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Novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness for selected challenges and responsibilities facing teachers in a minority Francophone environment

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NOVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PREPAREDNESS FOR

SELECTED CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FACING TEACHERS IN A

MINORITY FRANCOPHONE ENVIRONMENT

by

Roger Lebel

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of nine novice teachers in the minority Francophone environment of southwestern Ontario were investigated. Challenges previously identified in the literature are attributed to minority Francophone environments. Participant narratives exposing their experiences with these challenges were studied over a seven month period using critical ethnography and analyzed.

Key findings indicate five challenges experienced by novice teachers in this study: politics of identity related to assimilation, limited resources, hidden Francophone curriculum, attitudes toward challenges and issues related to pre-service and ongoing professional development. Participants were not aware of the pervasive nature of these challenges and reported a sense of being overwhelmed. Contributing factors included: majority of participants completed their post-secondary studies in English yet were employed in French first-language schools; not adequately forewarned of the challenges and influence these had on daily practice; and, professional development opportunities not sufficiently exposed to participants.

ABSTRAIT

Les perceptions de neuf nouveaux enseignants en région minoritaire Francophone du sud-ouest de l'Ontario ont été investiguées. Cette recherche présente les défis déjà identifiés qui sont directement liés au fait d'œuvrer en milieu minoritaire et expose les expériences vécues par les participants sur une période de sept mois en faisant appel à une ethnographie critique. L'analyse se fait dans l'optique d'une communauté professionnelle.

Résultats clés démontrent que cinq défis ont été identifiés par les participants à l'étude: la politique de l'identité et l'assimilation comme facteur de celle-ci, ressources limitées, l'existence d'un curriculum Francophone "caché" et l'impact de celui-ci sur la pratique quotidienne de la profession, l'attitude vis-à-vis les défis Francophones et la question de la formation vécue en faculté et du développement professionnel une fois en service. Les participants n'ont pas eu suffisamment de formation ni de sensibilisation par rapport à la nature de ces défis et se sentaient parfois dépassés. Les facteurs atténuants : la majorité des participants ont fréquenté des institutions postsecondaires anglophones et se sont trouvés sous l'embauche d'une école de langue française; ils n'avaient pas été avertis de l'envergure des défis et l'impact que ceux-ci avaient sur la pratique quotidienne de la profession; les opportunités de formation n'ont pas été explicitées pour les nouveaux enseignants.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work first and foremost to my parents, whose fierce pride in our language and culture I feel I have finally been able to do justice.

Maman, tu auras été si fière de me voir arrivé à ce moment après tous mes défis. Tu me manques tellement.

Papa, je continue la lutte féroce que tu m'as montré était nécessaire à notre survie en tant que communauté—peut-être ce travail contribuera à cette lutte.

Also, to my wife Janice who has shown incredible patience and support during this drawn out battle. The slow horse has arrived and thanks to you, the knight is somewhat less the worse for wear. Je t'aime.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Preamble

Growing up Francophone in southwestern Ontario meant belonging to an

"invisible" minority—no one knew we were Francophones as we often had little or no

accent when speaking English, even when we were among other Francophones! This was

a result of being immersed in English and the pressures of having to blend and function in

that milieu. Several personal experiences of intimidation and assimilation, while growing

up in southwestern Ontario, provide an insight into the systemic challenges to the cultural

and linguistic Franco-Ontarian reality that persist to this day in the lives of Francophones

in the region. These challenges extend into the lives of teachers, though limited research

has been completed attesting to the impact of these challenges. Due to the lack of

published research, the question remains: though Francophones have gained the

autonomous management of a French-language school system, are their teachers prepared

to respond to the types of challenges they will face with respect to their minority

Francophone identity?

To non-Francophones, it is difficult to comprehend why Franco-Ontarians express

an attitude of resistance; of a need to defend their faith, their culture and particularly their

language. By their nature, the terms "resistance" and "defence" indicate the presence of

conflict. If one is to understand the challenges that Francophones identify as particular to

their educational environment, acknowledging the historical conflict between the English

and French cultural groups is imperative. One refers to the "two solitudes" in Canada, a

term popularized by the 1945 Hugh MacLennan novel of the same name and which has

come to mean the lack of communication between the two main linguistic and cultural groups in Canada: the English majority and the French minority.

