this research will help to improve my practice in these ways.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of my research was simply to better understand what reading in French is like for some Grade 9 French immersion students. As an extension of this, I hoped to improve my practice in two ways: first, using the perspectives of students, I sought to enhance my ability to recognize and address a greater diversity of student strengths and challenges in reading, removing barriers to their enjoyment of and engagement with French texts. I hoped to do this by asking students themselves how they experienced reading in French and how they saw themselves as readers. In so doing, I also identified a possible link between self-efficacy --students' perceptions of themselves-- motivation, and achievement. Students were also asked which learning and teaching methods they appreciated or enjoyed best when learning in French and reading in French. I compared their answers to other researchers' findings in order to gain some insight into the things I

can do to help them engage with reading.

A second practical and pedagogical purpose of my research was to attempt to learn how to empower my students to monitor their own learning and enhance their French skills and appreciation of the language. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, I believe that reading is an important part of acquiring a second language and I believe that a second language is an enriching tool for life-long learning. The goal of student empowerment reaches beyond the French immersion classroom. It is important that they acquire the skills necessary to identify and address their own strengths and weaknesses in all areas now, making them more independent, internally motivated learners for the future. It is about building capacity among learners.

Research Questions

Researchers studying motivation in second language acquisition such as Gardner (1985, 2001) name positive views of the task at hand as central to student motivation. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) and Bournot-Trites and Reeder (2005) showed just how rich student perspectives can be in the quest to improve teaching and learning when they interviewed them about their experiences with reading and learning a second language, respectively. I thought it important, then, to ask students themselves how they feel about reading in French, in an effort to address the following questions.

The main question guiding my proposed research is:

How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?

This first question is directly asking students to recall situations in which they have felt engaged in or disengaged from reading. This question should be asked because there is a gap in the existing research literature where adolescent learning, second language acquisition, reading, and motivation intersect. Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that a useful first step for any second language instructor would be to understand the origins of their attitudes and motivation toward reading in their second language. In asking students about their experiences with reading in French, I make it possible to infer which instructional strategies are most effective in fostering engagement among middle school second language (L2) readers.

A secondary research question is:

How do student self-perception as readers and engagement in reading relate to reading comprehension achievement?

In this second question, I explore the link that I hypothesize exists between engagement in reading and success in reading comprehension in grade 9 French immersion. The term reading comprehension achievement is not meant to be complete in its consideration of all the elements that make up the ability of reading comprehension but, rather, a skill set made up of several abilities that are deemed central to reading comprehension in the research literature. The specific elements of reading comprehension to be evaluated include fluency, paraphrasing, summarization, making connections between the text and other texts or lived experiences, inference-making, self-monitoring (metacognition), awareness of expository text structure, text integration skill, and the ability to draw specific details from a text. These skills will be discussed further in the methodology and

literature review sections.

It seems evident that more engaged and motivated learners will likely achieve higher levels of reading comprehension but it is not a certainty and this research will hopefully help me understand better just how the three are interconnected. If there's a clear link between self-efficacy, or perception of oneself as a reader, and the ability to understand what one is reading, then I need to change my practices to be more encouraging of students, to improve their notions of themselves and their potential for success as readers. Later, I can evaluate if and how these adaptations to my instruction have had the desired effect.

I take a pragmatic approach to this research. Throughout this thesis, I discuss its implications for my practice. A third question of this research, therefore, is:

Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?

By asking students for examples of negative or positive experiences they've had of reading, as well as what could be changed to make them enjoy reading in French more or less, they can give me some idea as to what I could do differently to engage them more in second language reading. In discussing my thesis topic with some colleagues, I was reminded that not everyone trusts students to answer honestly and without agenda. I remember one person saying something to the effect of: "Yeah, right! They're just going to tell you it would be good to watch movies all the time!" How I choose to implement these changes into my practice is a subject for another thesis but suffice to say I will not underestimate the honesty and

potential of themes in student responses concerning what would make them enjoy reading more. Whatever it is, if a number of them suggest it, I will try it. Krashen's (2003) *Pleasure Hypothesis* states that any situation that actually promotes the learning of a second language is enjoyable. As a practitioner, I can certainly say anecdotally that students are more engaged, ask more questions, and seem more motivated to learn when, as a class, we are doing something that is enjoyable for them.

I hypothesize, however, that I will not encounter one unified perspective on what is enjoyable, what is fun, what makes a student want to read more or less in French. In fact, I expect student responses will be as varied as the students themselves. As such, a large part of my job as teacher is to find ways to teach students how to read to their interests, in ways that they enjoy, because I cannot possibly teach thirty different students in thirty different ways. Rather, I can facilitate a classroom environment where my expertise in the areas of language acquisition and literacy as well as my knowledge of the texts and resources available combine with my personal relationships with students to give them the best possible chance to find interesting, pleasant, enjoyable ways to read and learn in French.

Study Significance

BC Ministry of Education enrolment figures published in a table by Canadian Parents for French (2011) show increasing enrolment in French immersion across BC while overall enrolment numbers decline. There are more and more immersion students every year and there is a shortage of qualified teachers. Research in L2

learning, then, is becoming more and more important across British Columbia and across Canada.

I consider the potential benefits of my research to be in five distinct categories. First, my teaching practice should benefit greatly from the acquired and refined skills in student engagement and reading comprehension instruction. Throughout the research process, I have remarked upon and enjoyed an increased awareness of everything I do with my students. All of the reading for the literature review alone has taught me so much about motivation, second language acquisition, and literacy; I feel it has made me a better teacher. I am far more qualified to teach and facilitate reading in French now than I was at the outset of my graduate studies. That is good for me, and good for all of my future students. I have to credit my students for all of their wisdom - individual and collective - that has shown me how to modify my practice to improve their learning.

Secondly and also related to teaching practice, this research will help me learn how to empower individual students to examine their own thinking and learning in such a way that will promote independent, critical thought. In all the reading I did about effective literacy instruction, I heard from many authors promoting instructional models emphasizing metacognition, thinking about one's thinking. I asked my students to reflect regularly on their learning, on what they were reading, and on how they were reading. It is my hope that they will learn from this process how to self-assess, set goals, and think about where they are in relation to their goals. I believe that such skills and habits help students become less dependent on the adults around them, making them more active learners,

researchers almost, rather than passive learners or listeners. Of course, this instructional model can be further refined based on student input and I can go on to integrate self-reflection and meta-cognition more effectively with future classes.

Third, this research will be significant, as it will be shared with my peers and colleagues through formal professional development workshops and informal discussions. I will share my findings, conclusions, frustrations, and my perspective on their implications with colleagues in the hopes that other French immersion teachers, at the middle school level or elsewhere, can adapt and apply them to their own classrooms. I plan on developing an instructional model based on my research, whose effectiveness I could review in a form of Participatory Action Research over the coming school years and that I could then share with other teachers. I believe this research will promote a discussion of reading in French immersion classrooms and bring about reflection and adaptation on the part of L2 literacy instructors.

Fourth, the research will contribute to a major gap in the existing literature surrounding adolescent second language reading engagement and comprehension. As I will discuss in Ch.2, there is much written about motivation among adolescent learners, much written about motivation in second language acquisition, much written about how students learn to read in a second language in their primary years, but very little written about motivation specifically among adolescent second language learners and how that motivation affects reading acquisition among those adolescent learners. This research constitutes a valuable contribution to that conversation about the intersection of adolescent motivation and learning to read in one's second language.

Finally, my research may have broader positive effects on a national and international level as a promoter of bilingualism in an increasingly globalized era. This research will be developing my skills as an instructor in bilingual education and will, therefore, be contributing to the continuation and perhaps improvement of bilingual education in Canada. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, enrolment in immersion programs is on the rise. As more and more parents seek out bilingual education options for their children, I will be able to better teach them and share my findings with colleagues who will also be able to apply them to their own teaching.

Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings

The literature concerning the theoretical background of this research is discussed at greater length at the end of the second chapter. To summarize what is said there, this research is a constructivist, critical, pragmatic take on case study research. I will listen to students' responses individually, looking for depth and richness of data rather than generalizable conclusions. While I appreciate that students' utterances and experiences are their own, I look to find themes among their responses and to analyse the possible meanings and origins of those themes. In so doing, I, as participant in this pragmatic and reflective study, hope to develop some strategies with the help of my students to enable them to find ways to enjoy what could be a very emancipatory practice: reading in a second language.

Language Use

When discussing student achievement, I have used specific qualifiers in keeping with the BC Ministry of Education's Provincial Letter Grades Ministerial

Order (2012) (summarized in Table 2 on page 48). When a student achieves in the range of an “A” (85.5% - 100%), the terms *excellent* and *outstanding* are used. *Very good* reflects a “B” (72.5% - 85.4%), *good* reflects achievement at the level of a “C+” (66.5% - 72.4%), *satisfactory* reflects a “C” (59.5% - 66.4%) and *minimally satisfactory* reflects a “C-” (49.5% - 59.4%). Therefore, when it seems that my vocabulary in describing student achievement is limited, it is because I am using only provincially acceptable language that specifically refers to a level of achievement related to letter grades and percentages. Similarly, in the BC Ministry of Education’s Performance Standards for reading (2002) (see Appendix G), an evaluation scale of 4 is used. I, therefore, use the same scale in much of my own teaching and evaluating. I will often describe student achievement as *excellent* (4) or *very good* (3) and, in brackets, give a score out of 4 with a percentage value. Also, when students are asked to self-assess their reading abilities in different specific areas, they do so on a four-point scale.

When I refer to *achievement* in reading comprehension, I am referring to a student’s ability to apply a number of skills and strategies that are considered necessary to understand texts at grade level and are thought of as skills and strategies common to *good* readers. The importance of most of these skills and strategies is reflected by their identification in the BC Ministry of Education Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for Français Langue 9 (1997) (summarized in Table 3 on page 50). These skills and strategies include: being able to make connections to a text, being able to make inferences about a text, being able to understand a story’s narrative structure, being able to make predictions about a text

using one's prior knowledge on the subject, being able to summarize a text in one's own words, and being able to make use of a variety of vocabulary strategies designed to help one make sense of new words. Also, more obviously linked to reading comprehension ability, being able to understand the general sense of a text and being able to draw specific details from a text. So, the term *reading comprehension achievement* is meant to encompass all of these skills as evaluated through formal reading comprehension assessments.

Overview of the Thesis

In the first chapter, I have described the purpose of my research as well as its significance in relation to my practice, learners, the current body of knowledge, and bilingualism in general. I also outlined the questions guiding this research and the theoretical position I have assumed in undertaking this research.

In the second chapter, I present a review of the literature relevant to this study. The literature falls into the following categories: Second Language Acquisition (SLA); second language (L2) reading skills acquisition; the transfer of findings from first language (L1) research to L2 settings; L1 reading comprehension; motivation and engagement in L1 settings; motivation and engagement in L2 settings; and theoretical background.

The third chapter explains my research methods and methodology including the design of my research, the instructional methods used, the development of reading comprehension assessments, recruitment, data collection and analysis, validity and limitations, and ethical considerations.

In the fourth chapter, I present the data. First, I present all data on a case-by-

case basis, in an effort to honour the individual stories of participating students. Second, I present the data in four themes as they occur across all student questionnaires. The four themes identified are: choice, assigned work, understanding, and interest. I go on to present the cross-case data from reading comprehension assessments and student self-assessments.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to results and discussion. In this chapter, I analyse the data presented in chapter four in terms of their relation to my research questions and aims, the existing research literature, and their implications for my practice. First, I consider the case-by-case presentation of data. I then discuss each of the four themes identified in student questionnaire responses. I then discuss assessment and self-assessment data as well as student written work. Finally, I offer suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature most relevant to my proposed research falls into six broad categories: a general background in Second Language Acquisition theories; the acquisition and importance of second language (L2) reading skills; the transferability of reading skills and, therefore research findings, from first language (L1) to L2 settings; findings on L1 reading comprehension; literature concerning reading instruction and motivation for adolescents generally (across various language settings); and literature concerning the roles of motivation, attitudes, and engagement in L2 classroom settings more specifically. To summarize, I will suggest that a gap exists in the research literature concerning the intersection of studies of motivation, adolescent learning, L2 learning, and learning to read. While there exists much research concerning reading comprehension among adolescents in an L1 setting and some research concerning L2 reading acquisition in the earlier school years, there is a gap in the literature around the acquisition of L2 reading comprehension skills *among adolescents*, and the role of attitudes and motivation in that process. This study aims to contribute to that gap in the existing research literature.

I will also suggest here that given the evidence for the transfer of language acquisition skills and challenges from L1 to L2 in the early school years, L2 middle school teachers can and should use existing L1 research concerning adolescent reading instruction to help fill the gap. Similarly, I will argue for the transferability between L1 and L2 settings of findings highlighting the role of student motivation

and engagement in learning and learning to read among middle school aged students. I will use theories of motivation in SLA to contextualize particular instructional strategies recommended in the L1 literature, as there is a lack of practical recommendations in the SLA motivation literature. Lastly, I include an epistemology and research paradigm section in the literature review outlining the theoretical background of this research.

Relevant Background in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory

When I set out to learn more about why my students almost universally reported enjoying L2 reading less than L1 reading, I realized that I did not know anything about how additional languages are learned generally. I felt that such knowledge might help me make sense of the individual and trending responses to survey questions. This section is meant to provide a background in SLA theory that will be used to add depth and context to other literature reviewed here as well as my own research findings in the discussion section of this thesis.

As a field of study, SLA emerged from Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Psychology in the mid-20th century. Two early important works in this field include Pitt Corder's 1967 essay *The Significance of Learner's Errors* and Larry Selinker's 1972 essay *Interlanguage*. Both discuss how the systematic study of students' language abilities between introduction and mastery of a second language can help us understand how language is acquired more generally as well as how to create favourable language learning conditions. Corder refers to this place in between introduction and mastery of the target language as *transitional competence*. He focuses on the study of learner errors in this stage as a means to learning more

about the systems of language learning. He asserts that these errors are not random but, rather, systematic, a necessary element of language acquisition.

Selinker (1972) refers to this transitional stage as *interlanguage*. He claims that *interlanguage*, similar to Corder's *transitional competence*, is a separate linguistic system in language acquisition. Selinker studied L2 learners' utterances in their target language. The evidence showed that L2 learners say things differently than native speakers when trying to express themselves in the target language. As a French immersion teacher, I find this obvious and uninteresting. Students often use English structures to say things in French. But Selinker used the patterns in these utterances to conclude that there is a separate linguistic system in the attempted production of an L2, the *interlanguage*. Both of these authors' works are relevant to the present study in how foundational they are to the broader field of Second Language Acquisition, of which my research is a part. They are also relevant because both suggest a need for both input and output of a target language in order to learn it. But what are the respective roles and importance of input (i.e. reading) and output? Is reading important in SLA? This is a very important question in terms of legitimizing and giving purpose to my own research. I will now turn to some important works in SLA theory dealing with these questions.

More recently, SLA theorists have debated which learning behaviours or environments might be most conducive to language acquisition. Merrill Swain and Sharon Lapkin (1995) established their *Output Hypothesis*, suggesting that learners, when producing the target language, notice gaps in their knowledge or errors upon which they can then reflect in order to learn more about the target language's

structure. This hypothesis brought to mind Corder's argument that much can be learned about SLA from a learner's errors. According to Swain and Lapkin, so can the learner. In asking grade 6 French immersion students to think aloud while writing in French, they found that learners showed strong signs of both semantic and grammatical reflection. Swain and Lapkin were criticized for their absolute emphasis on output as the means of SLA, though they did not claim it was the only force in learning a second language.

Stephen Krashen (2003) offered a different and slightly contrary hypothesis for second language acquisition from Swain and Lapkin's. Krashen introduced his *Input Hypothesis* or *Comprehension Hypothesis*. Krashen suggests that second language learners learn best through the provision of extensive inputs such as providing students with extensive reading opportunities, something he called *Free Voluntary Reading*. Krashen's *input hypothesis* and the instructional model of *Free Voluntary Reading* asserted that reading is critical to the development of a second language. Such a claim is critical to my research. In order for L2 reading comprehension and motivation to be worthy of investigation, these aspects need to be an important part of the acquisition of a second language. Krashen further stressed that the input be comprehensible and not overly taxing for students. He formalized this idea in his *Pleasure Hypothesis*: pedagogical activities that actually promote language learning are enjoyable. As a French immersion teacher, the *pleasure hypothesis* makes a lot of sense to me. Speaking anecdotally and generally, students tend to engage and learn more when they enjoy what they're doing. Krashen's emphasis on the affective, as in his *Pleasure Hypothesis*, brought him into

the realm of motivation and engagement, very relevant to my own research. I will return to this aspect of his work shortly.

Day and Bamford (1998) developed an L2 instructional strategy similar to Krashen's *Free Voluntary Reading* called *Extensive Reading*. This model involves a large volume of diverse, independent L2 reading at the appropriate reading level for information or pleasure. Student choice and pleasure, as well as teacher modeling and facilitating are crucial in Day and Bamford's model. As will be discussed later in this chapter, there is much argument in L1 literacy instruction literature that students need to have lots of time to read. Due to this overlap between the rich L1 reading comprehension instruction literature and the L2 reading instruction literature, I have made time for reading a priority in my instructional model for this research.

All of the above authors have contributed significantly to the field of Second Language Acquisition and are, therefore, relevant to my own present research. More importantly, the debate over input vs. output relates to the importance of reading and communicating about reading. While my research is not meant to contribute directly to this debate, my instructional methods in this research utilize elements of both models. As I will show later in this literature review, many L1 literacy experts argue for such a balanced approach.

Literature Concerning L2 Reading Skills Acquisition

The most prominent questions in L2 reading acquisition literature as it relates to French immersion programs are about the effect of bilingual education on one's first language, the suitability of bilingual education for students who struggle

to read in their L1, and predictors of L2 reading acquisition. However, nearly all of the research to date on L2 reading acquisition relates to the earliest stages of learning to read, revolving around decoding and word recognition skills, and there is very little research into more advanced L2 reading comprehension development - particularly among adolescents. The findings shown here, however, will serve to support the notion that reading acquisition skills do indeed transfer between L1 and L2. This notion is important to my research because if it can be shown that skills and challenges transfer between learners' first and second languages, it can be concluded that there is some basis for the use of research findings and recommended instructional strategies for middle-school-years L1 reading comprehension, even in the L2 classroom.

Early research into French immersion programs (Genesee, 1987) focused on the concern that students' mastery of literacy skills in their first language would suffer from reduced instruction in that language and increased instruction in the second language. In what has come to be known as the additive bilingualism principle, researchers have shown that bilingual learners in general, and French immersion learners specifically, do not suffer any diminished capacity to read, write, think, or communicate orally in their first language. As Genesee (1987; 2000 with Cloud and Hamayan; 2004 with Paradis and Crago; 2007a; and 2007b) admits, French immersion students who receive no English language instruction in their first two years of school do lag behind their peers in terms of English language literacy outcomes in those earliest grades. However, these students typically catch up to their English-only peers in all English literacy outcomes within one year of

having one hour per week of English literacy instruction. The fact that these students are able to overcome two years of absolutely no English language literacy instruction so quickly speaks to the transferability of the literacy skills acquired in French in kindergarten and grade one (This transfer of skills will be discussed further in the next section). And not only do students catch up quickly to their English-only peers in L1 achievement, they also perform well in their L2 relative to native speakers.

French immersion students when tested against native French-speakers of their same grade level typically achieve in the same range on outcomes related to listening and reading comprehension by the sixth grade. They perform only slightly below native French-speakers on assessments of expressive language such as written and verbal output (Genesee, 2007a). These findings are actually somewhat contrary to my own teaching experience. As will be demonstrated in a later section of this chapter, middle-school-aged French immersion students often claim that they find French texts either too difficult or too boring. That is, they are not able to read material that would be interesting to them as they are not able to read in French at the same level as their native French-speaking contemporaries. This discrepancy between Genesee's findings and my own experience illustrates the lack of research concerning middle-school-aged L2 readers, and the over-emphasis on primary readers. The point remains the same, however, that not only is immersion students' English not suffering but they are also mastering French. This is, therefore, additive bilingualism.

Additional research has been done to determine which factors best predict

how well a student will learn to read in their L2. Paradis, Genesee, and Crago (2004) argue that knowledge of the alphabet and phonemic awareness (PA) - understanding of how a word is comprised of individual phonemes - are the two most reliable predictors at the beginning of kindergarten of how well students will learn to read in the first couple of years of literacy instruction. This is important for instructors in that it allows them to identify students at risk of experiencing difficulty with reading as early as the first half of kindergarten in order to get them the support necessary to overcome those challenges. While these studies refer only to early primary literacy instruction and not later reading comprehension instruction, they are relevant to middle school teachers in several ways. Firstly, middle school teachers can sometimes be surprised by a teenage student who cannot decode and find ourselves teaching reading fundamentals. Secondly, reading acquisition is a complementary process by which reading comprehension skills and decoding skills inform one another. Thirdly, as will be discussed later in this chapter, previous L2 reading experiences can have a major influence on a student's later L2 reading motivation, all the way to adulthood.

MacCoubrey, Wade-Woolley, Klinger, and Kirby (2004) looked at whether French immersion kindergarten students' reading acquisition abilities could be predicted using English language assessments. MacCoubrey et al. used early Grade 1 L1 measures such as phoneme awareness, sound isolation tasks, and rapid naming tasks to predict for L1 and L2 reading acquisition struggles in Grade 2. They found that, indeed, English language assessments could be used to predict students' L2 reading acquisition abilities. Through their study, they found phonemic awareness

and lexical access to be the most reliable predictors of L2 reading acquisition ability.