The most recent census figures (*Office des affaires francophone* [OAF], 2005) indicate that despite the historical importance of Francophones to the southwest of Ontario (at one time representing more than one third of this region's population), the region is now home to a Francophone population representing only 2.3% of the whole. The southwest region (geographically defined as Windsor to greater London and including Huron, Grey and Bruce counties) contains 6.3% of all Francophones in the province. According to the census figures, only 26.9% of remaining self-identified Francophones in the southwest indicated using French as the primary language of communication in the home, indicating a trend towards still further assimilation of this group. The rights guaranteed by Section 23 of the Charter have been said to have been created in order to "right past wrongs" with respect to language in Canada (Montgomery & Lemaire, 2004).

The influence of the English majority culture is felt in every aspect of life for people trying to maintain the Franco-Ontarian identity in a region where speaking French in a public setting still has the potential to attract open scorn. From personal experiences, and the intimidation my parents experienced when they were moving into their first new home together simply because they were Francophone may seem like it belongs to ages past, but the reality is, such conflictual relations between Anglophones and Francophones persist in much of southwestern Ontario. On one occasion, my parents went to my grade school for a meeting and were handed papers suggesting that I should attend a "special" school and that I might even benefit from a simple surgery (*frenuloplasty*) to free up my

tied tongue. My parents informed them that we only spoke French in the home, that I did not have any intellectual deficiencies or problems expressing myself. The fact that I was a Francophone was simply never perceived as a possibility by the school.

Later, my parents were part of a group that lobbied the school board for French education rights under Section 23 following the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 23, also known as the "Canada Clause," stipulates that citizens whose first language, whether English or French, is the minority of their province, have the right to receive instruction in primary and secondary school in that language (see Appendix 1). Eventually the lobby won us the right to French immersion but only up until grade eight. In my father's words, this was "better than nothing." Gaining slightly less than half of my grade school instruction time in French was considered a victory. However, with no follow-up possible in secondary, it meant that my written expression would not be adequate when the time came for post-secondary education.

To the chagrin of my parents, there was a period when I refused to speak French to them. They would ask a question in French and I would respond in English. It was simply easier to behave like the majority than to always fight for something for which we, as a minority, were made to feel embarrassed of—evidence of the potency of the pressures to assimilate. Despite my parents' best efforts, we were subjected to a constant push to melt into the mainstream. Since pursuing my professional life in the French language school system, I have seen this same trend of assimilation pressure in students.

My own teacher training had prepared me to teach in English. When I was unexpectedly hired in a French school board in my third year of teaching, I frequently

went home exhausted with a headache from the relentless exertion of propping up the Francophone identity. Mine was a position of passion and politics, certainly not of formal training with respect to the Francophone reality in Ontario. My ability to exert influence on my colleagues and students came from personal experiences and acknowledging the challenges they face to their cultural identity on a daily basis.

I believe in French language instruction mostly as a result of being a Francophone in southwestern Ontario and never having had that opportunity. I am able to appreciate how difficult it is to maintain a minority language and culture without adequate support. At the outset, and since having gained years of experience, I often wondered: was I up to the task to be a front-line defender of the language? At the start of their careers, did my colleagues feel such doubts; did they feel they were adequately prepared for these challenges? Did they possess specialist knowledge related to teaching in a minority Francophone environment that I did not? These are the underlying questions driving the research of this study. That is, to ask novice teachers how they perceive these responsibilities.

The research presented herein has implications for teacher education and professional development in minority Francophone settings. If other Francophones are to be supported in an effort to avoid the divided self I was forced to live, teachers will have to confront these issues in their own schools. They will have to be made formally aware of the historical and psychological impacts of Bill 17 (explained in detail below) for Francophones in Ontario. Further, they will need to better understand the mentality of being a Francophone student in a minority Francophone setting and the pressures of

assimilation for which they, as teachers and defenders of the Francophone culture, language and identity, will be responsible.