Generally, the findings of these studies point to, among other things, the suitability of French immersion for learners struggling to read in their first language and the principle of additive bilingualism whereby learning in one's second language is shown not to hinder in any way the development of one's first language but rather adds to it. These findings, though biased toward primary skills, do serve to establish a research background to guide future studies and support the idea that reading acquisition skills transfer between L1 and L2. If reading acquisition skills transfer between L1 and L2, can teachers and researchers use findings and recommendations from L1 literacy research to guide practice and further research?

Transferability of L1 Research to L2 Settings

Two questions concern my research here: First, *Do reading acquisition skills and challenges transfer between first and second languages?* Second, *Is it appropriate for us to use research findings in first language reading comprehension development to fill the gaps in the research surrounding second language reading comprehension development?* Both of these questions have been answered in the research literature. I will summarize how that research has argued that there is substantial evidence of the transfer of reading acquisition skills between first (L1) and second (L2) languages. While it is not ideal that L2 teachers and researchers rely on first language reading comprehension research, practitioners need to attempt interventions on behalf of struggling students now and cannot wait for further second language reading comprehension research results. I hope to contribute my research to this gap in the existing literature concerning instruction in adolescent L2

reading comprehension.

Genesee (1987) argued for a model of L2 acquisition emphasizing certain cognitive reading skills that are transferable across languages, particularly across languages as similar as French and English. Genesee provided evidence of this in the form of studies he carried out in a trilingual school in Montréal (1983, as cited in Genesee, 1987) where students were taught in English, French, and Hebrew. The students' French and English reading scores were much closer than French or English were to Hebrew. Obviously, Hebrew is a very different language from French or English in terms of syntax and spelling, among other things. These findings generally support the idea that some language acquisition skills do transfer.

As mentioned in the section regarding the literature on L2 acquisition, Genesee also showed that French immersion students who lagged behind their English-only peers in English literacy achievement indicators after two years of French-only instruction were able to catch up to those same peers after just one year of receiving one hour weekly of English instruction (1987). This research speaks to the transferability of certain language acquisition skills between L1 and L2 settings.

Geva and Clifton (1994), in a comparison of good and poor readers in an early French immersion program to good and poor readers in an English-only program, found that there is much transfer of reading skills and challenges between first and second language learners. They found that there was a positive connection between oral reading accuracy, speed, and comprehension skills in the two languages. More specifically, those who could read, understand, and retell a piece of

text in English could do the same in French while those who couldn't in English couldn't in French either. They found the correlations to carry over into other skills such as word recognition and even into errors such as the types of erroneous word substitutions students made while reading. These findings bring to mind for me Corder's (1967) study of learner's errors that suggested that the errors committed could actually give us insight into how the L2 is acquired.

Geva and Clifton did find some variation in their results. It appeared that young good readers in their first language were more likely to be equally strong in their second language. Struggling readers were somewhat more likely to struggle slightly more in their second language than in their first language. There are some possible implications for these findings. For example, Geva and Clifton's findings suggest a model of instruction in which L1 and L2 literacy instruction draw from and reinforce one another, albeit to very slightly variable degrees. Skills developed in one language may help to scaffold reading acquisition in the other language, though not necessarily in the same ways for everyone. This coincides with my own professional experience in that there doesn't seem to be one cure-all blanket method for teaching anything because none of these approaches do justice to the diversity of the students in any given classroom.

The notion of transferability in first and second language acquisition and, more specifically, the acquisition of reading comprehension skills, extends beyond the transfer of skills into the transfer of challenges or difficulties as well. Genesee (1987, 2007a, 2007b) has shown how students who are at risk of experiencing difficulty learning to read in a second language are not differentially challenged in

their native language. Genesee's assertion agrees with Bournot-Trites and Denizot's research (2005, as cited in Genesee, 2007) into the risk profiles of students at risk of reading difficulty. Bournot-Trites and Denizot claim that the same processes are important to both L1 and L2 reading acquisition. August and Shanahan (2006, as cited in Genesee, 2007) also did a review of research on how minority-language students - students whose first language is not the majority language spoken in the school - learn to read. They found that there were many cross-linguistic factors in reading acquisition and that both languages drew upon many of the same fundamental processes.

All of the above research suggests that reading acquisition skills *do* transfer between L1 and L2 settings and that there are grounds for the use of L1 research and findings in L2 research and practice settings such as a French immersion classroom. Paradis, Genesee, and Crago (2004) make the same conclusion, arguing that researcher-practitioners in L2 settings need to base their action and research on the best available material that exists in L1 research. This suggests that I can use reading comprehension instruction models in my own teaching and research that borrow largely from L1 literacy research. However, L2 researchers such as myself must acknowledge their sources and address any limitations or conflicts that L1 research data may impose on their ability to make generalizable conclusions. I'll now speak to these L1 data that have informed my own research and practice so strongly.

L1 Findings on Reading Comprehension

Research to date on the acquisition of L1 reading comprehension skills

suggests that the abilities associated with successful readers can change over time. There do seem to be certain skills, though, that predominate in discussions of advanced reading comprehension such as inferential skills and self-monitoring. Researchers offer a variety of reasons for why students might struggle with reading comprehension and suggest several effective instructional practices. I have chosen to apply to my own practice and research those principles that seem to persist most strongly throughout the research literature.

Research by Johnston, Barnes, and Desrochers (2008); Oakhill, Cain, and Bryant (2003); Duke and Pearson (2002); Duke, Pressly, and Hilden (2004); and Liang and Dole (2006) all touch on themes of meta-cognition or self-monitoring as important factors in the development of reading comprehension skills. For this reason, I included reflective reading journals on our class blog as well as self-assessment and goal setting. Other skills central to reading comprehension touched on in their various papers include: knowledge of story structure, independent reading time, making connections and predictions, and oral language skills. All of these elements factored into my teaching of a novel-study unit, which formed the basis of the student data collected.

In a longitudinal study of students aged seven to nine years old, Oakhill et al. (2003) determined that comprehension monitoring, story structure knowledge, and text integration skill were important factors in the development of reading comprehension. Text integration refers to a student's ability to remember content of texts rather than exact wording. Also, the authors found a correlation between IQ and comprehension skill. In the same study, the authors examined factors

important in the development of word-reading skills. They determined that the skills contributing most strongly to the development of reading comprehension skills and word-reading skills were clearly different. The implication of this finding for literacy instructors is that they cannot assume that reading comprehension skills will naturally follow word-decoding skills, though you cannot have comprehension without word-reading. Reading comprehension instead requires a specific set of instructional strategies to help learners become 'good' readers. From my own experience, I know that students all seem to need a different balance of explicit strategy instruction and other approaches.

In their meta-analysis of research surrounding the development of reading comprehension skills, Johnston et al. (2008) concluded that the skills that support reading comprehension seem to change over time depending on which stage of development a student is in. For example, the authors found that in the middle primary years a student's reading comprehension abilities are much more strongly linked to word-reading skills, that is, whether a student can recognize and read a word aloud. In the later elementary and early middle school years, however, the ability to understand what is read becomes much more highly correlated with oral language skills as well as a student's ability to make inferences, monitor their own comprehension, and perceive story structure. Inferential skills and sensitivity to story structure are also the skills most often found to be impaired among children who struggle with reading comprehension.

These findings are generalizations, however, and Johnston et al. admit that there is in fact significant diversity in the profiles of students that struggle with

comprehension; some struggle with vocabulary and others with more text-level skills such as decoding. This fits with my own teaching experience, as middle school students are not all at the same reading skill level. Consequently, Johnston et al. determined that the best instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension would be those that explicitly instruct the skills listed above as critical to developing text comprehension: inference, self-monitoring or meta-cognition, and the perception of story structure. They also concluded, though, that instructors have to be able to recognize a diversity of problem areas among learners and design an instructional program that addresses as many of them as possible as well as they can. Other researchers have identified similar skill sets as generally critical to developing reading comprehension skills.

All of these findings suggest instructional strategies that highlight student involvement in and reflection on their learning and require a teacher aware of the diversity of strengths and challenges in the classroom and the instructional techniques available to address them. These elements deemed central to L1 reading comprehension instruction by many researchers have been incorporated into my own teaching for the purposes of the present study. Despite its value to my teaching, the research cited here does not address issues specific to reading acquisition among adolescents, namely engagement and motivation.

Student Engagement and Motivation in L1 Settings

In this section, I will discuss some research concerning motivation and engagement as factors central to successful literacy instruction for middle-school-aged students. Basically, students who struggle to read, enjoy reading less and are

less motivated to read than are those who read and understand well. Later, I will discuss research into the role of motivation in SLA specifically. There is no research that I could find specific to adolescents in SLA. But what does the L1 research say? I will argue based on a review of the research to date in this field that student self-perceptions as readers, student choice, student interests, and access to a rich and diverse array of literary works and styles are crucial to motivating and engaging adolescents in the process of reading comprehension acquisition. This conclusion comes not only from researchers' opinions but also their analysis of the comments of interviewed students themselves.

Donna Alvermann (2002) argues that student interests, engagement, and self-esteem are paramount to successful literacy instruction for adolescents. Alvermann also contends that a diversity of texts, media, and settings is crucial. In order to engage a more diverse array of learners, Alvermann says, teachers must allow them to read and write to their interests and in modes that are appealing to them, non-traditional as they may seem to teachers. Examples of non-traditional modes include comic books and graphic novels, magazines, and even video games.

According to Alvermann, students' perceptions of themselves as readers, what she calls their self-efficacy, is also essential in motivating them to read at all and to engage at any great depth with their reading. By making students feel confident as readers, they can feel invited into the dialogue and self-reflection that is learning to read and acquiring reading comprehension skills. Similarly, teachers' perceptions of students matter. If a student has the sense that a teacher views them as incapable, they will internalize this assessment and withdraw from the process.

Alvermann also advocates participatory approaches to instruction rather than teacher-centered approaches. By actively engaging students in their own learning, students can learn to view texts as tools for learning rather than words to be memorized.

Alvermann's work resonates with me. I find, generally, that students are more inclined to engage in class when they have some choice in what they are learning about and/or how they are going about it. I certainly can relate to the role of self-efficacy. Students often make statements suggesting they have already decided what kind of reader or math student they are as though it's somehow fixed and permanent. They seem to become less and less motivated to try the more convinced they become that they're not going to meet with success in a given area. Alvermann's claims remind us of the importance of making sure that students are interested. But what do students themselves have to say?

In their study of middle school student motivation and engagement, Ivey and Broaddus (2001) looked at student responses to questions about their own reading experiences. They found that students cited choice in a wide variety of reading materials, having time to read independently, listening to the teacher read, and teacher knowledge of the texts available as major factors in encouraging their reading. Many students reported having negative reading experiences with texts that were chosen for them. Ivey and Broaddus' work fits with Alvermann's work in motivating adolescents in that both highlight student choice and giving students time to read as important elements of any effective literacy instruction model.

Bournot-Trites and Reeder (2005) looked at student motivation in reading in

a French immersion setting using student questionnaires. Students reported choosing English books more frequently than French books. They self-assessed as having weaker reading comprehension skills in French than in English. When asked why they chose not to read in French, students said that reading in English was easier as it was their first language. They specified that French reading was made more difficult because of new grammar and vocabulary, including slang and word play. Also, students felt that there was a very limited selection of interesting books to read in French. They felt that the interesting books were too difficult and the easier books too childish. This problem of not being able to find books that suit both students' interests and reading ability levels drove them away from reading in French. Interestingly, students also recommended their teachers force them to read more in class and at home so they could become more proficient readers and, therefore, learn to enjoy it more. In this instance, students seem very self-aware of the importance of what Alvermann would call their self-efficacy. They know that if they practice reading, they will get better at it and therefore feel more confident with it. If they feel more confident, they will enjoy it even more and use it as a learning tool.

These student responses seem to be similar to those of the students in Ivey and Broaddus' study in some ways. Students in both studies responded that having a diverse array of books to choose from was a motivating factor for them. It would seem, however, that there are some factors unique to French immersion that motivate or discourage reading. For example, the lack of books that suit a more mature interest reader but are written in an accessible way will compound the lack

of books to choose from. French immersion teachers will be hard-pressed to create a library that is motivating for students both in its appropriateness for interest and reading level but also motivating in its diversity and scope. It would seem that teachers in French immersion face a difficult task of creating complex L2 literacy instructional frameworks as well as finding new ways to get students reading in the face of a scarcity of resources. That being said, as these researchers have shown, they are not alone in their task; they can just ask their students for advice. The importance of student perspectives should not be neglected in the development of reading comprehension instruction frameworks; hence the importance of student responses in the present study. It is extremely important to also consider models of motivation and engagement specific to second language acquisition.

The Roles of Attitudes, Motivation, and Engagement in L2 Settings

The most consistently used and debated model of motivation in language learning is Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model. In 1985, Gardner explained that there were four aspects to motivation in learning a language: goal-orientedness, effort, a desire to achieve the goal, and positive attitudes toward the task at hand. He demonstrated through a review of the literature existing at the time that a student's attitude both toward learning a second language and toward the cultural community of that second language could be linked to improved achievement in the acquisition of that target language. Gardner also developed the concept of *orientation* in motivation. Orientation basically categorizes a person's reasons for wanting to learn a language as either integrative or instrumental. Students who wanted to learn French in order to be able to communicate with French people, for

example, were *integratively oriented*. On the other hand, those who wanted to learn French to get good marks or meet a university requirement were said to be *instrumentally oriented*.

His most recent version (2001) of the Socio-Educational Model of motivation in language learning describes how one arrives at a point of language achievement. Both *motivation* and *language aptitude* influence achievement. Motivation consists of three elements in Gardner's model: *effort, desire to achieve the task*, and *enjoyment of the task*. Motivation is influenced by *integrativeness*, or an interest in learning the L2 so one can become more familiar with its cultural community, and by *attitudes towards the learning situation*. The latter involves a learner's attitude toward any part of the learning situation from teacher to course materials to classmates. The three variables of *integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation*, and *motivation* combine to form *Integrative Motivation*. Integrative motivation is a complex of positive attitude toward the target language group as well as the learning situation, a desire to identify with the target language community, and a motivation to learn the language. He claims that there are other factors that have an effect on SLA achievement, such as the use of SLA strategies, and self-confidence, but that they are not as directly associated with success as motivation is. Gardner's model is very formulaic and somewhat reductionist. In my experience, the success of a given student cannot be reduced to the product or sum of a series of pre-determined factors. Only that student knows why they don't feel like reading and it is probably for a coincidence of dozens, maybe hundreds of factors unique to him.

Crookes and Schmidt (1991, as cited in Jacques, 2001), Dörnyei (1994, as cited in Jacques 2001) and others have developed expectancy-value theories to try to identify the key components of motivation in SLA. In an expectancy-value theory, motivation and behaviours are deemed to be largely determined by one's expectations for success and one's perceived value of the task. Dörnyei (1994, as cited in Jacques, 2001) added to this factors relating to the teacher's authority, presentation of the material, modeling of interest in the language, and feedback on student progress, among other factors. Kuhl (1994, as cited in MacIntyre et al., 2001) argued that expectancy-value theories couldn't account for the sometimes-paradoxical behaviours of humans. He argued that people have differing abilities to start and keep up action and some tend toward hesitancy while others tend toward action. He argues that a motivated individual does not always act and that action does not always imply motivation. I am inclined to agree with Kuhl that expectancy-value theories and Gardner's socio-educational model do not adequately honour the individual experience of reading.

Still other researchers have argued for the addition of different factors to models of SLA motivation. Noels (2001) argued for the integration of external factors such as the L2 community, the teacher, and family members in models of SLA motivation because they so affect the learner's key needs of social identity, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) argued that competitiveness and cooperativeness also contributed to motivation and success in learning a second language. They also argued that motivated learners learn more because their motivation influences their use of specific SLA strategies.

Krashen (2003), whose *input hypothesis* was discussed earlier, talked specifically about L2 *reading* motivation. Krashen argues for a need to provide students with lots of interesting and easy to understand reading material as well as give them lots of time to read for pleasure. This fits with what researchers in the L1 literature have said makes for effective reading instruction. Students need time to read. Krashen also speaks of a phenomenon very familiar to me as a French immersion teacher: the difficulty in finding material that is both interesting and comprehensible for students. As mentioned earlier, Bournot-Trites and Reeder (2005) learned from French immersion students that this was an important factor in their motivation to read in their L2.

Day and Bamford (1998) dedicated an entire chapter of their book on *Extensive Reading in SLA* to the importance of affective elements such as motivation and attitude. They credit five factors with the development or formation of attitudes toward reading in a second language: attitudes toward reading in one's first language; previous L2 reading experiences; attitudes toward the second language itself, its culture, and its people; the second language classroom environment; and the ongoing experiences of second language reading. Only the latter is in any way within my control as teacher.

Day and Bamford espouse an expectancy-value theory of motivation, similar to that of Krashen. Generally, they argue that people will do what they expect they can accomplish relatively easily and/or tasks whose outcome or process they value. More specifically, they consider materials, L2 reading ability, attitudes toward reading in the L2, and external factors (sociocultural, familial, attitudes of friends) to

be the most important factors in determining student motivation to read in their L2. They place particular emphasis on the availability of appropriate materials and the student's attitude toward reading in L2.

The literature concerning motivation in second language acquisition, all largely derived from Gardner's socio-educational model, prioritizes expectancy of success in a task and value associated with completion of a task as central to the development of motivation in learning a second language. There is secondary mention of student self-esteem and little mention of teacher attitudes toward students and other external factors in motivation. There is no explicit mention of self-efficacy as described by Alvermann (2002). Student choice is mentioned by Gardner (1985, 2001) and Day and Bamford (1998) as important to attitudes and motivation. Student interest is only mentioned by Gardner, among SLA motivational theorists, as a factor in motivating SL learners, whereas it appeared often in the L1 motivation literature. I find expectancy-value theories of motivation unsatisfying in their blanket attempts to explain why individual students are or are not motivated to read but I can understand their application across large populations of students.

Theoretical Background and Research Paradigm

This research is constructivist, pragmatic, and critical in its epistemology. As outlined by Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011), constructivist research seeks to gain understanding by interpreting the responses of participants. My student-participants and I are in the process of creating knowledge around the issues of reading and motivation in a very specific context. I do not believe that there is a formulaic series of factors that determine my students' experiences with reading

predictably but rather that they can tell me how they feel about reading. In this sense, my research is also dialogic. This study is constructivist in that I listen to my student-participants' perspectives on reading in French in an effort to enhance our understanding of how to motivate students to read.

This research is pragmatic in that I am addressing what I perceive is a problem in my classroom: students do not enjoy reading. This is a problem because students are not able to access a potentially powerful tool of second language acquisition and learning in general. Creswell (2003) described pragmatic research as when a researcher tries to learn about a problem and come up with some ways that they can improve their practice to help address that problem. It is a highly reflective research paradigm. As an example of this, I kept a research diary. As Holly and Altrichter (2011) explain, diaries allow for continuous analysis throughout data collection. This process identifies gaps in the study and allows preliminary results to be evaluated. This is very similar to how Noffke and Somekh (2011) define action research, except that I will not be implementing these adaptations to my practice and evaluating their effectiveness as a part of this research.

My research is somewhat critical as well. While it does not explicitly challenge any authority or power structure, it does seek to create change and empower a group that is somewhat oppressed by their lack of control and independence as learners (Lincoln, et al., 2011). This research is critical in that it will seek to empower students to identify and address their own future learning needs in such a way that will liberate them somewhat from the potentially

oppressive power structure of the traditional teacher-student relationship. In these relationships, the teacher can often be the only one credited as able to produce valid knowledge or transform a student's learning. For instance, asking students to reflect and self-evaluate their ability to make use of specific learning strategies is meant in part to make them more self-aware and in control as learners.

The aims of this research include elements of all three of these paradigms. It is a subjective, interpretive, non-positivist, non-reductionist, largely qualitative study that seeks to contribute non-generalizable insights to the study of reading, motivation, middle school education, second language acquisition, and to some very specific intersections of all of the above.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I have demonstrated a gap in the existing literature at the intersection of adolescent learners, second language learners, engagement, and reading comprehension. I have also demonstrated the legitimacy of using L1 research to contextualize findings of research in an L2 setting. Finally, I have explained my identification with and use of particular research paradigms.

In the chapters that follow, I will outline my research methodology and present and discuss my research findings. I will place all findings in the context of this literature review. In each chapter, I will explicitly return to what I have learned from these researchers and use it to situate myself, my students, and their perspectives on reading in their second language.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

I chose a qualitative approach to this study because I wanted to honour the individuality of my students and participants by grounding my data in their own lived experiences. I wanted a pragmatic (Creswell, 2003) methodology that allowed me to interpret rich data in order to achieve deeper understanding of a problem that I perceive in my practice and, therefore, learn how to better address this problem. Marshall and Rossman (2010), Rossman and Rallis (2003, as cited in Marshall and Rossman), and Jackson, Drummond, and Camara (2007) describe qualitative research in these ways and made me aware of its potential in helping me to achieve my goals as researcher and practitioner.

Case Study

I developed a case study model based on my reading of Chadderton and Torrance (2011), who point out case study's strength in developing depth of data over breadth of data. This seemed very appropriate for my goals. No numerical survey or meta-study of province-wide reading comprehension assessment results could provide the same depth and humanity of information that a case study such as this one can. I developed multiple sources of data, which I will explain in this chapter, to help me understand my students' experiences of reading in French and how I might help improve those experiences.

Participant Selection and Sampling

I used a form of what Lewin (2011) calls *convenience sampling* or *opportunity sampling*, typical among small-scale case study models of qualitative research with aims of improving practice. I will explain the reasons for and the consequences of this sampling method. Participant selection was limited to adolescent students outside of what is technically considered the elementary grades (kindergarten – grade 7) in French immersion within my own school. I had two cohorts of 20 grade 9 students, then, from whom to recruit participants. For ethical reasons, namely that I have significant power over potential participants, participation had to be completely voluntary and anonymous. As such, only 8 of 40 eligible students consented to have their work used as data *and* submitted a questionnaire. This sample of 8 students has average reading comprehension assessment and self-assessment that are significantly higher than what I typically observe in my entire classes. This could be because students who are successful readers are more inclined to participate in a research project centred on something they're good at or it could be for a number of other reasons. Whatever the reasons, the resulting sample is not representative of the entire grade 9 class. The data collected from these participants, then, can only be used to draw conclusions about this very specific group of participants.

Instructional Model and Instrumentation

Students completed a formal reading comprehension assessment at the start of the term. This formal assessment, based on Snyder, Caccamise, and Wise's (2005) description of reading comprehension assessment involved reading aloud to me, discussing the text with me, and responding to a variety of types of written questions about the text to assess for specific abilities. In keeping with Snyder et al.'s discussion of

such assessment, the goal is to measure a student's ability to construct deeper meanings about and connect to their reading. Individual questions in this assessment are generally graded out of 4, as per the BC Ministry of Education Reading Performance Standards for grade 9 Français Langue. Their scores relate to qualitative descriptors, which have been translated and are described in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Four-point numerical Scale with Descriptors

Score out of 4	Descriptor
4	Student exceeds the expectations.
3	Student completely meets the expectations.
2	Student minimally meets the expectations.
1/0	Student does not yet meet the expectations

Table 2: Letter Grades, Percentages, and Associated Descriptors

Letter Grade	Percentage	Descriptors
A	85.5 – 100	The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade
B	72.5 – 85.4	The student demonstrates very good performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
C+	66.5 – 72.4	The student demonstrates good performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
C	59.5 – 66.4	The student demonstrates satisfactory performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
C-	49.5 – 59.4	The student demonstrates minimally acceptable performance in relation to expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
F	0 – 49.4	The student has not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, the minimally acceptable performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.

Total score on the assessment is presented in percentage form. Percentages relate to a letter grade and, therefore, particular descriptors, as outlined in the BC Ministry of

Education Provincial Letter Grades Ministerial Order. These percentages, letter grades, and descriptors are summarized in table 2, above.

Students also completed a self-assessment of their reading abilities that some used to set reading goals for the school year at this time. This self-assessment is meant to encourage self-monitoring or metacognition. Students rated themselves out of 4 – again, tied to descriptors found in the performance standards - on 12 “I can” statements derived from the Performance Standards and the BC Ministry of Education Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for Français Langue 9. The twelve “I can” statements, translated, are:

- I can sound out words that are difficult to pronounce or understand.
- I can reread what I don't understand.
- I can find smaller words, parts of words, and English words in words that I don't recognize.
- I can use context to find the meaning of a word (by trying to replace the word with another word that makes sense in the sentence).
- I can use text features such as a cover, a description on the back of a book, images, and a title to make predictions about the subject of a text.
- I can use what I already know about the subject of a text to help me understand it.
- I can understand the general sense of a French text.
- I can find specific details in a French text.
- I can make inferences and defend them. For example, if Little Nicolas often helps his mother, we can infer that he likes her a lot.

- I can make connections between what I read, other texts I've read, and my own life.
- I can give my opinion of a text and defend it with reason and examples.
- I can summarize in my own words what I read.

The relevant PLOs for this self-assessment have been translated and summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: PLOs Relevant to Reading Comprehension Assessment and Self-Assessment

<i>The student will be able to:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make predictions about reading, listening, or viewing based on certain clues such as length of text, prior knowledge of subject, familiar vocabulary, etc. • learn about the author to orient their listening or reading • use various means to support their comprehension of an oral or written text: questioning their prior knowledge, rethinking original predictions, etc. • describe their strategies for reading, listening, and viewing • demonstrate their comprehension of an oral or written communication by denying, affirming, critiquing, and judging the pertinence of the ideas expressed • read independently and with ease various texts to inform or entertain oneself • identify and compare universal themes presented in written, oral, or visual works • react using various means of presentation to the values promoted in written, oral, and visual works coming from different cultural communities • analyse character characteristics • show their understanding of and react to different genres of cultural expression such as novels, comic books, and animated shorts from French authors

We then began a novel-study unit that lasted until late November or early December (the end of the first term). The instructional model I used was rooted in the research literature discussed in chapter 2 and designed to produce data that would be used to answer my research questions. This unit therefore included elements of self-

monitoring, story structure analysis, technology, choice, independent reading time, and the use of specific reading strategies. Students had weekly reading assignments as well as a weekly double-entry reading response blog entry in which they responded to a particular passage from the book. Also, students kept track of challenging vocabulary, completed a writing-in-role assignment on the blog, examined the books' narrative structure, and conducted a mini-research assignment that they also posted to the class blog. At the end of the novel study, students completed another reading comprehension assessment and another self-assessment and reflected on their reading goals. Student work produced during the novel study was analysed against themes identified in questionnaire responses.

Lewin (2011) points out that questionnaires can be very useful in qualitative research in establishing patterns and themes across the data set. This is exactly how I used this instrument. Developed largely based on Lewin's guidelines, the questionnaire included open-ended, written response questions; rating scales; ranking questions; and two simple dichotomous questions. Questions with numerical responses were accompanied by descriptors. For example, when asked how comfortable they are reading in French on a scale of 1-5, the number "1" was accompanied by the descriptor "very uncomfortable." Ranking questions asked students to rank, in order of preference, a variety of reading options in English and French. The open-ended questions, designed to yield more detailed, rich accounts of reader experiences, were:

1. Describe any positive experiences you've had with reading in French;
2. Describe any negative experiences you've had with reading in French;
3. What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French more; and

4. What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French less?

The final source of data is a research diary that I kept. In it, I reflect upon the research, recruitment, data collection, and data analysis processes. Holly and Altrichter (2011) discuss how a research diary can be used to help a researcher reflect upon findings and identify new avenues of investigation. My research diary entries took many different forms. Often, I simply noted very broad observations about the research process. For example, at one point I expressed frustration about the recruitment process. I felt slightly resentful of what I perceived as “limitations” placed on recruitment due to ethical considerations. Upon reflection, I was able to remind myself of the importance of these ethical considerations and turned my energy instead towards possibilities for improvement of these systems in future research. At other times, my research diaries took the form of sketches or poems and served to give meaning to feelings that I could not articulate clearly at the time. All of these entries and the resultant reflection helped me to be cognizant of my own perspectives and feelings. Because of the informal and inconsistent nature of this data source, however, it will not be cited frequently in this thesis. It’s function lay behind my conclusions and results, however as it formed an integral part of my reflective thought process.

Recruitment

At the beginning of the school year, I gave a letter to my grade 9 students and sent an email home to their parents advising them of my plans to recruit participants for a research project in December. For ethical reasons related to my “power-over” relationship with potential participants, I could not recruit participants from my own students for my own study. I therefore recruited our school’s Teacher-Librarian as a third

party recruiter. Once students had completed their novel study and assessments for the first term, the third party recruiter sent home information letters, consent packages, and questionnaire packages, to be reviewed and discussed with parents. I also sent an email, notifying parents of the impending arrival of these packages. All communication with students and parents regarding this study made clear the goals of the research, potential consequences of participation, limits to confidentiality, and the potential future uses of data, as per UVic Human Research Ethics Board requirements. Participants could choose to participate by submitting either the signed consent form authorizing the use of their work as data, the questionnaire which implied consent to have their responses used as data, or both. Students who wished to participate were instructed to return the consent forms to have their work from the first term used as data as well as the questionnaires to the third party who then stored them.

Data Collection

Once all students' marks for the first term had been published in report cards, I made photocopies and digital copies of *all* students' assessments, self-assessments, and work from the first term and gave them all to the third party. I then returned originals to students. The third party then discarded the work of non-participants and changed the names on all the participants' data and attached them to their questionnaires. Once all of the data had been made anonymous, by giving participants pseudonyms and it was confirmed that marks had been published in report cards, the third party turned data over to me. I immediately moved participants' data into locked storage at my private residence.

Eight participants both consented to having their work used as data and submitted a completed questionnaire. Two participants submitted completed questionnaires only. Three participants consented to having their work used only. Three participants submitted only a partially completed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

I then set about reviewing, coding, and analysing the data. In keeping with my wishes to honour the individuality of my participants, I first sought to tell their stories by conducting a vertical analysis of the data on a case-by-case analysis. I present the data of each participant in the first section of chapter 4. I completed this vertical analysis by first describing the participant's responses to the four open-ended questionnaire questions. I then describe the participant's self-assessment and their reading comprehension assessment results before presenting the data from their written work. I also summarize briefly each case.

Having completed vertical analyses of each case, I then used a thematic cross-case analysis approach, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), to analyse and code the data in responses to open-ended questionnaire questions. To summarize Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis model, I first read and reread the entire data set, making simple notes of my observations. I then began identifying codes among data at a semantic or superficial level. Following this, I began to refocus on themes instead of codes, thinking of how codes might be related and grouped. Next, I revised my list of possible themes, joining some together, splitting some, and eliminating others. I then defined and named my themes and, finally, I used those themes to analyse and triangulate the remaining data and produce this report.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical issues arise in this research. They include but are not limited to: the power structure and social positioning inherent in my relationship with the student-participants; informed consent on the part of the participant and their legal guardians; confidentiality and anonymity; and pre-publication access. However, ethics, as Piper and Simons (2011) stated, are situated. I faced unforeseen ethical decisions and their repercussions during my research.

My “power-over” relationship with students and prospective participants was the most obvious ethical issue in this study. It was imperative that students not feel in any way coerced or pressured to participate. The main measure employed in addressing this concern was to have a third party conduct the recruitment so that I could not know who was or was not participating. In order to ensure prior informed consent, participants and parents were repeatedly reminded of the aims, purposes, potential consequences, and uses of the research in emails, information letters, consent packages, and questionnaire packages. Lastly, participant confidentiality could not be completely guaranteed, as it is possible that I might be able to identify a participant based on handwriting or something they said. Also, others who read this thesis might be able to guess at the identity of a participant based on something they said. These limits to confidentiality were made very clear in all communications with students and parents.

Knowledge Mobilization

I plan to share my research with my colleagues and school board in the hopes that it could inform some policy implementation in my school district. It is my hope that our school board can use the findings produced by this research to justify improved support

for our L2 learners. Additionally, I will present an accessible version of my findings to interested parents and students in an effort to truly include them in the research process from start to finish. Participants will have the right to review how the data is represented before publication. I plan on facilitating professional development workshops in my area to share my findings and further discuss with other teachers how we can better motivate students to read in French. Similarly, I would like to apply my findings to my own classroom to issues of motivating students to speak more French in class and embrace writing in their L2.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the methods and methodologies applied to this research. I have described the instrumentation used and explained how recruitment, sampling, and data collection took place. I have discussed my reasons for using a qualitative and pragmatic case study approach with thematic analysis. I outlined and addressed the main ethical considerations of this research and, finally, I explained what I plan to do with the knowledge gained from this study. In the next chapter, I will present the data from student work and questionnaires.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

In this chapter, I will present the data from student writing, self-assessments, formal reading comprehension assessments, and questionnaire responses. Eleven students consented to having their writing, self-assessments, and formal reading comprehension assessments used as data. Thirteen questionnaires were submitted but only 10 were fully completed. Two respondents only completed the questions that required numerical answers and one respondent neglected to answer two of the written response questions. Of the 10 fully completed questionnaires, 8 were submitted with student work so links can be drawn between student perception of their experiences and selves and their reading comprehension achievement, self-assessments, and written work. When quoting student responses, I have retained all original spellings and punctuation. When quoting student work, I have translated from French to English. Passages that I translated are indicated by “Own translation” as per APA style guidelines.

Case-By-Case Analysis

Students have individual collections of experiences, self-perceptions, interests, likes and dislikes, and their own ways of learning. It is important to me to honour the individuality in their data. I therefore completed a vertical analysis of each individual case and will provide a brief summary here of each of them. I call these learner profiles. In chapter 5, this adds a richness and context for the analysis I make across these cases. I present the case studies in ascending order of formal reading comprehension achievement, from lowest to highest. In each of the 11 cases, I first present the main points and themes in questionnaire responses. In chapter 5, these accounts of experiences

with reading in French help to answer my first research question: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?* I then present the data found in participants' written work as well as their assessments and self-assessments. These data help me address the question: *How do student self-perception as readers and engagement in reading relate to reading comprehension achievement?* In the next chapter, I also discuss the implications of these data for the research question: *Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?*

Jeffery.

Questionnaire responses. Generally, Jeffery does not describe his experiences reading in French positively. When asked to rank his reading preferences, Jeffery ranked all five English reading options higher than the five French reading options. Jeffery expressed in his questionnaire responses a lack of positive reading experiences and a lack of interesting books available in French when he said: "Since I have not read many books in French, I have not had many positive experiences." and "For me, I would like more interesting books in the library."

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Jeffery is uncomfortable reading in French and he only reads in French for pleasure once every few months. He reads more often for pleasure in English and feels more comfortable reading in English. However, Jeffery self-assessed as a good to very good French reader in class. He evaluated himself as using lots of different reading strategies very well though he felt he was only minimally able to understand the gist and specific details of French texts.

His reading priorities or goals for the year were to make better links between French texts and other books, to better give and defend his opinion of a French text, and to summarize in his own words a French text.

Jeffery's formal reading comprehension evaluations showed that he is a careful, deliberate reader, and not particularly fluent. Consistent with his self-assessment, he showed an ability to use specific strategies to help him learn the meaning of new words but he struggled to summarize in his own words what he had read. He was able to pull specific details from texts satisfactorily. It's worth noting that his reading comprehension test scores improved substantially between September and December.

Jeffery's writing-in-role work on the blog showed, overall, good comprehension of the general storyline in the novel he read as well as comprehension of some specific details.

Dear Hanneli,

...Hello! How are you? It's not very good here, I have been captured by the Nazis and we had to leave Moortje at home...The Nazis are very bad, they push my parents to work and they shave our heads....I don't see what I'm writing because the dormitories have no light. If there were light, the Nazis might see me writing.

If the Nazis see me writing, I think they'll kill me. (Own translation)

This sample of Jeffery's written work shows general understanding, an understanding of details, and limited inferring. In his other blog entries, Jeffery describes passages of the text as moving, sad, captivating, and attention grabbing and makes no complaint about the reading process.

Case summary. Jeffery is the lowest-achieving reader of all the participants but he self-assesses as good to very good. His goals correspond with areas of weakness on his formal assessments. He demonstrates through written work and formal assessment that he understands grade-level texts and that he is able to make use of some reading strategies. His written work suggests interest and some emotional engagement with text.

Thomas.

Questionnaire responses. Thomas did not submit a questionnaire.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Thomas self-assesses as a good reader of French, generally, and his average self-assessment corresponds almost exactly to his reading comprehension assessment scores. According to Thomas, his greatest weakness in reading in French is in summarizing what he reads and using strategies to find the meaning of words he doesn't know, such as trying to replace the word with another word that fits in a sentence. His goals for the year are to work on summarizing, inferring, and using reading strategies to understand new words. Initially, in September, Thomas barely passed his reading comprehension assessment. He struggled with fluency, note taking, and finding details. Thomas' second reading comprehension assessment showed a major improvement over the first. In his second assessment, Thomas read more fluently, made good connections, took notes, summarized, and answered detailed comprehension questions very well.

In his other work, Thomas showed some understanding of general plot lines, narrative structure (he could identify, for example, the development and dénouement of the story), and some good inferring: "...I think they must be shocked and in a good way very excited to return to normal life but also a bit scared to return to normal life because

much has changed” (Own translation). Here, Thomas shows some inferring ability and an ability to react personally to a French novel as well as an understanding of the general plot lines. Thomas does not offer any criticism or negative reaction to the novel or the reading process.

Case summary. Thomas is a student who struggles somewhat in formal assessments of his French reading comprehension, relative to other participants in this study. However, in his written work, he does show some ability to understand the gist of a French novel, to infer somewhat complex character emotions, to connect to the text, and to make use of reading strategies in order to better understand words he otherwise would not have understood.

Evan.

Questionnaire responses. Evan did not complete a questionnaire.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Evan self-assesses as a very good French reader on average. Specifically, Evan self-assesses as having excellent abilities to understand the general sense of texts in French and use strategies to find the meaning of new words. However, Evan does not demonstrate much confidence in his ability to find specific details in French texts or make connections to French texts. Evan’s formal reading comprehension assessments show that he is a fluid, even expressive reader who makes excellent use of vocabulary strategies and, generally, shows very good reading comprehension. Evan does not show any particular weaknesses in his formal assessments, not even his self-assessed weakness of finding specific details in the text. On the contrary, his other written work demonstrates good inferring and solid understanding of general plots *and* specific details:

...I already made a new friend, his name is Nikoa. Nikoa taught me their language and the paths of the forest he's a very good friend. Also, they gave me a special name because I killed an elk with one arrow. Now, I'm known in the village as the Wapiti. (Own translation)

One weakness in Evan's written work is a lack of well-developed connections to the text: "...A connection for this passage to real life is that in some situations love can make you want to seek vengeance against the one who broke your heart" (Own translation). There is evidence here of a profound connection but it is not developed further. Evan's reading response blog entries show that he's engaged in his reading. He finds passages funny or even disappointing (i.e. when there isn't a battle scene).

Case summary. Evan is, in many ways, a very good reader. He seems to show across his work and assessments an ability to use most strategies and complete most tasks associated with good reading comprehension, from vocabulary strategies to inferring and summarizing. His self-perception as a reader shows no lack of self-efficacy. Indeed, he is wholly accurate in his assessment, except that he underestimates his ability to find specific details in a text. His written work shows that he is somewhat engaged in his reading.

Daniel.

Questionnaire responses. Daniel says that the difficulty of a text (specifically of vocabulary and expressions), the ability to choose texts himself, and the work associated with reading are all factors in his enjoyment of reading in French:

...I would also enjoy reading in French less if we were forced to make notes and concentrate on things disconnected to the book's plot and events (grammar, verb

conjugation). If I were forced to read a book above my current level with a more complicated sentence structure I would grow confused and enjoy reading less.

Daniel also mentions an issue that French immersion teachers anecdotally can tell you they hear often from their students: "...all the books that are interesting are too hard and easier ones are childish and I stop thinking about what I read." Daniel mentions that he has had a positive reading experience with "...this current novel study." He does not elaborate on why, exactly.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Daniel self-identifies as comfortable reading in French, though he rarely does so for pleasure. By contrast, he self-identifies as a very comfortable English reader who reads very often for pleasure. Daniel's self-assessments indicate that he is generally a very good reader in his own eyes with the exception of his abilities to find specific details in French texts and to make connections to French texts. Accordingly, these are his reading goals for the year as well as to practice replacing words he doesn't know with words that fit in the context to try and understand the new word's meaning.

Daniel's formal reading comprehension assessments suggest that he is a fluid and expressive French reader. In his second assessment, Daniel demonstrated excellent note taking, summarizing, connection making, and a good ability to find specific details in a French text. His self-assessment was accurate in that his weakness, though not much of one, does seem to be pulling specific details.

Daniel's other written work shows an excellent understanding of narrative structure, and excellent use of vocabulary strategies. His blog entries show very good

inferring and connections, as well as a clear understanding of general plot lines and details:

Again, I feel connected to Anne-Marie because she had to help her mother without the help of brothers and sisters...I also understand that the most likely reason she helps her mother is to take her mind off of a subject associated with emotional suffering: Mathieu. I pity Annie because I understand the greatness of pain that a person needs to feel to distract themselves. Poor Annie. (Own translation)

Daniel shows here an ability to understand not only the events of the book but also the subtleties and to infer the underlying motivations for characters' actions. In his reading response blog entries, Daniel described the book as unbelievable (shocking), curious, touching, sad, and interesting and he often makes profound personal connections with events and characters.

Case summary. Even though Daniel's self-assessment and formal reading comprehension assessments show that he has not yet mastered the extraction of specific facts from French texts, he is still more than capable of understanding them at a profound level, of connecting with them, of relating to them. He seems very engaged in his novel and he says so in the questionnaire but he complains of difficulty with vocabulary.

Felicity.

Questionnaire responses. Felicity mentioned themes of difficulty, interest, choice, and vocabulary in her questionnaire responses. Similar to Daniel, she referred to the difficulty of finding a book at her reading level:

I think I would enjoy reading in French more if there were more French books at my level of reading instead of long novels or too-easy-to-read books. Also if there were a bigger range of books in different types of interesting genres, like supernatural or mythologie.

Three times in her questionnaire responses, Felicity refers to the difficulty of a text or her ability to understand it, including: “Some negative experiences are mostly when I can’t understand what the text says.”

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. In the questionnaire, Felicity self-identifies as being comfortable reading in French, though she does so rarely for pleasure. She is a very comfortable and frequent English reader, though she did not rank all English reading above all French reading in terms of preference. Felicity self-assessed substantially below her actual reading comprehension scores in formal assessments. Specifically, she scored herself very low in terms of her ability to use several vocabulary strategies, make inferences, and give her opinion on a French text. Despite her earlier claims of experiences in which she does not understand French texts, she gave herself top marks for understanding both the general sense of a French text as well as specific details. Felicity identified using text elements such as images, headings, and covers to make predictions about a text; using context to determine the meaning of a word; and generally understanding French texts as her reading goals for the year.

Felicity’s formal reading comprehension assessments show a student who reads sometimes confidently, and at other times carefully. She takes notes and uses vocabulary strategies very well; summarizes well, and does an excellent job pulling specific details

from the text. Overall, she was assessed as having very good, almost excellent, reading comprehension skills.

Felicity's written work, while showing lots of difficulties with spelling, grammar, and sentence structure, demonstrates that she understands the events of the story very well and that she is capable of making strong personal connections to help her infer the emotional responses of characters to their circumstances:

When Mrs Goslar tried to explain what was happening to Hannah, it reminded me of when I was young. My mother and I often watched sappy movies together and one time we watched a movie where this woman was about to give birth and she was in a lot of pain. I didn't understand why so I asked my mother. She explained it to me and so I understand it now. But Hannah is just a young girl who, probably, didn't know anything about what was happening. I felt a little bit bad for Hannah because she probably thought her mother was dying or something. (Own translation).

Felicity's other written work shows excellent understanding of narrative structure as well. She describes the novel as sad or depressing but also expresses pleasure in reading parts of the book. She writes at great length of her emotional responses to the story and roots them in rich descriptions of personal experiences.

Case summary. Felicity has had experiences of not understanding French texts and yet she self-assesses as being comfortable reading in French and having an excellent ability to understand the general sense of a French text and pull specific details from a French text. Her written work shows that she can connect to French texts, infer character

emotions, react well personally, and understand narrative structure. Her blog entries suggest a high level of emotional engagement in the novel.

Maria.

Questionnaire responses. Maria expressed a lot of frustration with certain instructional practices and student obligations associated with in-school reading: “If I could just read without having to pause every chapter to react to what I’ve read...Breaking books into pieces really makes them infuriating to follow for me.” And when asked what might make her enjoy reading less, Maria had this to offer: “Exactly what we’re doing in class now...having to break them apart and read them over multiple weeks just makes them seem intolerable. I also really dislike having to write down connections to the book I’m reading.” In both of the above excerpts, Maria is very clear on one thing: she just wants to read. She doesn’t want to interrupt her reading to complete assignments. She does say, though, that she would be happy to complete a sort of book report once finished the novel. In fact, Maria rated French reading options quite high in her ranking of preferences. For example, she would rather read a French comic book than any form in English except a novel. She would rather read a French novel than an English magazine or web site.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. On the questionnaire, Maria self-identified as very comfortable reading in both French and English and she reads for pleasure very often – more than once per week – in both French and English. She is the only participant to read so much in French for pleasure.

Maria self-assesses as an excellent reader on average. She claims her weakest area is connecting to the texts she’s reading. She identified her goals as making better

connections, using her own prior knowledge to better understand what she's reading, and using vocabulary strategies to uncover the meaning of new words.

Maria's formal reading comprehension assessments are very good, almost excellent on average. She is a fluid and expressive reader. The assessments show that Maria does not have any particular area of weakness. She summarizes well, picks out details well, uses vocabulary strategies and makes connections. In fact, her connections are the only area in which she under-estimated her ability. In general, Maria was one of the few students to assess themselves above their actual reading comprehension achievement levels.

Maria's written work shows some simple use of vocabulary strategies. Her blog entries show exceptional spelling, grammar, and vocabulary as well as a strong ability to understand the general sense and details of the story, make connections, and infer:

I think it's very kind of Mathieu to keep his promise to sculpt Anne-Marie's portrait, even after such a long time. I moved here five years ago and I left behind some good friends. It's difficult to remember after only five years, let alone eight. Mathieu must be a honourable man, loyal to Anne-Marie. I think these characteristics are important to a friendship. We see these characteristics several times in Mathieu. For example, when Father Cléret died, Mathieu wanted to face Chonian to avenge him, but the Father wanted him to forgive the Seskanous. He honoured the Father's wishes. (Own translation)

Maria's blog entries reflect on character attributes and she offers opinions on the characters' behaviour and the writing in the book. She also describes the novel as frightening or sad.

Case summary. Maria is a very gifted writer and, in her written work, shows outstanding skills indicative of a highly effective reader, though her formal assessments show slightly lower achievement. Maria has confidence in herself as a reader and she enjoys reading in French but she does not enjoy constantly having to go back over what she's read, dissect it, and keep notes or journals. She would much rather just read.

Anna.

Questionnaire responses. Anna does not enjoy reading online. She made that clear when she ranked reading online in English and French 9th and 10th out of ten choices, respectively. Apart from reading online, Anna would always rather read in English than in French. In her questionnaire responses, Anna expresses a positive experience with the novel she read for the novel-study:

When we started reading 'Le Wapiti' I was surprised and pleased by how clearly I could understand it. Even without knowing the exact definitions of words, I could infer from context. I also enjoy finding French sayings...

Other themes that emerge in Anna's questionnaire responses include frustration with French punctuation, sentence structure, and plots, all of which feel very foreign to her. Lastly, Anna referred to her difficulties finding French books that interest her.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. In the questionnaire, Anna self-identified as very comfortable reading in French, as she is in English, though she only reads in French for pleasure rarely while she reads in English for pleasure very often. Anna did not complete any other in-class self-assessments as the other participants did. This is likely due to absence.

Anna achieved very well on her first formal reading comprehension assessment and excellently on the second. In both cases, she read fluidly and with expression. In both assessments, Anna demonstrated excellent summarizing, connection making, finding of details, and use of vocabulary strategies.

In her written work, Anna showed excellent understanding of narrative structure. Her blog entries demonstrated excellent connections and inferences, as well as a clear grasp of the general plot and very specific details or subtleties:

Father Cléret was very fortunate that Mathieu was there to save him and help him with the dictionary. Mathieu was very fortunate to have someone who did not think of him as a man chosen by the spirits, but simply a man...The Father is a person who has no connection to the old Mathieu, the Mathieu of Quebec, so he's perfect for listening to the story of the murder from Mathieu's point of view. Mathieu has never told this story to anyone who believed him, and that's what he needed. (Own translation)

Anna's written work on the blog also talks about her appreciation for the writing in the novel: "I thought that final sentence was a great way to finish the chapter" (Own translation).

Case summary. Anna is right to self-identify as a very confident French reader. She is obviously able to understand on a number of levels texts at grade level. She also brings an enthusiasm, it would seem, to her reading experiences. She enjoys the language learning and comments on the quality of writing, the awkwardness of punctuation, and other linguistic and literary elements.

Casey.

Questionnaire responses. Two of Casey's top three reading preferences involve reading in French. Casey specifically names a translated series, *The Spiderwick Chronicles* as something he enjoyed reading in French. Casey says he would be more inclined to enjoy French reading "If the plot was more interesting, and the book was my reading level." Casey echoed this sentiment when he said he has had a hard time finding books that he can both enjoy and understand.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. During an in-class self-assessment, Casey said he is a very good reader, on average. He identified using text features such as the cover, headings, and images to make predictions and the act of making connections to a text as particularly challenging for him. Accordingly, he identified these two things as well as inferring as his reading goals for the school year.

Casey's formal reading comprehension assessments are excellent, on average. In both assessments, he read fluidly and with expression. Casey did a particularly good job using vocabulary strategies, making connections to texts and drawing specific details from them. He showed no particular weaknesses. He did not seem to have any particular difficulty making connections as he suggested in his self-assessment, and his written work shows the same solid abilities.

Casey's written work showed that he has an excellent understanding of narrative structure. Casey's writing-in-role blog entry suggested excellent comprehension of the general sense of the story as well as an ability to understand specific details and subtleties:

It was me who left you the elk skin. I realized that I'd never had the chance to thank you for your generosity during my stay on your ship, la Vaillante. When we arrived in Quebec, I got a job helping Monsieur Le Normand at the armoury with his work. He offered me an apprenticeship but you know me, I turned it down in favour of adventure. (Own translation)

Casey shows in this excerpt that he can understand not only the main events of the book, but also infer subtleties in terms of why the characters did what they did. Casey's blog entries show a great deal of reflection on the intention and the effect of the author's writing: "From the beginning of the book, the author demonstrates how Mathieu is capable and that Mathieu can adapt to the situations he faces" (Own translation). Casey does not, however, pass any judgement on the quality of the book or his reading experience.

Case summary. Casey is an excellent French reader who underestimates his abilities slightly on average. His questionnaire responses suggest one main theme in his experiences reading in French: the need to find interesting books at his reading level. His written work shows that he understands and connects well with texts and characters and that he reflects on the author's intentions and actions while reading.

Ben.

Questionnaire responses. Ben seems more concerned with the format or medium of what he's reading than its language. He prefers firstly, reading a novel in English and, secondly, in French. From there, he moves through the remaining media or modalities in order of preference, always preferring first of all to experience it in English and then in French before moving onto the next preferred medium.

Three main themes exist in Ben's questionnaire answers: variety/choice, difficulty/understanding, and interest. He sums it all up when he says:

I think I would enjoy reading in French less if the books I was reading were too hard and I couldn't understand what I was reading. Also, if the books didn't interest me, and if I couldn't choose what books I wanted to read independently.

Ben reports that, while travelling, he had a positive reading experience. He was able to understand signs and instructions written in French.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Ben answered yes to the question "*Do you speak French at home with a family member?*" on the questionnaire. Ben self-identifies in the questionnaire as a comfortable French reader who reads sometimes (once per month) in French for pleasure. He is a very comfortable English reader who reads often for pleasure (weekly). In a more detailed self-assessment, Ben said he is very good to excellent at all aspects of reading in French. Two things he said he only does very well are: using context to find the meaning of a word and finding specific details in a French text.

Ben's formal reading comprehension assessments are consistently excellent. In both cases, he read fluidly and with good expression. He made excellent connections, made excellent use of vocabulary strategies and, contrary to his own self-assessment, showed an excellent ability to find specific details in French texts. In his second assessment, Ben was only minimally able to summarize what he had read in his own words but in the first assessment he did so excellently.

Ben's written work is outstanding. He has excellent knowledge and understanding of narrative structure. Ben's reading response blog entries show inferring

skills, connections, and clear understanding of the general sense of the plot as well as its details and subtleties:

The first sentence in this passage tells me that the war has ended. Hannah was so starved on the journey on the train that lasted days. She had an opportunity to get off the train when it stopped, to go eat, but food didn't come without risks. If Hannah got off and didn't come back quickly enough, the train could leave without her....

...During the second world war, my grandmother was 8 years old. Each time my grandmother and her mother heard planes flying overhead, they had to hide in the forests that surrounded their house. They were scared that the planes would bomb their house and burn it. Sometimes they spent the night in the forest because the war was so brutal. No innocent person deserves to suffer during war. (Own translation)

Ben's written French is excellent. His written work on the blog expresses relief, sadness, shock, fear, and disbelief related to the story.

Case summary. Ben is a gifted writer, an excellent reader, and an accurate self-assessor. He articulately and clearly touches on major barriers to enjoying reading in French: lack of choice or variety and the lack of books suitable both for his interests and reading level. Ben is clearly engaging with the text on an emotional level and making profound, well-developed personal and historical connections to the book, allowing him to infer character emotions and experiences.

Kate.

Questionnaire responses. For the most part, Kate would rather read in English than in French with the exception that she would rather read most any text in French than read online or in a video game in English. The main themes in Kate's written questionnaire responses are: choice, interest, and work associated with reading. When asked what would make her enjoy reading in French less, Kate said: "Not having a choice in which book I read/having to choose from 3 or 4 books that don't interest me, and having to do a lot of work for the book I read." Kate wants to just read, and read something that she chooses because it's interesting to her. She even specified that it is not enough to be able to choose from 3 or 4 books if the books don't interest her.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Kate answered yes to the question "*Do you speak French at home with a family member?*" In the questionnaire, Kate self-identifies as a confident French reader who sometimes reads in French for pleasure. Kate self-assessed in class as an excellent reader overall, rating herself as only very good on just two strategies or skills: using context to find the meaning of a word and finding specific details in a French text. According to Kate, she is excellent at understanding the general sense of French texts.

Kate's formal reading comprehension assessments are right in line with her self-assessments. She achieved excellently in both assessments. She read fluidly and with expression and showed excellent abilities to use vocabulary strategies, make connections, summarize, and draw specific details from French texts.

Her written work includes examples of excellent understanding of narrative structure. Also, Kate's reading response blog entries show excellent connections

between the book and present-day society as well as inferring of character emotions based on the events of the book:

I find this passage very nice and a bit hard to believe. At that time, a kind and nice German soldier was very rare so it's hard to believe that a German soldier was kind enough to give a piece of cake to a young child such as Gabi. I imagine that Hannah and Gabi were very surprised and happy.

It's sad because, at that time, when Hannah and Gabi were hungry, the only thing they could do was to die of hunger in silence. Today, if you're hungry, the only thing you have to do is to open the fridge and eat something. Also, when we need more food we only need to go to the grocery store and buy more. Hannah and Gabi could not do this. (Own translation)

Kate uses the following descriptors when talking about her reading: nice, hard to believe, sad, exciting, discouraging (Kate is referring here to the plot, not the act of reading.), and bizarre.

Case summary. Kate correctly self-assesses as an excellent French reader. She uses all of the major reading comprehension strategies. She does not over-estimate or under-estimate her own abilities. She takes issue with having too much work to do with reading. It would seem she would rather just read, and read interesting books that she chooses. Kate's written work does not indicate whether she is actually engaged in the act of reading or not.

Lauren.

Questionnaire responses. Lauren did not complete a questionnaire.

Self-assessment, reading comprehension, and written work. Lauren self-assesses as a very good or excellent French reader in all but two areas: giving her opinion of a text and defending it with reasons and examples; and, summarizing in her own words what she reads in French. Lauren's formal reading comprehension assessments will address the latter, while her written work will speak to the former.

Lauren is the highest-achieving participant in formal reading comprehension assessments. Lauren's reading comprehension assessments show her to be an excellent French reader. She reads fluidly and with expression. She shows excellent summarizing abilities and an excellent ability to draw specific details from a text, both very clear indications of someone who is comfortable reading at grade level in French. Lauren also shows excellent use of vocabulary strategies and excellent connections. Lauren's self-assessment is accurate but for her under-estimation of her ability to summarize a text using her own words.

Lauren's written work shows an ability to react to a French text and to justify her reaction:

...Also, I think it's a bit bizarre that they weren't wearing the Star of David. I know that it was dangerous to be Jewish and that the Star revealed to the Nazis that you were Jewish, but at that time it was more dangerous to not wear the Star, wasn't it? Like, if you were a Jewish person at that time and you weren't wearing the Star and a Nazi asked you for your papers, I think the consequences would be grave. (Own translation)

Lauren's written blog work includes the following descriptions of the novel: sad (the book made her cry), dramatic, hard to believe, bizarre, and terrifying.

Case summary. Lauren demonstrates high-level reading comprehension skills and strategies throughout her formal assessments and her written work. She seems to understand that she reads well and that is reflected in her self-assessment. Lauren's written work includes themes of emotional response to the text and demonstrates an ability to justify her reaction.

Anonystudent #1.

Questionnaire responses. This female student referred on multiple occasions to understanding. Her positive experience involved understanding written information while traveling. Her negative experience involved expressions that are hard to understand. She also brought up issues of interest, variety, and the work associated with reading. She would enjoy reading "well-written" books in different genres such as fantasy, action, and myths/legends. She negatively describes work related to reading such as novel studies.

Anonystudent #2.

Questionnaire responses. This male student referred to vocabulary, understanding, genre, and interest in his questionnaire responses. He came back repeatedly to the point of vocabulary, sometimes giving contradictory answers. For example, when asked about positive French reading experiences, he said: "I enjoy learning more vocabulary while reading French novels." However, when asked about negative experiences, he said: "Sometimes I find that I get bored by the vocabulary." Again, he says he would enjoy reading less if the grammar and vocabulary were really difficult and that he would enjoy reading in French more "...if I understood the

vocabulary better, or if I watched a movie after...Or if it was a graphic novel where I could connect the pictures to the words.”

Presentation of Themes in Data Across Cases

The previous section examined individual cases in order to give rich, detailed personal accounts of students’ experiences with reading and reading instruction as well as their achievement in reading comprehension, both through formal assessments and evaluation of their written work. This section presents the data as themes across all cases.

Using Braun and Clark’s (2006) model of thematic analysis, as outlined in Chapter 3, I identified four central themes in student questionnaire responses to the following questions:

- Describe any positive experiences you’ve had with reading in French.
- Describe any negative experiences you’ve had with reading in French.
- What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French more?
- What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French less?

The four major themes identified are:

- Choice;
- Assigned Work;
- Understanding; and
- Interest.

Each theme will be presented in its own section below. In each section, I describe how the theme appeared in responses as well as how frequently. In a final section of this

chapter, I discuss how the themes apparent in the questionnaire responses relate to other data: student writing, self-assessments, and reading comprehension assessments.

Choice. The theme of choice was mentioned 21 times. The theme is divided into two sub-themes:

- Choice as opposed to obligation or having the text chosen for you and
- Choice in terms of having a variety of texts available from which to choose.

Statements from students often referred to choice in both senses, for example: “I think I would enjoy reading in French more if I had access to more of a variety of French books and that I can choose the books I want to read independently.” This is an example of a student positively associating choice with increased enjoyment. There were also student responses expressing a *negative* association with a *lack* of choice, for example, when asked what might cause them to enjoy reading in French less: “Not having a choice in which book I read/ having to choose from three or four books that don’t interest me...” This particular quote shows a student who wants to have the right to choose their own reading material but who also wants to be able to choose from an adequately interesting variety of books. One student did praise the variety of books available to him in the school’s library when he said:

I’ve had a lot of positive experience at with reading in french [names school] for example: this current novel study and with [names teacher] in grade 7 because of the selection of french books in our library, it’s easy to find a good book at my level.

This student is the only participant who expressed a positive attitude toward the selection of books available in our school library. Participants in this study referred to the lack of

available and suitable French texts 13 times. They referred to graphic novels, “modern” books, book series, books translated from English, fantasy, adventure, sci-fi, and action genres. They spoke of these genres as things that would help them to enjoy reading but they also lamented the lack of such books as a reason for not enjoying reading in French: “For me, I would like more interesting books in the library.” Another student said: “Also, if there were a bigger range of books in different types of interesting genres, like supernatural or mythologie.”

Students also occasionally referred to choice in relation to difficulty or understanding: “I think I would enjoy reading in French more if there were more French books at my level of reading instead of long novels or too-easy-to-read books.” This data extract, therefore, has been coded as belonging to multiple themes: choice and understanding.

Assigned Work. Students referred to schoolwork associated with reading 14 times across 11 questionnaires. Sometimes students mentioned, without much detail, the novel-study unit they completed just before completing this questionnaire. At other times they referred to very specific tasks that they were asked to complete during this latest novel-study unit.

While I may be biased toward perceiving their preoccupation with this most recent reading experience that I facilitated for them in class, it seems obvious to me that many of their responses do indeed point specifically to that unit of study. Some of them refer to the novel study in a positive light: “I’ve had a lot of positive experience at with reading in french at [names school] for example: this current novel study...” Others were slightly less glowing in their consideration of the novel-study when asked to describe any

negative reading experiences: “Reading books on which I am obligated to do a novel study...” That same student, when asked what would make them enjoy reading in French less, responded clearly: “Exactly what we’re doing in class now.” Other students reflected on specific tasks which I believe were quite clearly references to the same novel study unit, when asked what would make them enjoy reading in French less: “...more novel studies (- only one is good) where you have to go back + get a ton of quotes.” I think this student is referring to their weekly double-entry reading response journals in which they had to pick a passage from the text that they had read that week and then offer a personal reaction to it with connections. Occasionally, a student spoke more generally about doing work related to what they read when asked what would make them enjoy reading in French less: “...having to do a lot of work for the book I read.”

Understanding. Participants referred to understanding 34 times, making it by far the most frequently recurring theme. I further divided the theme into three sub-themes:

- General understanding;
- Language and Narrative Structure; and
- The co-incidence of understanding and interest.

Most responses related to understanding referred to the level of difficulty of a text. Most often, it was a negative association with reading texts above their reading level: “I think I would enjoy reading in French less if the books I was reading were too hard and I couldn’t understand what I was reading.”

But students also referred to positive experiences reading at their reading level: “When we started reading ‘Le Wapiti’ I was surprised and pleased by how clearly I could understand it.” These positive experiences were not limited to the reading of books:

“When I went on a trip to Europe, I could read signs and instructions on the airplanes.”

Another student said: “For example, when I went travelling in Europe I could read all of the french subtitles.”

Many students referred to understanding in terms of language elements or narrative structure. Students talked about vocabulary, especially expressions and slang, when asked what would make them enjoy reading in French more:

If I read more often, if I understood the vocabulary better, or if I watched a movie after reading it. Or if it was a graphic novel where I could connect the pictures to the words. Or if the book had a sophisticated plot but an easy text.

Another student thought of vocabulary not as a barrier to enjoyment of reading in French but, rather, as a potential tool: “I would enjoy reading in french more if I had a larger french vocabulary and a deeper understanding of possible slangs an author might use.” Later in his questionnaire, however, he says he would not enjoy focusing on grammar that he considers quite far removed from the plot.

Some students spoke of language elements and understanding in terms of narrative structure and the writing styles of French novels. One participant remarked on how French punctuation can be frustratingly different from English punctuation:

French punctuation is downright frustrating. A speaking part being started by an indent-dash, then separated by commas after is really confusing. The pacing and story structure of original French books (I mean, those not translated from English) is very foreign and choppy or jumpy, often jumping forward in the timeline with no warning, makes it hard to get to know the characters.

This same participant also went on to elaborate on how we might alleviate this problem:

...maybe French books translated from English ones. That way the pacing won't be so aggravating, and we can settle into the story more. Familiarity is useful when learning new things, and novel structure is something that most of us are used to, if only subconsciously

A final sub-theme of this category is the co-occurrence of understanding and interest. Five times, students talked about the simultaneity of understanding and enjoying what they read: "I have found it difficult to find books which I have both enjoyed and understood." When asked what would make him enjoy reading in French more, this same student said clearly and simply: "If the plot was more interesting, and the book was my reading level."

Most French immersion teachers and students can sympathize with this issue. The bulk of the texts ordered for French immersion school and classroom libraries are written for native speakers and readers. As such, while the subject matter might be appropriate for a fifteen-year-old reading in their second language, the reading level is not. Within the L1 literacy community, there is a genre of literature referred to as high-low (high interest, low reading level), destined for struggling readers. Such a genre may well exist in French as well but is difficult to source in an adequate variety of themes and formats in British Columbia. This issue of struggling to find reading material that meets learners' needs in terms of interest and difficulty can make reading in French a very frustrating experience for immersion students.

Interest. The topic of interest was raised 16 times in students' questionnaire responses. As mentioned above, interest was sometimes mentioned in the context of its rare coincidence with understanding. Interest was also mentioned in the context of

choice with one student reporting they would enjoy reading in French more if they could choose books that interested them and another saying they would enjoy reading less if they were obligated to read an uninteresting book. Two students expressed negative associations with “badly written” books or positive associations with “well written” books. Neither elaborated on those concepts. For example, when asked what would make him enjoy reading in French more, one student responded: “For me, I would like more interesting books in the library.”

Students also referred to specific genres, or criteria for books that they find interesting. For example, when asked what might make her enjoy reading in French more, one student said:

Well-written books about subjects I’m interested in. I do not enjoy reading in French all that much because it is very hard to find books that I like. Topics I like are fantasy, action/adventure, myths + legends.

A male student expressed a positive reading experience he’d had: “It was an exiting book with lots of action.” In several responses, students referred to plot and plot lines as an important element of interesting books: “...if the book had a sophisticated plot but an easy text.”

Nine students referred to “uninteresting” books negatively. One female student expressed her frustration with “typical” French books:

Most French books I see look like classroom books that are orders in packs of thirty so that the entire class can read. These books typically: a) are short and simple, without an interesting plot, b) have writing styles reminiscent of grammar textbooks (“La souris est sous la table. Le chat est sur la chaise.”), c) are

basically life lessons like ‘treat others the way you want to be treated’ dragged out for a hundred pages, and d) have no emotion, as if the author wrote for money and nothing else. Fill the library with these, and I’ll run and hide in the manga section.

Other genres or titles referenced as interesting include: Tintin, manga, Spiderwick Chronicles (translated), books originally written in French (not translated), supernatural, mythology, and “modern” books.

Conclusion. The above mentioned themes as they appear in student questionnaire responses paint a picture of a group of students largely looking to choose independently - and based on their interests and reading levels - texts in French to read not for work or assignments, but for pleasure.

In this chapter, I have presented, case-by-case, the data submitted by each participant. I then identified, through cross-case thematic analysis, the four main themes and their sub-themes present in participant responses to open-ended questions on the questionnaires. These particular questions dealt most directly with student descriptions of their experiences reading in French and learning situations that may encourage or discourage their engagement in L2 reading. For the remainder of this chapter, I will present the cross-case data trends present in students’ self-assessments and their reading comprehension as evidenced both through formal assessments as well as their written work. I will also use the four main themes already identified to triangulate the data in students’ written work.

Self-Assessment, Reading Comprehension, and Student Work

Student self-assessment and reading comprehension achievement. The sources of the data most relevant to this issue are:

- numerical questionnaire responses concerning comfort and frequency of reading in English and French;
- student self-assessments done in class; and
- two formal reading comprehension assessments.

I'll first very briefly discuss these sources of data. Firstly, the rating scale questions give us a general idea of whether students feel positive or negative about their abilities as French readers. Secondly, students' in-class self-assessments offer more detail to our understanding of how students view themselves as readers of French. As mentioned in chapter 3, self-assessed scores out of four for each of the 12 "I can" statements relate directly to qualitative descriptors identified in the BC Ministry of Education Performance Standards for Reading in Français Langue 9.

The average self-assessed score against the twelve statements can indicate how, generally, participants assess themselves as French readers. These twelve statements are translated and listed in chapter 3. While all of the "I can" statements together make up a skill set of an effective or good reader, I paid particular attention to how students self-assessed on two statements:

1. I can understand the general sense of a French text; and
2. I can draw specific details from a French text.

The decision to highlight these two particular "I can" statements arose out of conversations in class with several students regarding what they felt the statements were

asking them. Several students reported understanding these statements more clearly than the others as relating to reading comprehension. I would hypothesize that this preconception of what reading comprehension informed by what their parents, teachers, and peers have told them it means to understand something (to ‘get the gist of something,’ for example). The reasons behind this closer association of these two statements with reading comprehension would be worthy of further investigation in future research.

Additionally, members of one of the two grade 9 cohorts used their self-assessments to formulate three reading goals for the school year.

Lastly, students completed formal reading comprehension assessments in September or October and again in November or December. In this assessment, students read aloud to me to test for fluency; discussed the reading with me to test for connections, inferences, and use of strategies; and answered written questions about the text to assess note-taking, strategy use, summarization, connections, and their ability to find specific details in the text. Having explained the self-assessments, questionnaire questions, and formal reading comprehension assessments, I will now present the data yielded by these three instruments.

As an entire group, the 11 students who consented to having their work shared for the purposes of this research self-assessed positively and achieved very well in formal reading comprehension assessments. These results are presented in Tables 4 and 5, below.

Table 4: Reading Comprehension Assessment Results

Name	Total/20	Flow /5	Vocab/4	Summ/4	Conn/4	Det./6	Change
Jeffery	11.75	2	2.75	1.25	2.25	4.5	+4.5
Thomas	13.75	2.5	3.75	2.75	3	4	+6.5
Evan	15.5	4.25	4	3	3	5	-1.0
Daniel	16.25	5	3.25	3	4	5	+2.5
Felicity	16.75	3	3.25	2.75	3.25	6	-0.5
Maria	17	4.5	3.5	3	3.75	6	-1.0
Anna	17.25	4.5	3.5	3.75	3.75	6	+3.5
Casey	17.75	4.75	4	3	3.75	6	+1.5
Ben	18.25	4.75	4	2.75	3.75	6	-0.5
Kate	18.5	4.25	4	3.5	3.5	5	+3.0
Lauren	18.75	4.5	4	3.5	4	6	-1.5
Average	16.5	4	3.64	2.93	3.45	5.41	+1.55

Total: total reading comprehension assessment score

Flow: assessment of student's fluidity while reading in French

Vocab: ability to use vocabulary strategies

Summ: ability to summarize texts

Conn: ability to make connections to text

Det: ability to find details in text

Change: change between 1st and 2nd reading comprehension assessments

Table 5 : Student Self-Assessment Results

Name	Avg.	High/low	Sound	Reread	Vocab	Context	Features	Prior	General	Details	Inference	Connect	Opinion	Summary
Jeffery	2.75	0.4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
Thomas	2.71	-0.04	3	2.5	2	2	3	3.5	3.5	3	2.5	3	2.5	2
Evan	3	-0.1	3.5	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	3	2	2.5	2	3	3.5
Daniel	3	-0.25	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	3
Felicity	2.67	-0.7	1	4	1	2	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	2
Maria	3.5	0.1	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	2.5	3	4
Anna	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Casey	3.25	-0.3	3	4	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	1	4	4
Ben	3.5	-0.15	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Kate	3.58	-0.12	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4
Lauren	3.125	-0.6	4	3	3	3.5	3	3	3	3.5	3	4	2	2.5
Average	3.1085	-0.176	3.35	3.5	2.9	2.95	3.25	3.25	3.35	2.95	2.9	2.85	2.75	3.15

Avg.: Average self-assessment on 12 “I can” statements related to reading

High/low: Whether students self-assessed above or below their actual achievement level Sound: Ability to sound out words

Reread: Ability to reread unclear text Vocab: Ability to use vocabulary strategies

Context: Ability to use context to infer word meanings

Features: Ability to use text features (images, headings, cover, etc.) to infer text meaning

Prior: Ability to use prior knowledge to make predictions General: Ability to understand gist of French texts

Details: Ability to find specific details in French texts Inference: Ability to make inferences about French texts

Connect: Ability to make connections to French texts Opinion: Ability to give and defend opinion about French texts

Summary: Ability to summarize French texts in own words

Achievement. On average, students in this group achieved very well, averaging 81.5% on their assessments. On average, girls achieved better (3.51/4, 87.75%) than boys (3.11/4, 77.75%) and the bottom 4 achievers were all boys. However, there were also two very high-achieving boys. I did not find any discussion of gender as a factor in motivation, second language acquisition, or reading comprehension in any of the research literature that I examined. Overall, there was a 7.75% increase in student reading comprehension achievement between the two assessments in September and December.

Self-assessment. On the questionnaire, the average student comfort with reading in French was “comfortable,” or 4 on a scale of 5. Their average self-assessment, across all twelve of the “I can” statements, was 3.11 out of 4 or 77.75%, also “very good.” Boys self-assessed lower (3.04/4, 76%) on average than did girls participating in the study (3.22/4, 80.5%).

Two “I can” statements of particular interest relate to a student’s perception of their ability to understand the general sense of a text in French and to find specific details within a text in French. On average, students self-assessed very well on their ability to understand the general sense of a text in French (3.4/4 or 85%), slightly above their actual achievement (+3.5%). This “I can” statement has no direct correlate in the reading comprehension assessment against which it can be compared. The “I can” statement regarding a student’s ability to pull detailed information from a text, however, does.

Students self-assessed, on average, slightly lower on this statement than the first (2.95/4 or 73.75%). If this self-assessment is viewed against questions on the formal reading comprehension assessment requiring students to extract detailed information from a text, it becomes obvious that students greatly underestimated their ability to do so.

Students scored, on average, 86.9% on questions requiring them to find specific pieces of information in a French text. This means they under-estimated their achievement in this area by 13.15%. This is a much larger gap between self-assessed abilities and actual abilities than is seen in the case of students' general understanding of a text.

Link between self-assessment and achievement. Students under-estimated their own abilities by an average of 0.176/4 (4.4%). Only two students self-assessed higher than they achieved. The six highest achieving readers in this group of participants are the six highest self-assessors, but the connection becomes less consistent when we look more closely. Our highest achiever, Lauren, is the fifth-highest self-assessor while our sixth-highest achiever, Maria, is the second-highest self-assessor. Our two lowest achieving students, Jeffery and Thomas, self-assess lower than the average but they are not the lowest self-assessing participants. The links between self-assessment and formal reading comprehension assessment in reading are summarized in Table 6, below.

Table 6 : Link Between Self-Assessment and Actual Achievement

Name	Avg. Self-Assessment (%)	Avg. Reading Comprehension Score (%)
Jeffery	68.75	58.75
Thomas	67.75	68.75
Evan	75.00	77.50
Daniel	75.00	81.25
Felicity	66.75	81.25
Maria	87.50	85.00
Anna	N/A	86.25
Casey	81.25	88.75
Ben	87.50	91.25
Kate	89.50	92.50
Lauren	78.13	93.75
Average	77.75	82.50

Participants' written work. Participant work used as research data includes the following:

- reading response double-entry blog entries:

- writing-in-role blog entries;
- mini-research blog entry;
- vocabulary list; and
- a narrative structure assignment.

I will present the data from these five sources in sections related to each of the four themes identified earlier. The themes of choice and assigned work did not appear in these sources of data. This phenomenon will be discussed in chapter 5.

Understanding. The theme of understanding was discussed earlier in this section as it relates to the vocabulary list and the ability to use strategies to infer the meaning of new vocabulary. Understanding is not something that is explicitly mentioned by participants in their written blog entries, but it is evident. Of the 11 participants that submitted their work as data, 7 demonstrated excellent understanding of the general sense of their novel through writing-in-role assignments and double-entry journals. For example:

After Mathieu was pushed out of the Seskanou group, he finds himself without a family. I imagine that he felt a bit lost after his friend, Father Cléret died. That may be why he thinks about Anne-Marie. Mathieu has been thinking about Anne-Marie for a while: He saw her last year but she didn't recognize him because he looked Iroquois. It's obvious that Matthieu is in love with Anne-Marie. (Own translation)

Maria's ability to understand the general sense of the story and draw details from it is evident in this example. The remaining four participants who submitted their work as data all showed very good understanding of the general sense of their novels as well as of more specific details. No participants showed less than very good understanding in their written work.

Interest. The theme of interest also appears in participants' written work done on the class blog. Only one participant actually uses the term "interesting" in his blogging:

I find it curious because it suggest to me that white men really thought that all indigenous people were savages. In the rest of the book I understand that it's not actually the case and that the aboriginal peoples have a culture and a life just like white people. In any case, it's interesting. (Own translation)

This is the only example of data in which a participant clearly states that they are interested but interest and engagement in reading can often be inferred by the descriptors students used and the intensity of their personal reactions. The descriptors used are: sad or depressing, hard to believe (including shocking, bizarre, and curious), dramatic, touching, moving, captivating, attention-grabbing, exciting, nice, great, funny, frightening or terrifying, discouraging, and disappointing. An analysis of the significance of these descriptors and their frequency will be included in chapter 5.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the data found through a case-by-case presentation of individual participants as well as a cross-case thematic analysis, identifying major themes across student responses to questions in the questionnaire and using those themes to aid in the presentation of data from student self-assessments and reading comprehension assessments as well as written work.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how themes relate to the research literature and how themes relate to this study's research questions:

1. How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?

2. How do student self-perception as readers and engagement in reading relate to reading comprehension achievement?
3. Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?

Further consideration in chapter 5 of students' self-assessments will help us answer the first question while a discussion of their written work and their reading comprehension assessments in is relevant to the second and third research questions.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

Introduction

It is worth restating here the purposes, questions, methods, and themes of this research because results will be discussed in relation to them. I have sought here to better understand what it's like for adolescent French immersion students to read in French and to use this information to improve my practice as a second language literacy teacher. My research is guided by three questions:

- *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?*
- *How do student self-perception as readers and engagement in reading relate to reading comprehension achievement?*
- *Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?*

These three questions are addressed through case-by-case and thematic cross-case analysis of students' self-assessments, formal reading comprehension assessments, written work, and questionnaire responses. The major themes in student questionnaire responses are: choice, assigned work, understanding, and interest. In this chapter, I consider these themes as they relate to the research literature discussed in the second chapter and my own research questions. I consider their pedagogical implications because my research is pragmatic, seeking to understand a problem in order to get closer to solving it.

Case-by-Case Analysis

I presented student data case-by-case in chapter 4 in an effort to honour their individual stories as second language readers. The individual accounts provide a richness and a level of detail not available through thematic cross-case analysis let alone through any broader, less qualitative approach. Through the presentation of individual participants' data, there is a variable assortment of skills and challenges, likes and dislikes. For instance, Maria reads very well and enjoys reading more than any other student but despises any work that interrupts her enjoyment of reading. Jeffery reports never having had a positive experience reading in French at all. There are students like Felicity who want to read fantasy and there are students like Thomas who want to read books with action. Anna and Casey both associate positive reading experiences with texts translated from English while Maria prefers texts written originally in French. All of these individual students experience reading in French differently. It is this diversity of learner profiles that has major implications for my teaching practice.

One participant, Ben, summarized the situation well when he said:

I think I would enjoy reading in French less if the books I was reading were too hard and I couldn't understand what I was reading. Also, if the books didn't interest me, and if I couldn't choose what books I wanted to read independently.

If I can find a number of texts that Ben finds interesting and that he can understand, he would presumably read more. When one considers the vast range of reading abilities, this becomes considerably more difficult to do as a teacher. If one also

consider that students of various reading abilities also have equally variable interests, sourcing an adequate variety of texts becomes even more daunting. The fact that reading levels and interests are not directly linked to one another – that is, all “good” readers or “bad” readers don’t necessarily enjoy reading the same genre of text – means that it would be almost impossible to research, source, and familiarize oneself with an adequately diverse range of texts. So how does one balance teaching to the individual as well as one can against teaching generically to the class as a whole in order to satisfy certain basic requirements?

There is a tension most teachers are familiar with between meeting the needs of individual learners as unique people, and meeting the needs of the entire class. Some teachers tend to associate the former with getting to know students, establishing meaningful relationships with them. Some teachers tend to associate the latter with rushing to teach the same material to the entire class in the same way in order to satisfy as many of the prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) as possible. If I have twenty or thirty individuals in my class and I’m accountable for the instruction of government mandated learning targets, I cannot possibly adequately honour each individual student in my classroom. Ted Aoki (1991) referred to the balance of these competing priorities as the *dwelling in between*. He referred to the honouring of individual students as human beings with specific personalities, learning needs, likes, and dislikes as *curriculum-as-lived-experience*. The pressure teachers feel to teach the prescribed curriculum in a generalized and utilitarian way is called *curriculum-as-plan*.

It is extremely important to state that *curriculum-as-plan* and *curriculum-as-*

lived-experience are not necessarily at odds with one another. Teaching practices that foster deeper relationships with individual students are not necessarily at odds with successful teaching to prescribed learning outcomes. Aoki makes this clear as well when he says that the *tensionality of dwelling in between* often fosters reflection and new ideas, improving teaching practices in both areas. There are many ways to teach to the individual in a classroom *and* be accountable for PLOs. I, like many other new teachers, must work to find those ways.

The implication of what Aoki is saying and of the diversity I am seeing in my individual participants' data is a need for me to find a balance, a way to better dwell in between these two worlds. This requires a substantial familiarity of student interests and levels of understanding as well as a vast knowledge of available texts that might suit a student's learner profile. I imagine, early in each school year, asking students to complete a formal reading comprehension assessment, a self-assessment of their reading abilities, and a survey regarding their reading preferences. Using this, I can tailor my whole-class discussions of available texts to better pair students up with texts. Students would also have to be trained to better select texts for themselves. For instance, if five students mention that they enjoy reading manga, I can make sure to point out the French manga section of the library while speaking with the whole class about text selection strategies at the beginning of the year. Several authors in the research literature (Allington, 2002; Alvermann, 2002; Ivey and Broaddus, 2001) have argued that a knowledgeable, skilled teacher is crucial to effective literacy instruction.

Allington (2002) said that the most important factor in encouraging reading

skills was a teacher that knew how to teach. This research was rooted in elementary classrooms and was not specific to reading comprehension but the assertion is nonetheless relevant. Alvermann (2002) also stated that what mattered most in reading comprehension instruction for adolescents was the teacher's understanding of the approach and what resources were available to support the goals of the approach. Ivey and Broadus (2001) found that students who had been identified as highly engaged readers more often identified their teacher as a motivating factor than did students who showed less engagement. These findings all suggest that teacher expertise is an important factor in the effective instruction of reading comprehension among adolescents.

The case-by-case analysis of participants' stories as readers reveals great diversity with serious implications for my teaching practice. The intersection of Aoki's notion of *dwelling in between* and the above literacy researchers' assertions regarding the importance of teacher competence imply that I will need to know my students and our resources equally well in order to help them become independent, happy French readers. The thematic analysis of data across all participants also produced rich data.

Cross-Case Thematic Analysis

As mentioned in chapter 3, I used Braun & Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis to code data from questionnaire responses. Through this coding process, I identified four principal themes in the data: choice, assigned work, understanding, and interest. In each of the following sections, I explain how the data that make up each theme fit within the existing research literature and my research questions, as

well as their implications for my practice as a teacher.

Choice. As described in chapter 4, the theme of choice includes participants' responses mentioning the ability to choose their own texts for reading as well as having an adequate variety of texts from which to choose. Generally, participants reported a positive association with being able to choose their own texts. Participants also expressed frustration with the limited selection of books that interested them and/or that they understood. How do these data extracts and this theme fit within the broader research literature?

In Gardner's (1985, 2001) socio-educational model of motivation in second language acquisition, choice informs students' evaluation of the learning situation that, in turn, affects their motivation to learn in their second language. Similarly, though more specific to reading, Day and Bamford's (1998) model of second language reading instruction called *Extensive Reading* argues that having the choice of what to read forms a crucial part of students' ongoing experiences of second language reading and that it is these ongoing experiences that have the greatest potential to improve student attitudes toward reading in a second language moving forward. If it is assumed that students get more pleasure out of reading when they have the choice of what they read, as Day and Bamford (and my personal experience) suggest, this theme of choice resonates also with Krashen's (2003) *Pleasure Hypothesis* in which second language learners learn to read better when they enjoy or get pleasure from what they're reading.

In the L1 research literature, Alvermann (2002) cited student choice as a necessary component of any reading instruction program that hopes to engage and

motivate readers. Ivey and Broaddus (2001) surveyed L1 middle school students and found that choice of reading material was a top theme in their comments about reading. Similar to respondents here, students interviewed by Ivey and Broaddus declared that they were more likely to enjoy reading when given the choice of what to read as opposed to having texts chosen for them by the teacher.

Bournot-Trites and Reeder (2005) did some research among French immersion students. They found that students felt choice from a variety of available texts would motivate them to read more. Students in Bournot-Trites and Reeder's study, similar to participants in the present study, said that they didn't feel there were an adequate variety of French books for them to choose from. Ben, for example, as mentioned in Chapter 4, wants to be able to independently choose his own text but also says that he wishes there were a larger variety of books so he has a better chance of choosing something for himself that is both at his reading level and interesting to him.

This issue of diversity of themes, subject matter, genres, and formats is also raised by Alvermann (2002), who says that it is necessary to provide students with a broader range of text forms or modalities in order to offset what she calls a privileging of academic literacy. The responses of participants in this study would seem to agree with Alvermann: their interests are too diverse and they, generally, are not experiencing engagement with the types of texts that are typically provided to French immersion students. They want something different. The sub-theme of choice as it relates to variety speaks to a problem most French immersion teachers and teacher-librarians can sympathize with: there just is not enough variety of

subjects, genres, formats, and reading levels available to meet the needs of most, let alone all, students.

This theme and the data extracts included within it make a valuable contribution to the answering of some of my research questions. Firstly, they help answer the question: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?* Student responses concerning choice suggest that they feel limited in their reading experiences. They suggest that they don't feel they can read truly independently if they can't choose what it is they're reading. The fact that their responses so often refer to choice in conjunction with interest or difficulty (as in, having enough books from which to choose that both interest them and are at their reading level) suggests that they perceive the subject and the difficulty of texts as very important factors in their enjoyment of and achievement in reading. For example, when asked what might make her enjoy reading in French less, Felicity said: "I wouldn't enjoy French more if the text were harder to read and if I was always forced to read a book that I am not interested in or are too easy/too hard." In this quote, Felicity associates negatively with having texts chosen for her as well as texts being uninteresting to her or inappropriate for her reading abilities. She is demonstrating self-awareness - that these factors are important to her - as a reader. I will return to a discussion of interest and difficulty later in this chapter.

Student responses such as Felicity's concerning choice also address the question: *Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?*

Felicity was not the only participant to connect their lack of choice to an obligation to read certain books for a specific assignment or unit of study. Some students made clear reference to our recent novel-study unit as a negative example of a time when they did not have much choice in which texts they read. Kate, for example, reported that she would be discouraged from reading in French by “Not having a choice.../having to choose from 3 or 4 books...” Upon reading this and other such responses, I was forced to reflect on its implications for my practice.

In the novel-study unit conducted before data collection for this research, I allowed students to choose from three different novels with which I was already somewhat familiar. I assumed that I needed to be familiar with any texts they might read in order to help students engage with and understand them. I found this extremely helpful. As I read the three novels over the summer leading up to this novel study, I kept a reading vocabulary list of words I did not understand or that I found interesting. This included expressions, turns-of-phrase, and slang. As the students worked their way through these novels, I was able to more quickly and effectively help them understand new vocabulary because I was already familiar with the vocabulary myself. Also, having read the stories, I could have great conversations with students about characters, events, and themes. Also, because of my familiarity with the books, I could facilitate some lessons that connected them to one another, allowing students to discuss their books with others who had not read them, helping them deepen their own understanding of their texts.

It proved invaluable having read the books they were reading in that I was able to help them understand what they were reading or discuss the themes, plot,

and character with them. However, I may have underestimated the importance of allowing them to choose their book for a novel study completely independently. There is much to be said for the power of autonomy that such choice affords. Speaking from personal experience, I have witnessed the sense of empowerment that students can gain through having the choice of not only what they want to study and do, but how they want to study and do it. Improved communication with one another and discussion of texts can bring students about to conclusions that I might have otherwise had to make explicit for them. But what does it mean to truly give students independent choice of texts, and from a broad range of genres and formats as students and authors such as Alvermann (2002) have suggested? Is there a happy medium between completely independent choice of texts and teacher-selected texts? Had I allowed them to choose any book at all for their novel study, some of them may have engaged better in the work associated with the novel study. Some, like Kate, may have looked at several texts to find one that was interesting to her and that she felt was also at her reading level, and then actually read it. Others, though, would require much more guidance and assistance in finding the right text for them. I worry that many would simply seek out the shortest book in the library, or, worse, randomly choose a book that would prove frustratingly and discouragingly difficult. Unfortunately, I simply do not have the time to sit down with all students to help them identify their appropriate text.

While the intent of this thesis is not to develop a comprehensive reading instruction model here and now that takes into account all of my findings and the responses of my students, I imagine the balance, the *dwelling in between* these

competing priorities of time and student engagement, to look something like this: I do not have to read every book that I make available to students for reading. I can broaden their choices well beyond three novels to include a variety of genres, formats, and degrees of difficulty but not open it to the entire contents of the library. Also, I can have students casually check in with me on his or her selection and explain to me why that text is appropriate for them in terms of interest and reading level. This will allow me to ensure that students are practicing a certain amount of self-monitoring as well. What Kate and other participants' comments imply for me, as a teacher is to trust them *and* to guide them.

Assigned work. The theme of assigned work includes any data extracts in which students mentioned, positively or negatively, tasks associated with reading or the lack thereof. Maria's responses in particular caught my attention because they so immediately fit with the research literature. This student talked about how work associated with reading tends to ruin the act of reading and breaks the story up too much:

If I could just read without having to pause every chapter to react to what I've read...Breaking books into pieces really makes them infuriating to follow, for me.

In this sense, what one participant is saying is that the work they perform in relation to reading interrupts their enjoyment of the reading itself. This comment immediately brought to mind Krashen's (2003) *Free Voluntary Reading* and Day and Bamford's (1998) *Extensive Reading* as tools in second language instruction. Both authors refer to the *flow* of reading and reading as a *flow activity*. The idea is

originally credited to Csikszentmihalyi (1991, as cited in Krashen, 2003), who described it as a state people attain when they're deeply engaged in what they're doing. According to Csikszentmihalyi, reading is the most common flow activity in the world.

Other researchers (Allington, 2002; Duke et al., 2004; Duke and Pearson, 2002; Ivey and Broadus, 2001; Rasinski and Podak, 2004) in L1 reading comprehension have emphasized the importance of time to any effective reading instruction model. Duke and Pearson suggested that no amount of quality instruction could result in improved reading abilities if students don't have adequate opportunities to read.

Other participants such as Daniel and Kate spoke negatively of the work often associated with reading. One anonymous participant disliked having to “go back and get a ton of quotes” during a novel study. Another anonymous participant gave conflicting responses, saying he enjoys learning new vocabulary while reading but that the vocabulary also bores him. With some exceptions, the general suggestion in participants' responses and in the research literature is that students should be given more time to read without interruption or assignments.

Student responses under the theme of work associated with reading help us answer the questions: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French? and: Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?* Their responses suggest that they perceive reading itself as pleasurable but that when

they think of reading, they also think of the work that often goes along with it and they do not reflect positively on this work. This notion that reading always or almost always comes with work is very relevant to my research and my practice as a teacher.

As mentioned in the section about choice, as a teacher, it's difficult to give up one's control as well as to move past the convention of assigning work to test a skill and then grading it. Again, I experience a great deal of pressure as a teacher to cover a certain amount of curriculum in a given year – Aoki's *curriculum-as-plan* - and that pressure is not conducive to spending any amount of time reading in class. I have to ask myself, what is the purpose of reading? Is it to be assessed and evaluated or is it to learn, to engage, to enjoy oneself and to develop all three as lifelong habits? If I remove the obligation associated with reading, maybe students will learn to separate the two, and engage more in reading. Students such as Maria seem to want, at least, to be able to read the book first, and do the work later. It would still be important to ensure that students are engaged in what they are reading and understanding it, even if I am not formally assigning "work" with their reading. One possible instructional strategy I could implement to this end would be a system of informal interviews with students regarding their reading. During these interviews, I could discuss connections and inferences with students as well as ask questions about the texts to try to determine whether they've chosen a text that is appropriate given their reading level and interests.

In the section on case-by-case analysis, I argued that the staggering diversity of learners implied a daunting task of differentiating instruction. Here, in this

section about the theme of assigned work, students are refreshingly united: the vast majority of them associate negatively with assigned work related to reading. Their responses suggest that they describe their experiences with reading in French as somewhat laborious and tedious and that I, as their instructor, might incorporate more time for free, independent reading into my reading instruction model. This implication resonates with the work of L1 and L2 researchers' conclusions that large amounts of time for reading are essential to effective reading instruction.

Understanding. The theme of understanding includes any data extracts in which participants refer directly to understanding of a text, to the difficulty or ease of reading a text, and, in the case of Anna and some other participants, to specific barriers to understanding.

Anna finds French punctuation of dialogue frustrating and difficult to follow. Other participants, such as Felicity, Daniel, and two anonymous students refer to vocabulary, slang, and expressions as barriers to their understanding of French texts. Language conventions such as punctuation and vocabulary are not the only barriers to understanding mentioned. In her comments about French punctuation, Anna very astutely connected language conventions to the narrative structure of French novels:

French punctuation is downright frustrating. A speaking part being started by an indent-dash, then separated by commas after, is really confusing. The pacing and story structure of original french books (I mean, those not translated from English) is very foreign and choppy or jumpy, often jumping forward in the timeline with no warning, makes it hard to get to know the

characters.

As Anna's comment here demonstrates, the barriers to understanding for French immersion students are not limited to word recognition or breadth of vocabulary. While understanding is the theme with the most supporting data, there is a huge variety in just how students talk about their understanding of French texts. Are participants in this study unique in their collective obsession with understanding?

How do this theme and the data extracts coded within it fit within the broader research literature? Student responses as they relate to difficulty and understanding can clearly be linked to Alvermann's (2002) suggestion that self-efficacy is crucial to student motivation and engagement in reading. According to Alvermann, engagement is a product of motivation and students must perceive themselves as competent, capable readers in order to feel motivated to read. It is most important that a student understand what they are reading in order to develop their sense of self-efficacy. Alvermann outlines several concrete methods for improving student self-efficacy including clear goal setting with regular feedback as well as the integration of technology. Alvermann also asserts the importance of teacher perception of students. If students feel their teacher wants them to do well and believes that they can, their motivation and engagement increase. Alvermann's findings coincide closely with my own experience as a teacher. Students are very conscious of their own perceived abilities and it's very important to make them feel successful and capable by setting clear, achievable goals.

It does not make one feel good about oneself to not understand what one is reading. Therefore, not understanding what one is reading can take away some of

the pleasure of reading and demotivate one from further reading. Researchers in the area of second language acquisition such as Krashen (2003) have suggested that students need access to a large variety of interesting and easy to understand material in order to effectively promote reading as a powerful tool in SLA. Two of the factors of motivation in L2 reading named by Day and Bamford (1998) are relevant here: previous L2 reading experiences and ongoing L2 reading experiences. When students come into my classroom, they bring with them their own narratives as readers and some of them are full of struggle and difficulty. Those experiences lessen their motivation to read further in their L2.

The theme of understanding, and the student responses coded within that theme contribute a wealth of data toward answering some of my research questions. Specifically, they address the question: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?* It's almost uncanny that, across 11 questionnaires with four written response questions each, student responses were coded within the theme of understanding 34 times. This powerful collective response shows that students describe their experiences reading in French as difficult and marked by frequent frustrating episodes of non-understanding. This largely negative perception of reading in French as too difficult to understand is surely a major barrier to student engagement and motivation. Looking back to Alvermann, Krashen, and Day and Bamford, it can be clear just how important it is that students feel capable and competent if they are to feel motivated to read in French. Student responses indicate a low sense of self-efficacy. This will be further discussed in my analysis of

student self-assessments and actual reading comprehension achievement later in this chapter. Suffice to say here that, while students report many issues and negative experiences with understanding reading in French, they don't feel that they are bad readers and they achieve very well as a group. Maybe the issue is less one of self-efficacy, and more one of too often being given or choosing inappropriate texts. As I will now explain, the theme of understanding as it relates to student responses and the research literature has several implications for my practice as a teacher.

Anna's response included at the beginning of this section regarding punctuation and French narrative structure raises an interesting issue: a student of a second language can learn the grammar and the vocabulary that make up part of the language but, behind any text, there is also a culture or a history of writing that goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. French books are written differently from English books. As Anna later points out, books translated to French from English might help somewhat to get around this issue. As Anna says: "Familiarity is useful when learning new things and novel structure is something that most of us are used to." This comment also resonates with work by researchers (Oakhill et al., 2003; Johnston et al., 2008) in the field of L1 reading comprehension who suggest that an understanding of narrative structure is an important part of any reading instruction program. Participant responses in this theme, therefore, also contribute to answering the question: *Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading and achievement in reading comprehension in a French immersion classroom?* Students need to experience success and understanding in reading in French in order to experience some level of enjoyment and, as Anna has

suggested, some sense of familiarity can help a great deal. Instruction in French story structure may be a useful tool in an L2 reading instruction model.

Most respondents in this study indicated they've had some negative experience involving low or a lack of understanding or that they would enjoy reading less if they were to have such an experience. The implication for me as a teacher is the need to know my students, their interests, and their reading levels first. This could be accomplished through early and regular assessments, not all necessarily formal. Such an exercise would be helpful in linking students with appropriately leveled texts that offer them some sense of familiarity, such as a theme or subject they know about already or a translated version of a book they've already read in English. Also, I need to know the material out there and to be able to help students find the book that suits them by teaching them how to decide if it's too difficult and by showing them specific books that I think might interest them and be at their level.

In this section, I have discussed how student responses related to understanding more often than they related to any other theme. Students generally describe their experience reading in French as difficult and arduous. They identify vocabulary and narrative structure as barriers to their enjoyment of reading in French and the research literature makes very clear why their lack of experiences of success and understanding would act to demotivate and disengage them from reading in French. The implication for my practice is that I have to help students find the text that is right for them in terms of their understanding so they can experience some success, develop their positive self-efficacy, and begin to enjoy

reading. Unfortunately, however, understanding is not the only barrier to their enjoyment of a text in French. As I will now discuss, students also experience difficulty finding texts that interest them.

Interest. Students often mentioned specific genres of texts when discussing what interested or did not interest them. For instance, Casey mentioned the *Spiderwick Chronicles*. Maria referred positively to Tintin. An anonymous student said he'd read more in French if there were graphic novels. Daniel asked for more book series and modern books in the library. Felicity and another anonymous participant spoke of fantasy, adventure, and mythology as genres that interested them.

The topic of interest was also often mentioned together with understanding, referring to the difficulty finding texts that were both enjoyable and readable in French. Students are frequently describing their reading experiences in French as one or the other, not both. Casey, for example, said: "I have found it difficult to find books wich I have both enjoyed, and understood." Felicity mentioned enjoying reading in French more if she could understand books better and if they belonged to certain genres that interest her. An anonymous participant said he would enjoy reading in French more "...if the book had a sophisticated plot but an easy text." It is obviously unfortunate that readers would not think of the act of reading as both achievable and interesting.

The theme of interest fits well with Krashen's (2003) *Pleasure Hypothesis*. Pedagogical activities that promote language learning are enjoyable. Therefore, if students are not reading in an area that interests them, they are likely not enjoying

it, and not learning the language as well as they might if they were reading something they really found interesting. Similarly, as Anna pointed out earlier, familiarity can help students understand what they're reading and they are more likely to already be familiar with subjects that already interest them. Alvermann (2002) also argues that, in order to motivate adolescent learners to read, teachers need to allow them to read to their interests. Students in Bournot-Trites and Reeder's (2006) study said that they had a very hard time finding French books that interested them. Students in my own study, then, are not alone among French immersion students in feeling frustrated and bored with French reading. Among second language acquisition (SLA) motivational theorists, Gardner's (1985, 2001) socio-educational model of motivation in SLA claims that enjoyment of a task is a crucial element of motivation.

This theme of interest helps to address the research questions in the following ways. Student responses related to interest show us that students often describe reading in French as an uninteresting activity, not because it's in French, but because there are not enough French books that match up with their areas of interest. They may sometimes view reading in French as interesting or understandable, but rarely both (though maybe neither).

In terms of instructional strategies which might foster engagement, responses centered on interest suggest that a teacher could promote student engagement and motivation in reading by giving students the choice of books to read but also by pointing them in the direction of certain genres or authors. Such a suggestion implies, once again, a tremendous familiarity with books in the library,

gaps in the books in the library, and the interests of a large and diverse student body. The co-occurrence of interest and understanding in student responses complicates this issue even further. I am aware that, as a teacher, I will need to teach my students how to find these elusive books "...with sophisticated plots and easy texts..." and I will need to familiarize myself with more books so I can more easily point students in the direction of a thoroughly enjoyable read.

One participant in particular, Anna, expressed with great wit, her feelings of disinterest with what she considers "typical" French texts:

Most French books I see look like classroom books that are orders in packs of thirty so that the entire class can read. These books typically: a) are short and simple, without an interesting plot, b) have writing styles reminiscent of grammar textbooks ("La souris est sous la table. Le chat est sur la chaise."), c) are basically life lessons like 'treat others the way you want to be treated' dragged out for a hundred pages, and d) have no emotion, as if the author wrote for money and nothing else. Fill the library with these, and I'll run and hide in the manga section.

There exists in every classroom students who need the French books "with writing styles reminiscent of grammar textbooks." They are at their reading level. But they do not need to be boring. This quote reminds me, in a humbling kind of way, that there is such an enormous range of readers in any one classroom and that they each deserve to be shown those books that suit them. Teachers grapple every day with the reality that they have 30 individual human beings in their classroom and that they have to teach to the middle-to-lower-end of that class in order to reach as many

people as well as possible – Aoki's *dwelling in between*. This student has very cleverly reminded me of my role as a teacher to teach to the individual if and whenever possible or to help them teach themselves.

The above mentioned themes as they appear in student questionnaire responses - choice, work, understanding, and interest - paint a picture of a group of students largely looking to choose independently, based on their interests and reading levels, texts in French to read not for work or assignments, but for pleasure. This is easier said than done as students and teachers both face challenges in matching students up with texts that are appropriate both for their maturity and interests as well as their reading level. I, as teacher, will need to develop a reading instruction program that teaches students how to assess books for their suitability, as it's simply not feasible for me to individually match up each student to a book one-by-one. These themes are similar to those raised by researchers such as Alvermann, Ivey and Broaddus, Bournot-Trites and Reeder, Krashen, and Day and Bamford, among others. The perspectives of these authors as outlined in the literature review argue that student choice and interest are key to engagement and that self-efficacy or the belief that the task is achievable is central to student motivation. These authors also echoed student comments that they need access to a wide variety of interesting texts at their reading levels, a teacher who can help them navigate that selection, and time to enjoy reading without interruption or assignment.

Cross-Case Analysis of Self-Assessment and Achievement Data

One of my research questions is: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French?* The data used in this research tended to contribute to answering that question in two parts. Student questionnaire responses presented in the previous section addressed the question: *How do middle school French immersion students describe their experiences of reading in French?* The second part: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers?* is answered more by the data in students' self-assessments. Students' perceptions of themselves as readers are different from their descriptions of their experiences with reading. If they've had experiences with reading that they describe as frustrating, as some of them have, they might attribute that to their own faults as readers or they might attribute that to a problem with the text: it was not suited to their reading level or interests or it contained too much slang. Inferences about their self-perceptions as readers of French based on participants' written questionnaire responses are limited. Instead, I used self-assessments done in class to help us understand how students view themselves as readers.

Why is it important? According to research in L1 reading comprehension (Johnston et al. (2008); Oakhill et al. (2003); Duke and Pearson (2002); Duke et al. (2004); and Liang and Dole (2006)), metacognition is an important part of an effective reading instruction model and a trait common to good readers. Additionally, Alvermann (2002), Day and Bamford (1998), Krashen (2003), and Gardner (1985, 2001) all describe students' self-efficacy or their perception of a task

as achievable as key factors in their motivation and engagement. So, what do the data say?

Reading comprehension achievement. The reading comprehension data presented in chapter 4 are summarized again in Table 7, below.

Table 7: Reading Comprehension Assessment Results

Name	Total/20	Flow /5	Vocab/4	Summ/4	Conn/4	Det./6	Change
Jeffery	11.75	2	2.75	1.25	2.25	4.5	+4.5
Thomas	13.75	2.5	3.75	2.75	3	4	+6.5
Evan	15.5	4.25	4	3	3	5	-1.0
Daniel	16.25	5	3.25	3	4	5	+2.5
Felicity	16.75	3	3.25	2.75	3.25	6	-0.5
Maria	17	4.5	3.5	3	3.75	6	-1.0
Anna	17.25	4.5	3.5	3.75	3.75	6	+3.5
Casey	17.75	4.75	4	3	3.75	6	+1.5
Ben	18.25	4.75	4	2.75	3.75	6	-0.5
Kate	18.5	4.25	4	3.5	3.5	5	+3.0
Lauren	18.75	4.5	4	3.5	4	6	-1.5
Average	16.5	4	3.64	2.93	3.45	5.41	+1.55

Total: total reading comprehension assessment score

Flow: assessment of student's fluidity while reading in French

Vocab: ability to use vocabulary strategies

Summ: ability to summarize texts

Conn: ability to make connections to text

Det: ability to find details in text

Change: change between 1st and 2nd reading comprehension assessments

They show a group of students who, on average, achieve very well in formal reading comprehension assessments whose achievement improved slightly between assessments in September and December. As a group, they achieved at least very well on every single set of questions in the formal reading comprehension assessment, from making connections to finding specific details in the text and summarizing.

Self-assessment. The student self-assessment data, summarized below in Table 8, show that participants, on average, are comfortable reading in French and self-assess as very good L2 readers. Participants self-assessed as very good at

understanding the general sense of a text in French and at finding specific details in a text. In general, students slightly under-estimated their abilities as readers relative to their actual achievement.

Table 8 : Student Self-Assessment Results

Name	Avg.	High/low	Sound	Reread	Vocab	Context	Features	Prior	General	Details	Inference	Connect	Opinion	Summary
Jeffery	2.75	0.4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
Thomas	2.71	-0.04	3	2.5	2	2	3	3.5	3.5	3	2.5	3	2.5	2
Evan	3	-0.1	3.5	3.5	3	3	3.5	3	3	2	2.5	2	3	3.5
Daniel	3	-0.25	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	2	3	3
Felicity	2.67	-0.7	1	4	1	2	4	4	4	4	1	4	1	2
Maria	3.5	0.1	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	2.5	3	4
Anna	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Casey	3.25	-0.3	3	4	4	4	2	3	3	4	3	1	4	4
Ben	3.5	-0.15	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Kate	3.58	-0.12	4	4	3.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4
Lauren	3.125	-0.6	4	3	3	3.5	3	3	3	3.5	3	4	2	2.5
Average	3.1085	-0.176	3.35	3.5	2.9	2.95	3.25	3.25	3.35	2.95	2.9	2.85	2.75	3.15

Avg.: Average self-assessment on 12 “I can” statements related to reading

High/low: Whether students self-assessed above or below their actual achievement level Sound: Ability to sound out words

Reread: Ability to reread unclear text Vocab: Ability to use vocabulary strategies Context: Ability to use context to infer word meanings

Features: Ability to use text features (images, headings, cover, etc.) to infer text meaning Prior: Ability to use prior knowledge to make predictions

General: Ability to understand gist of French texts Details: Ability to find specific details in French texts

Inference: Ability to make inferences about French texts Connect: Ability to make connections to French texts Opinion: Ability to give and defend opinion about French texts Summary: Ability to summarize French texts in own words

The link between self-assessment and achievement. One of my research questions was: *How do student self-perception as readers and engagement in reading relate to reading comprehension achievement?* Table 9 shows both average reading comprehension assessment scores as well as average self-assessment scores for each student.

Table 9 : Average Self-Assessment and Reading Comprehension Scores for each Participant

Name	Avg. Self-Assessment (%)	Avg. Reading Comprehension Score (%)
Jeffery	68.75	58.75
Thomas	67.75	68.75
Evan	75.00	77.50
Daniel	75.00	81.25
Felicity	66.75	81.25
Maria	87.50	85.00
Anna	N/A	86.25
Casey	81.25	88.75
Ben	87.50	91.25
Kate	89.50	92.50
Lauren	78.13	93.75
Average	77.75	82.50

There does not seem to be a conclusive link between student self-assessments and student achievement. As shown in Table 9, the highest achievers vaguely correspond with the highest self-assessors and the lowest achievers with the lowest self-assessors but upon looking more closely, the link becomes very ambiguous. For instance, the highest achiever, Lauren, is only the fifth-highest self-assessor while the lowest self-assessor, Felicity, is only the sixth-lowest achiever.

Despite these students' underestimation of their reading abilities, the group of participants as a whole self-assessed their reading abilities very closely to their actual achievement (-0.176/4). On average, then, participants' self-assessments were quite accurate. Both their self-assessments and their reading comprehension

achievement are within the same letter grade level. There is no glaring issue of self-efficacy in general, but are there specific areas that participants as a group identify as areas of weakness?

According to participants, their second greatest weakness is in drawing details from text (2.93/4). It seems plausible, then, that the ability to draw specific details from a text would be especially important to overall success. There does appear to be a general connection between the two, with some contradictory data as well: The two lowest-achieving students struggled the most with this element of reading comprehension. Moving upward in the table from the two lowest-achieving students, a student's ability to draw details from a text rises coincidentally with a student's ability to understand French texts more generally. There is one exception, however: the second-highest achieving student in terms of general reading comprehension had only the seventh-highest rate of success with this particular skill. So, while there may be indications in the data of a general link between ability to pull specific details from French texts and general reading comprehension achievement, the data are still somewhat unclear and ambiguous and certainly inconclusive. This could, therefore, be an avenue for future research.

Presence of themes in self-assessment and assessment data. Themes of choice, interest, and work could not be clearly located within self-assessment and assessment data. None of those themes were mentioned in any of the "I can" self-assessment statements or the questions on the reading comprehension assessments. The theme of understanding, however, can be related to reading comprehension in general and to certain specific "I can" statements in the self-

assessment.

Looking back to students' written questionnaire responses, a number of students mentioned vocabulary as a barrier to understanding. For example, they talked about "hard to understand expressions". I checked this theme of vocabulary against students' self-assessed ability to use certain strategies to help them understand new vocabulary and against their achievement in the application of these strategies in their reading comprehension assessments. Basically, I wanted to know if students who struggled with the use of vocabulary strategies to infer the meaning of new words struggled accordingly with reading comprehension in general.

The strategies are ones that I explicitly taught students in the weeks leading up to their first assessment in September. Also, they were asked to keep a "new vocabulary" list during the novel study for which they had to identify two or three new, challenging, or interesting words they'd encountered in each chapter. For each word, they indicated if the word contained any smaller French words within it, if the word made them think of an English word, and if they could replace the word with another word they knew (French or English) that made sense in the context of the sentence and paragraph.

Two of the students who mentioned challenging vocabulary in their questionnaires did not consent to having their work used as data for research purposes so they cannot be used to link the use of vocabulary strategies to overall reading achievement. One student, Daniel, who did consent to having his work used as data, spoke explicitly about how having a better vocabulary would make him

enjoy reading more. Daniel self-assessed, however, as already using these strategies very well (3/4, 75%) and that self-assessment is a fairly accurate reflection of his achievement in this area on formal reading comprehension assessments (3.25/4, 81.25%). Daniel's written vocabulary list for the novel study shows an excellent use of those vocabulary strategies. Overall, his reading comprehension achievement was also very good (16.25, 81.25%).

Two others spoke of negative experiences where they didn't understand texts more generally. Felicity, who said she has had bad experiences when she didn't understand what the text said, self-assessed very lowly (1/4, 25%) her ability to use vocabulary strategies to deduce the meaning of new vocabulary. However, in her formal reading comprehension assessments, she used these skills very well (3.25/4, 81.25%) and her overall reading comprehension achievement was also very good (16.75/20, 83.75%).

Ben said he would enjoy reading less if he couldn't understand what he was reading. However, when asked about negative experiences reading in French, he says: "None?" and he also self-assesses as being able to use vocabulary strategies to learn the meaning of new words excellently (3.5/4, 87.5%). Ben's reading comprehension scores correlate well with his self-assessment: he used the vocabulary strategies perfectly (4/4, 100%) in his formal reading comprehension assessments and he achieved excellently (18.25/20, 91.25%) in overall reading comprehension ability. Also, Ben's written vocabulary list showed excellent use of the vocabulary strategies.

One student, Anna, spoke positively of learning new expressions and

vocabulary. Anna did not complete a self-assessment, likely due to absence, but her reading comprehension assessments reflect her enthusiasm for vocabulary. She demonstrated excellent use of vocabulary strategies (3.5/4, 87.5%) and achieved excellently in reading comprehension overall (17.25/20, 86.25%). Anna's written vocabulary list for the novel study also showed excellent application of the vocabulary strategies.

It seems, based on the data from Anna, Ben, Felicity and Daniel, that while there is not much of a link between perceived ability in the use of vocabulary strategies and reading comprehension achievement, there is a link between actual ability to use vocabulary strategies and overall reading comprehension achievement. Continuing on with the investigation of a link between vocabulary strategies and reading comprehension achievement, when considering the rest of the participants' results (Table 7, page 123), overall reading comprehension achievement seems to improve with a better ability to apply vocabulary strategies. The link is not totally unambiguous, however. Thomas, who scored below average for his overall reading comprehension (13.75/20, 68.75%) demonstrated excellent use of those strategies. Evan also did much better in using those strategies (4/4, 100%) than he did overall (15.5/20, 77.5%). Apart from these two exceptions, however, the ability to deduce the meaning of new vocabulary using certain strategies does seem to correlate with higher overall reading comprehension achievement.

Conclusion. This would seem to be a fairly competent group of readers who are confident and know what they are capable of. In fact, I would say that the average

level of achievement in this group of participants is much higher than the average level of achievement in the entire grade 9 class. I will not speculate as to why that is, but suffice it to say that I believe the participant sample to be, on average, much more highly achieving than the average of their entire class, including those who did not participate in this study. The data here do not demonstrate any clear link between self-efficacy and achievement except to suggest vaguely that students who self-assess well, do well. The present data do not reveal, however, which comes first or the nature of that link. Although there appears to be a tenuous link between vocabulary strategies and reading comprehension, as well as between the ability to draw details from texts and reading comprehension, there are no reliably conclusive predictors across the data set of reading comprehension achievement. But establishing such conclusive predictors was never the goal of this research. Instead, the examination of reading comprehension achievement against student self-assessments has proven very useful in establishing some directions for future research, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Cross-Case Analysis of Student Work

Participants who consented to having their work used as data for the purposes of this research submitted all of their double-entry blogging, their writing-in-role assignment, a mini-research assignment, a vocabulary list, and a narrative structure assignment. I discussed their vocabulary lists in the previous section as they related to self-assessed and assessed abilities to use vocabulary strategies. I will not, therefore, discuss them here. In chapter 4, I only presented the data in relation to the themes of understanding and interest because the themes of choice

and work are neither obvious nor can they be inferred from the data.

Understanding. As demonstrated in chapter 4, all participants' written work demonstrated either very good or excellent understanding of the texts, both in a general sense as well as in terms of their abilities to draw specific details from the texts. If this is considered in relation to reading comprehension achievement results, both suggest that participants in this study are very good French readers. Both suggest an ability to understand specific details. Also, they demonstrate that they can connect to the texts on a deeper, more meaningful level, going beyond superficial understanding and beginning to relate the events and characters of their novels to their own lives and other things they have read, seen, or heard. Snyder et al. (2005) say that such a deep connection is crucial to true reading comprehension. According to student self-assessment data, students themselves are aware of their competence as French readers. They assess themselves quite accurately and quite positively. It seems that students were able to understand the books I made available to them for this novel study. One student, Anna, specifically mentioned how pleased she felt when she realized how well she could understand the novel she selected.

The combination of all of the above findings begs the question: Why, then, do they report --so universally-- negative experiences with reading French due to a lack of understanding? As Day and Bamford (1998) mentioned, previous reading experience informs student attitudes toward L2 reading. Students have come into this research with their own narratives as L2 readers that I as a researcher know nothing about. Perhaps these negative reading experiences involving non-

understanding pre-date this research. At any rate, this contradiction within the data is puzzling and warrants further, more detailed investigation. Perhaps a larger sample size or participant interviews would allow us to better understand exactly when and under what circumstances students have had negative experiences with understanding French texts.

Interest. The theme of interest is only specifically mentioned in participants' written work once. Other than that one instance, student interest and engagement have to be inferred from their reactions to the text. In large part, student reactions to the text demonstrate quite a high level of engagement. They are making very good or excellent connections, both personal and historical or to other texts. They do a very good or excellent job of inferring character emotions and responses to their experiences. Some of them report that the novel made them cry while others state their emotional connection through a very personal story of the loss of a family member or the birth of a family member. All of these elements, highly qualitative and extremely rich, demonstrate a group of participants who were seemingly able to enjoy what they were reading enough to respond meaningfully to it.

As with the theme of understanding, when student interest is compared to their questionnaire responses, there is an incongruence within the data set. Some students indicated on the questionnaire that they would rather not have their choice limited to 3 or 4 books that don't interest them, an obvious reference to this novel study. Others lamented the work related to this novel study, including the act of revisiting the books to retrieve quotes to which they responded so profoundly. Again, I find the suggestion that this novel study was laborious and uninteresting at

odds with students' reading responses and other written work. Additional research, perhaps in the form of semi-structured interviews, might allow me to ask students more about this.

Conclusion. In this section, I have presented my cross-case analysis of data in participants' written work as they relate to themes of understanding and interest. In the written work, students demonstrate high levels of understanding and interest or engagement with texts. In both cases, however, there is an incongruence within the data set between the written work and other sources of data such as self-assessments, assessments, and questionnaire responses. The incongruence between data suggests that further research is required into the specifics of both themes. It is to the area of future research and other conclusions of this research in general that I will now turn.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have analysed the data presented in chapter 4 and presented and discussed their results. I have considered these results in terms of their relation to the existing research literature, my research questions, and my professional practice. Through a case-by-case analysis of data, I conclude that the massive diversity of participants' learner profiles implies a need for highly differentiated instruction on the part of the teacher, as well as an intense familiarity both with student interests and abilities as well as available texts. I presented this model of differentiated instruction, however, as a sort of tension, a *dwelling in between* two worlds. In one world, a teacher can honour the individual and unique needs of every student. In the other, the teacher is accountable for the instruction of

a prescribed set of learning targets for the entire class. I conclude that, in my practice, I will need to find a balance, perhaps by teaching my students how to assess their own interests and abilities and how to determine the appropriateness of a text and by including them in the selection of topics to be explored.

Student questionnaire responses related to the themes of choice and assigned work both suggested a release of some control from the teacher to students, in an effort to give them more freedom to choose their own texts, as well as more time to read them free of interruption and assignments. In both instances, I am reluctant to completely give up control. Giving up control also means abdicating myself of my responsibility as teacher and I am not comfortable with that. I prefer to stay on in a role of teacher-as-facilitator, in which I make available to students a larger, though still technically limited, variety of texts from which to choose. If they are to choose their texts independently, they will also need to know how to do that. My task becomes to teach them how to assess their own abilities and interests as well as how to judge a text for its appropriateness. As they develop these skills, students could hopefully have more successful experiences with reading in French. As for giving students more free time to read, I would have to give up some of my control over our pedagogical path, our *curriculum-as-plan*, and allow students to fall into the *flow* of reading by giving them more time to read without interruption during class.

Regarding understanding, students self-assess and assess as very good to excellent readers and their written work shows very good to excellent understanding; yet they routinely complain of having had negative experiences with

reading in French when they didn't understand what they were reading. Given how frequently the theme of understanding was mentioned, it is obviously a serious issue for students. They negatively associate reading in French with a lack of understanding. The results of assessments, however, suggest that students are very capable of understanding texts at grade level. The threat or fear of not understanding, then, may loom larger than any actual struggle to understand texts at grade level. At any rate, as mentioned above, if I can teach students how to choose appropriately difficult texts for themselves, I can facilitate more positive and successful reading experiences.

Students often spoke of interest in combination with understanding; it is difficult to find texts that are both understandable and interesting to them. This is one of the difficulties of French immersion. Texts that are written for teenagers in French are written for teenagers whose first language is French and, as such, are generally too difficult for L2 French readers. What is needed is a selection of texts in various forms with, as one student put it, "...sophisticated plots and easy text." This high-low genre of text exists in L1 English settings but is slightly more difficult to source in French in British Columbia. These results imply that it is important that I try to find such texts. While attending French immersion conferences, I have become aware of a small selection of high-low French texts but most were written for elementary-school-aged children. Registering with publishers and distributors a demand for similar literature for adolescents might be a necessary first step in sourcing such texts.

The stated purposes of this research were:

- to better understand what reading in French is like for some Grade 9 French immersion students;
- to enhance my ability to recognize and address a greater diversity of student strengths and challenges in reading, removing barriers to their enjoyment of and engagement with French texts; and
- to attempt to learn how to empower my students to monitor their own learning and enhance their French skills and appreciation of the language.

I believe that I have successfully accomplished all three to some degree, though I have accomplished none of them completely. To generalize, participants' experiences with reading in their second language could be described as limited, difficult, uninteresting, and laborious. But such generalizations only go so far in really helping us understand their experiences. Due to students' thoughtful and rich questionnaire responses, I now understand that their experiences of reading in French can be described with one word: diverse. Their experiences are difficult, frustrating, pleasant, successful, boring, interesting, enjoyable, intolerable, and exciting. They are each as unique as the readers themselves.

Regarding the second and third stated purposes of my research, I have learned that, while trying to balance *curriculum-as-lived-experience* against *curriculum-as-plan*, there are certain things I might do to remove barriers to enjoyment and understanding for as many students as possible: to teach them how to assess their own abilities and interests and how to select appropriate texts themselves. I have to provide the context which would facilitate the successful

pairing of reader and text by sourcing a greater diversity of texts and familiarizing myself with them. However, if I am to engage as many students as possible in reading in French as well as possible, I will have to teach them and empower them to help themselves.

Areas of Future Research

The present study has contributed to a gap in the existing research literature concerning the intersection of adolescent motivation, second language acquisition, and reading comprehension. It has provided insights into the L2 reading experiences – positive and negative - of a specific set of adolescent French immersion students. It has also demonstrated a need for additional research in a number of areas.

Larger qualitative studies involving more participants and semi-structured interviews would likely yield more generalizable data regarding the adolescent French immersion reading experience. Participants would have to include teachers, students, and parents, and span multiple jurisdictions, in order to learn more about the trends and issues that exist in L2 reading. For example, such research would help to clarify the contradiction between very good or excellent student work, self-assessment, and achievement and their reporting of negative experiences of non-understanding when reading in French. Additionally, such semi-structured interviews could help us understand the incongruence between questionnaire responses reporting a lack of interest in reading in French and their written work suggesting a great deal of interest. One might ask: “Is it just that you would *prefer* not to have to do work related to a book you’re reading, or do you really *dislike* all

work related to reading?” I might also ask them: “What motivated you to write such thoughtful reading responses in your double-entry journal and writing-in-role assignments? Was it your genuine interest in the novel or something else?” These and other questions would help us to better understand just what students found interesting or uninteresting about the novels they read and the work associated with them.

Certainly, the conclusions of this research include fairly substantial implications for my own teaching practice. Continuing the action research cycle, in which a problem is identified and analysed, adaptations are implemented, and the modified practice evaluated, would help us to establish which specific instructional strategies can be most consistently linked with improved student engagement and achievement.

I also believe that a much broader mixed-methods study in which reading comprehension and instructional methods are analysed would be fruitful. If standardized assessments could be used to determine where students were most successful as readers across classrooms and jurisdictions, the teaching practices could be analysed in those settings in the hopes of identifying certain strategies or methods conducive to success and engagement in reading. Such a study could also help us to identify which reading comprehension skills or strategies, more specifically, can be associated with better L2 reading comprehension in general. For instance, is there a link between reading comprehension achievement and students’ abilities to use vocabulary strategies or find specific, detailed information in texts, as is mentioned in this research?

Lastly, this research has suggested the possibility of a link between self-assessed abilities or self-efficacy and actual reading comprehension achievement. However, the nature of this relationship remains unclear. Additional research into student self-perceptions as readers and their success as readers would be needed. For example, I would like to interview students about their self-perceptions and go further with an investigation of why they feel the way they do about their reading abilities. At the same time, I would like to interview teachers about their perceptions of the same students to try and understand what role teacher perception of student abilities plays in informing student self-perception. All of the above research could help to identify instructional strategies, classroom structures, or specific abilities and strategies that are conducive to successful L2 reading.

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Appendix A: Point Form Participant Consent Form

[Your department letterhead]

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: They're Just Not that into it: Adolescent Reading Engagement in French Immersion

Researcher(s): Jesse Whittington, Graduate Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria

Supervisor: Dr. James Nahachewsky, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria

Third-Party Research Assistant: Mrs. Claire Whitney, Teacher-Librarian, Mount Prevost Middle School

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

- *To learn from teenage French immersion students how they experience and feel about reading in French;*
- *To develop and identify teaching strategies that engage and motivate French immersion students in reading in French*

This Research is Important because:

- *There is a major gap in the research out there around how to motivate and engage teenagers reading in their second language. This research will contribute to addressing that gap.*
- Teachers need to get better at motivating and engaging students in second language reading.

Participation:

- You've been selected to participate because you are in French immersion and you belong to the age group I'm interested in working with and learning about.
- Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- Whether you participate or not will have no effect on your position, grades, or treatment.

Procedures:

- You have already completed a novel-study unit in Français Langue 9.
- Your work from this unit, including your journal entries, assignments, and self-assessments would be given to Mrs. Whitney who would photocopy them and return them to you. She would then remove your name from the photocopied versions.
- Also included in this package is a voluntary questionnaire about your experiences with reading in French that you can choose to complete and return to Mrs. Whitney. Your name will not be on this questionnaire. Handing in this questionnaire implies your consent to use it as data.
- Once all marks are finalized for term 1 and all student work and questionnaires have been photocopied and made anonymous, Mrs. Whitney will hand them over to me for research.

Benefits:

- The main benefits of this research to you are that you get a chance to reflect more deeply on your experiences with reading in French. This might make you more aware of what kind of reader you are and what you can do or what your teachers can do to make you enjoy reading in French more.
- There are also benefits to future students. By participating in this research, you would be helping Mr. Whittington understand how French immersion students feel about reading in French, what the barriers are to enjoying reading in French, and what teaching strategies work best to engage students and make them want to read in French. Mr. Whittington would share what he learns with other teachers and future students would benefit from improved teaching practices.
- There's also a benefit to the "state of knowledge." This research will help to fill a gap in the research out there about teenage students reading in a second language.

Risks:

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants:

- Mr. Whittington has a relationship with participants as teacher-student. Obviously, he has some power over students as a figure of authority and someone who assigns grades, for example. Students might, therefore, feel that they *must* participate in this research or else face some consequence from Mr. Whittington.
- To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken:
 - Mrs. Whitney will take care of all of the recruitment of participants. Only she will ever know who has agreed to participate and who has not.
 - Student names will be removed from all work that participants agree to have included in this research study. Mr. Whittington will not know whose work was included and whose was not.
 - No names will appear on the questionnaires. Mr. Whittington will not know who has completed a questionnaire and who has not.
 - Nothing will be handed over to Mr. Whittington until all Term 1 marks are finalized and report cards for that term published.

Withdrawal of Participation:

- You may withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence.
- Should you withdraw before data has been submitted to Mr. Whittington, your data will be removed from the study. Should you withdraw after your data has been submitted to Mr. Whittington for research purposes, we will not be able to remove it from the study.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

- As mentioned above, student work and questionnaires will be anonymous. There are some limits to how we can protect anonymity, however. For example, if Mr. Whittington goes on to share his findings with colleagues, another teacher might know which group of students was included in the study and then be able to attribute comments to a specific student somehow. These are the limits to anonymity in this study.
- To protect your confidentiality, data and consent forms will only ever be stored briefly under lock at Mount Prevost Middle School and will be moved to storage under lock in a private residence. Data and consent forms will be destroyed after five years.

Research Results may be Used/Disseminated in the Following Ways:

- Directly to participants and parents, published article, thesis, dissertation, presentations at scholarly/professional development meetings
- Your anonymous data may be used by other researchers in future research projects.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- Contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria, (250) 472-4545
ethics@uvic.ca

Consent for participation in Jesse Whittington's MA research: "They're Just Not that Into it: Adolescent Reading Engagement in French Immersion"

Your signature and your parent's signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project. You have the right to withdraw from this research at any time but your data cannot be withdrawn once Mrs. Whitney has submitted it to Mr. Whittington.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Name of Parent</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

Please sign this consent form, detach it from the rest of the letter, and return it to the third-party research assistant, Mrs. Whitney, at Mount Prevost Middle School, as soon as possible. A copy of this consent will be returned to you, and a copy will be taken by the research assistant.

Appendix B: Letter to Principal

Jesse Whittington

Mr. James Doyle, Principal
Mount Prevost Middle School
6177 Somenos Rd
Duncan, BC V9L 4E7

October 4th, 2012

Dear Mr. Doyle,

I am writing this letter to request approval of my proposed MA research to be carried out in my own classroom during the winter of 2012-13.

The subject of my research is student engagement in second language reading in a middle school French immersion classroom. There are two main questions I hope to answer: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French? Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading?* The aims of this research are to improve my teaching practices and to contribute to a gap in the existing research.

Research will take place between October and February of 2012-13 in my own Français Langue 9 classroom. After completing a novel-study unit in term 1, students will be recruited to participate. Participation will mean consenting to having their work from the previous term used as data as well as completing an anonymous questionnaire. Students will not have to do anything beyond their day-to-day classroom activities and no instructional time will be taken away.

I've taken steps to protect students' anonymity and confidentiality, and to make sure they don't feel coerced into participating. Claire Whitney will act as third party, collecting all consent forms, questionnaires, and student work. All student work will have names and identifying information removed before being given to me and all questionnaires are anonymous. Originals of student work will be returned to students once copies have been made while questionnaires will be kept and not returned to students. The third party will keep consent forms until I've successfully defended my thesis at which point they'll be destroyed. I will not know who has consented to participate and who has not. That way, students don't need to fear negative consequences for non-participation and they can feel free to express themselves honestly. I do not foresee any harm coming to students as a result of participation in this study.

I have received approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board as well as the SD79 Education Committee and Board of Trustees to conduct this research.

I ask for your formal permission to conduct my research at Mount Prevost Middle School.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Dr. James Nahachewsky, the UVic Human Research Ethics Office (250-472-4545, ethics@uvic.ca), or me. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Jesse Whittington

Appendix C: Letter to School Board

Jesse Whittington

Members of the Board
Cowichan Valley School District 79
2557 Beverly St.
Duncan, BC
V9L 2X3

September 1st, 2012

Dear Trustees,

I am writing this letter to request approval of my proposed MA research: *They're just not that into it: Adolescent Reading Engagement in French Immersion*, to be carried out in my own classroom during the winter of 2012-13.

There are two main questions I hope to answer: *How do middle school French immersion students describe themselves as readers and their experiences of reading in French? Which instructional strategies promote adolescent student engagement in reading in a French immersion classroom?*

I've come to this topic for several reasons. Firstly, I personally want to improve my practice as a second language literacy instructor. I want to learn how to better meet the challenge of encouraging all students to take up reading. It is an essential tool in the acquisition of a second language. Secondly, I believe in the French Immersion Program deeply in our district and I believe it takes qualified, engaged teachers to uphold the integrity of such a special program as well as to make it more accessible to students who struggle academically. Lastly, in my review of the existing research, I have noticed a major gap in knowledge concerning how adolescents improve their reading in their second language.

The proposed research would take place between October and February of 2012-13 in my own Français Langue 9 classroom. We will complete a novel-study unit, before beginning research, between October and December. This would involve an initial reading comprehension assessment similar to the DART. We'll then work to identify individual students' strengths and areas for improvement in reading. Throughout the following novel-study unit, students will read and reflect on a text of their choosing, always referring back to their ongoing self-assessment. At the end of the unit, once Term 1 marks have been finalized, participants will be recruited from the two cohorts of grade 9 French immersion students.

Full participation would include consenting to the use of their work from the novel-study unit as data in the research as well as completing a short, anonymous questionnaire. There will be no inconvenience or risk to students as a result of this research.

It is very important to me that before, during, and after this research project, I take every ethical step possible to protect my students as much as possible from any emotional, physical, or other kind of harm they may suffer as a result of this research. Obviously, I am in a position of power over my students. In order to minimize effects of coercion or pressure to participate that this power-over relationship may have over my students, a number of safeguards will be put in place. Firstly, a third party (Claire Whitney, teacher-librarian) will conduct the recruitment of participants so that I cannot know who has and has not consented to participate. This third party will also change or remove identifying student information from student work. The third party will make photocopies of student work and remove identifying information from those copies before submitting them to me. The third party will return originals of student work to students once copies have been made. Questionnaires will not be returned to students. Consent forms will be kept by the third party until successful defence of my thesis when they will be shredded.

I have received approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board to conduct this research. I can assure you that students and parents will be fully informed of the methods used, the intended and possible uses of the data collected, and any potential harm the student may be exposed to before they are asked to fully consent to the process.

I ask for your support in this proposed research and your formal permission to recruit students of SD79 for this research. Attached is a package including my application for ethics approval submitted to the UVic Human Research Ethics Board and my research proposal approved by my MA committee.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Dr. James Nahachewsky, the UVic Human Research Ethics Office (250-472-4545, ethics@uvic.ca), or me. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Jesse Whittington

Appendix D: Participant Questionnaire

Participant Questionnaire for the research project: *They're just not that into it: Adolescent Reading Engagement in French Immersion*

Thank you for completing this questionnaire! Your thoughts and ideas will become important pieces of data in a research project designed to improve teaching and learning in French immersion. Please answer all of the questions below and return the completed questionnaire to Mrs. Whitney, in the library no later than Friday, December 14th.

Please check the appropriate box:

1. I am: Male Female

Please answer the following question by checking beside 'yes' or 'no':

2. Do you speak French at home with a family member? Yes No

Please answer the following questions by circling a number on the rating scale:

3. How comfortable do you feel reading in French?

1	2	3	4	5
very uncomfortable	uncomfortable	average	comfortable	very comfortable

4. How comfortable do you feel reading in English?

1	2	3	4	5
very uncomfortable	uncomfortable	average	comfortable	very comfortable

5. How often do you read in French for pleasure?

1	2	3	4	5
very rarely (never or almost never)	rarely (once every few months)	sometimes (once per month)	often (weekly)	very often (more than once per week)

6. How often do you read in English for pleasure?

1	2	3	4	5
very rarely (never or almost never)	rarely (once every few months)	sometimes (once per month)	often (weekly)	very often (more than once per week)

Please answer the following questions by ranking items based on your preference:

7. Please rank the following in order of your preference with 1 being your most favourite and 10 your least favourite:

- _____ reading a French novel _____ reading a French magazine
- _____ reading an English comic book _____ reading storyline in a video game in French
- _____ reading online in French _____ reading online in English
- _____ reading an English magazine _____ reading a French comic book
- _____ reading storyline in a video game in English _____ reading an English novel

8. Please rank the following in order of your preference with 1 being your most favourite and 4 your least favourite:

- _____ reading silently by myself _____ reading aloud to myself
- _____ reading in a group and discussing the reading
- _____ following along while the teacher reads and discussing as a whole class

Please provide a brief written answer to the following questions:

9. Describe any positive experiences you've had with reading in French:

10. Describe any negative experiences you've had with reading in French:

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible:

11. What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French more?

12. What do you think would make you enjoy reading in French less?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please try to answer all questions before returning the questionnaire to Mrs Whitney in the library by Friday, December 14th.

Appendix E: Sample Reading Comprehension Assessment

L'École Mount Prevost Middle School: Département d'Immersion Française

Évaluation de la Lecture: Compréhension et Fluidité

9^{ième} année

Feuille de questions et réponses

"Des rapides et Deschutes"

(de "À la Une: Le Tourisme d'aventure," Duval)

Nom: _____

Date: _____

1. En utilisant une toile ou un tableau, fait des notes pour décrire quelques unes des expériences et activités des rafteurs. Divise les activités entre les différents jours de leur aventure. Utilise le verso de cette page pour tes notes.

2. Regarde l'image à la première page. Explique ce que c'est:

a. le capitaine: _____

b. les rafteurs: _____

c. le radeau: _____

d. les pagaies: _____

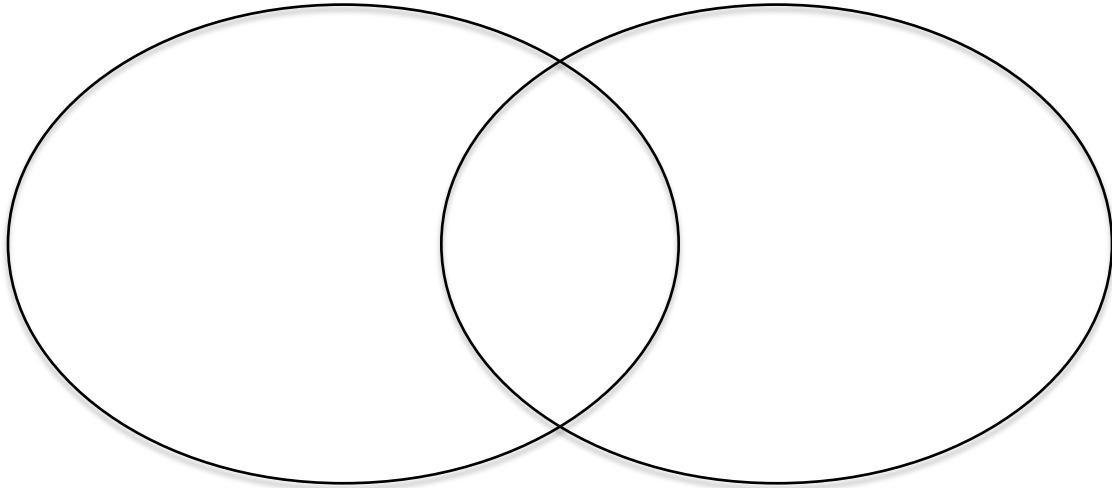
e. les gilets de sauvetage: _____

3. Explique pourquoi *Des rapides et Deschutes* est un bon titre pour cette histoire.

4. Qu'est-ce que tu fais pour t'aider quand tu arrives à un point qui est plus difficile à lire?

5. Explique dans tes propres mots ce que tu viens de lire.

6. À quoi est-ce que cette histoire te fait penser? Utilise un diagramme Venn pour comparer l'expérience des rafteurs à une expérience que tu as eu ou quelque chose dont tu as appris quelque part d'autre.



Questions de compréhension (répond dans tes propres mots):

7. Qui dans le radeau doit pagayer le plus fort?

8. Quel est le problème avec les campements où les gars avaient prévu aller?

9. Donne un exemple du texte qui montre pourquoi c'est important de porter un gilet de sauvetage.

** 1. Écris tes notes ici pour question #1.

École Mount Prevost Middle School: Département d'Immersion Française

Évaluation de la Lecture: Fluidité

9ième année

"Des rapides et Deschutes"

(De "À la Une: Le Tourisme d'aventure," Duval)

Nom: _____

Date: _____

Toute la journée, pendant la descente, le capitaine Stuva donne ses directives. Les garçons devront obéir à ses ordres en parfait synchronisme pour descendre les premières montagnes russes de la rivière, les Whitehorse Rapids. Les gars sont censés les atteindre tôt le matin suivant. Le but est d'attaquer ces eaux bouillonnantes avec des muscles reposés.

L'après-midi tire maintenant à sa fin, et les rafteurs, fatigués, comptent camper tôt. Un seul petit problème; les campements où ils prévoyaient aller sont complets. Cela signifie qu'ils doivent descendre les Whitehorse Rapids aujourd'hui même.

Sur le rivage, les scouts prennent une pause suffisamment longue pour bien examiner les rapides, puis remontent à bord des radeaux. Le rugissement de l'eau qui bouillonne devient de plus en plus fort à mesure que les embarcations approchent des rapides.

Haletant(e)

Soigneux/se

Confident(e)

Fluide

Expressif/ve

École Mount Prevost Middle School: Département d'Immersion Française

Évaluation de la Lecture: Fluidité

9ième année

"Des rapides et Deschutes"

(De "À la Une: Le Tourisme d'aventure," Duval)

Après la lecture pose les questions suivantes:

Quand tu arrives à un mot difficile, que fais-tu pour le comprendre?

Stratégies de mots:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> relit le | <input type="checkbox"/> regarde les images |
| <input type="checkbox"/> demande quel qu'un | <input type="checkbox"/> divise le mot en syllabes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cherche le dans un dictionnaire | <input type="checkbox"/> "chunk" le mot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> saute le mot | <input type="checkbox"/> cherche des petits mots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> essaye de penser à ce qui fait du sens dans la phrase | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autre: | |

Si tu lis un paragraphe et tu ne le comprends pas, que fais-tu?

Stratégies de sens:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> relit le | <input type="checkbox"/> cherche des mots je connais dans la paragraphe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> saute le | <input type="checkbox"/> regarde les images et captions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> essaye un autre livre | <input type="checkbox"/> essaye de le faire marcher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crée une image dans ma tête | <input type="checkbox"/> demande quel qu'un |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crée des notes de ce dont j'ai lu | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> imagine des liens entre le texte, moi-même, le monde, autres textes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autre: | |

Savais-tu beaucoup déjà des descentes en eaux vives avant?

Quels liens faisais-tu à "Des Rapides et Deschutes?"

Qu'est-ce qui t'a surpris de ce sujet? **OU** Qu'as-tu appris de nouveau?

Descentes en eaux vives: savais beaucoup avant savais peu avant

Liens:

Surprise/nouveau:

******Donne un compliment à chaque élève au sujet de leur lecture orale.

Appendix F: Self-Assessment Tool

Français Langue 9

Auto-évaluation et plan de perfectionnement langagière

Maintenant que tu as complété une évaluation de tes habilités en lecture ainsi qu'une évaluation d'écriture et une dictée, on veut formuler un plan pour comment tu vas progresser en français. Dans le tableau ci-dessous, donne-toi une note sur quatre pour chaque habilité. De ça, nous déciderons ce qu'il faut travailler le plus.

4 – Je fais ça presque parfaitement.

3 – Je suis confortable avec cette habilité ou stratégie.

2 – J'essaye d'utiliser cette stratégie mais je ne suis pas encore très confortable avec.

1 – Je n'utilise pas vraiment cette stratégie et je ne sais pas vraiment comment faire.

Stratégie/Habilité : « Je peux... »	Sept/ oct	Fév/ Mars	Juin
<p>LECTURE :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -sonoriser les mots qui sont difficile à prononcer ou à comprendre. -relire ce que je ne comprends pas. -chercher des petits mots, des parties de mots, et des mots anglais dans les mots que je ne reconnais pas. -utiliser le contexte pour trouver le sens d'un mot (essayer de le remplacer par un autre mot qui donne un sens à la phrase). -utiliser les indices comme une couverture, une description au dos d'un livre, des images, et une titre pour faire des prédictions du sujet d'un texte. -utiliser ce que je sais déjà du sujet du texte pour m'aider à le comprendre. -comprendre le sens général d'un texte français. -trouver des détails spécifiques dans un texte français. -faire des inférences et les justifier. Par exemple, si le Petit Nicolas aide souvent sa mère, on peut inférer qu'il l'aime bien. -faire des liens entre ce que je lis, d'autres textes que j'ai lu et 			

<p>ma propre vie.</p> <p>-donner mon avis d'un texte et le défendre avec des raisons et des exemples.</p> <p>-résumer ce dont je viens de lire dans mes propres mots.</p>			
<p>ECRITURE :</p> <p>-écrire sans utiliser des mots anglais.</p> <p>-diviser mon travail en paragraphes logiques, avec une introduction, un développement et une conclusion claires.</p> <p>-je peux écrire une introduction captivante qui gagne l'attention des lecteurs. BAM!</p> <p>-écrire de mon point de vue ou ma réaction à quelque chose.</p> <p>-justifier ma réaction avec des détails et exemples.</p> <p>-varier mon vocabulaire pour le rendre plus précis (par exemple, « marcher » devient « balader »).</p> <p>-utiliser des expressions idiomatiques.</p> <p>-corriger le grammaire, l'orthographe, et la structure de mon travail.</p> <p>-varier la longueur et le type de phrase que j'écris.</p> <p>-ajouter beaucoup de détails pour décrire un lieu, un personnage ou un évènement.</p> <p>-montrer la personnalité des personnages dans leurs actions.</p> <p>-changer mon écriture dépendant de l'audience (ex. enfants ou adultes).</p> <p>-ajouter des dialogues qui sont bien ponctués et qui montrent les personnalités des personnages.</p> <p>-utiliser des mots et expressions de lien (par exemple, « donc », « car », « puisque », etc.).</p>			

<p>ORAL :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-me tenir debout devant la classe avec une bonne posture. -faire un contact visuel avec les membres de mon audience. -parler devant la classe d'une voix calme et claire et d'un bon volume. -bien prononcer et articuler mes mots. -parler des sujets quotidiens avec mes amis en français. -parler toujours français en classe.			
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Appendix G: BC Performance Standards for Reading in Français Langue

Échelle succincte : Lecture de textes littéraires en 9^e année

Cette échelle succincte présente le résumé de l'échelle d'évaluation figurant aux pages suivantes. Toutes deux décrivent le rendement des élèves de 9^e année durant la période mars-avril.

Aspect	Ne satisfait pas encore aux attentes	Satisfait aux attentes (de façon minimale)	Satisfait entièrement aux attentes	Dépasse les attentes
APERÇU	L'élève a parfois besoin de soutien pour lire des œuvres littéraires destinées aux jeunes adultes ainsi que des poèmes présentant un langage et des idées quelque peu complexes. Il a besoin de soutien pour effectuer les tâches assignées. Ses travaux, souvent imprécis ou incomplets, comprennent parfois des informations non pertinentes ou inexactes.	L'élève lit des œuvres littéraires destinées aux jeunes adultes ainsi que des poèmes présentant un langage et des idées quelque peu complexes. Ses travaux, généralement exacts, sont parfois vagues et occasionnellement incomplets surtout lorsque l'activité couvre une période assez longue.	L'élève lit des œuvres littéraires destinées aux jeunes adultes ainsi que des poèmes présentant un langage et des idées quelque peu complexes et effectue, dans le cadre des tâches assignées, des travaux clairs et bien développés qui témoignent d'une certaine perspicacité.	L'élève lit des œuvres littéraires destinées aux jeunes adultes ainsi que des poèmes comprenant un langage et des idées quelque peu complexes. Il effectue, dans le cadre des tâches assignées, des travaux précis et bien développés qui témoignent d'une grande perspicacité.
STRATÉGIES • adaptation des stratégies • connaissance des genres • techniques littéraires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> est rarement conscient de ce qu'il faut faire pour adapter ses stratégies à des textes difficiles ou à ses problèmes de lecture ne reconnaît pas les éléments des divers genres ou n'en reconnaît pas la pertinence ne reconnaît pas toujours les techniques littéraires éprouve de la difficulté à interpréter le langage figuré; privilégie le sens littéral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a parfois besoin de directives pour choisir ou adapter ses stratégies face à des textes difficiles ou à ses problèmes de lecture utilise sa connaissance des genres pour anticiper les événements reconnaît quelques techniques littéraires essaie parfois d'interpréter le langage figuré; parfois inefficace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> choisit et ajuste ses stratégies et la vitesse de sa lecture pour aborder des problèmes ou des éléments particuliers du texte fait appel à sa connaissance des genres pour confirmer le sens et interpréter des idées reconnaît plusieurs techniques littéraires reconnaît le langage figuré et l'interprète souvent correctement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fait des choix délibérés et efficaces lorsqu'il s'agit d'aborder des textes difficiles fait appel à sa connaissance des genres pour appuyer sa compréhension, interpréter des idées et évaluer une œuvre reconnaît les techniques littéraires et les utilise efficacement interprète correctement le langage figuré
COMPRÉHENSION • éléments de l'histoire • prédictions • inférences • thème	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dégage avec exactitude la plupart des événements et des personnages principaux; confond parfois quelques-uns de leurs caractéristiques ou les omet fait des prédictions simples fait parfois des inférences simples, mais, en général, s'en tient plutôt à une interprétation littérale reconnaît le thème évident de textes simples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> décrit correctement les lieux, les événements, les personnages et les conflits fait des prédictions simples et les explique correctement fait des inférences simples qu'il appuie par quelques justifications pertinentes reconnaît le thème de textes simples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> décrit avec exactitude et en détail les lieux, les événements, les personnages, les conflits ainsi que les rapports que ces éléments entretiennent entre eux fait des prédictions logiques et les explique adéquatement fait des inférences logiques qu'il appuie par des justifications pertinentes reconnaît le thème de la plupart des textes et l'explique efficacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> décrit et analyse les lieux, les événements, les personnages, les conflits, les thèmes ainsi que les rapports que ces éléments entretiennent entre eux fait des prédictions logiques et les explique clairement et en détail fait des inférences approfondies qu'il appuie par des justifications détaillées reconnaît le thème des textes et l'explique de manière détaillée et avec logique
RÉACTION ET ANALYSE • rapports avec les expériences personnelles et avec d'autres textes littéraires • réactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> éprouve de la difficulté à établir des rapports avec ses propres idées et valeurs éprouve de la difficulté à établir des rapports avec d'autres textes littéraires émet des réactions ou des opinions imprécises, peu ou pas de justifications pour soutenir son point de vue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> établit des rapports évidents avec ses propres idées, valeurs et connaissances établit des rapports évidents avec d'autres textes littéraires émet des réactions ou des opinions soutenues par quelques justifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> établit des rapports logiques avec ses propres idées, valeurs et sentiments établit des rapports logiques avec d'autres textes littéraires ou avec des thèmes universels émet des réactions ou des opinions qu'il soutient par des raisons et des exemples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> établit des rapports logiques avec ses propres idées, valeurs, sentiments et avec d'autres textes littéraires et les explique de manière précise et détaillée élabore parfois une réaction créative ou approfondie soutient ses réactions, ses opinions et ses analyses par des arguments bien raisonnés