B. Statement of the Problem

The Franco-Ontarian community is somewhat aware of the long-term effects of Bill 17 (Haché, 2001). This legislation by the Ontario government, effective for the period of 1913-1927, discouraged public expression of the language and put severe legal restraints on teaching with French as the first language (Gaffield, 1993). Concurrently, the cumulative actions of the English language majority meant that the local population was pressured by various means to leave their Francophone identity behind in order to access the same levels of economic and political influence as their English-only counterparts. The gradual erosion of the Francophone presence is evidenced by the gradual loss of services in French, from media outlets to hospital care to church services. This loss of services has meant being Francophone in the region required ever-increasing effort, since the Franco-Ontarian community did not benefit from the subconscious experience of proximal influence. When the social practices of a community are attacked or completely removed, it is clearly a threat to the community itself. Wenger (1998) writes of the importance of social participation for the existence of communities:

> "Participation refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities…participation shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do (p. 4, emphases by author).

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Almost one century after the fact, teachers in minority Francophone settings are working to reverse the effects of Bill 17 by contributing to the construction of identity in a process of trying to become a vibrant community as Francophones once were in this region.

The social practice of communicating publically is central to a community's ability to construct identity. Jenkins (2008) argues that "identification makes no sense outside relationships" and that "identification has to be made to matter through the power of symbols…and is generated as emergent by-products of the transactions and negotiations of individuals pursuing their interests" (p. 7). In addition, Rimstead (2003) points to the importance of writing and literature in "how societies remember." Francophone print media such as editorial newspapers "Le Progrès," "Le Clairon" and "La Défense" all fell out of production by the 1920's (Cecillon, 2003), with the current newspaper ("Le Rempart") being little more than a weekly report on Francophone school activities. In itself, this is proof that the locus of the Franco-Ontarian identity has primarily become the school since little other community news occurs or is reported in French. The most recent example of losing social practices was the loss of local media services for *Société Radio Canada* in the spring of 2009 (the French arm of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). Despite ongoing legal wrangling, this was interpreted locally as yet another attack with associated pressures to assimilate despite the apparent progress made since the inception of the Official Languages Act in 1967. Ultimately, the constant attacks on public Franco-Ontarian expression discourage many members of the Francophone community from continuing to make the effort to maintain the language and culture, and this study examines the impact this has on the daily practice of novice teachers.

To better understand the mindset of the minority Francophone, one must also consider the loss of one of its main support networks: the Catholic Church. The Church had been a key institution at the heart of the Canadian Francophone identity (Gérin-Lajoie, 2006b). Over the past century in southwestern Ontario, there have been notable examples of the loss of French church services. At Notre-Dame-du-Lac parish in Ford City (this church was later renamed Our Lady of the Rosary), rioting occurred in 1917 when the bishop sought to replace the Francophone parish priest with a pro-Anglophone as a result of Bill 17, thus limiting the amount of services being said in French (Lajeunesse, 1960). The more recent shuttering of St. Joachim and Pointe-aux-Roches (Stoney Point) churches involved long drawn-out court battles to no avail. More subtly, St. Joseph, a formerly completely Francophone parish in Rivière-aux-Canards (River Canard) now only offers limited French services. The divisive nature of these conflicts cannot be ignored as those seeking to maintain influence followed the orders of the London Diocese while those who stood their ground were isolated and weakened—the result being that Francophones in the region felt further pressure to assimilate. Such divide and conquer tactics were used effectively throughout the province, alienating divided French-speaking communities from their traditional support networks (Haché, 2001).

In the face of this persistent pressure to renounce the Francophone identity, battles were pitched for the right to education in French. Under Section 23 of the Charter, this resulted locally in the creation of a French division within the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. Eventually, the autonomy of a separate system run entirely in French was granted in 1998: the *Conseil scolaire du district des écoles catholiques du*

sud-ouest [CSDÉCSO]. The school board covers a huge geographic territory (28, 819 km^2) and maintains 28 schools: 21 elementary, 6 secondary and one K-12 school. Like many French-language schools in minority situations, the school setting examined for this research is a secondary school that was itself established as the result of a drawn out battle.

Although it is a Francophone institution, the cultural and ethnic identities of the school being studied are far from homogeneous. "Culture is not fixed" and ethnicity can influence how a given culture develops; subgroups may claim different cultures from compatriots of a larger whole (McLaren, 1998, p.17). Within the school itself, multiple ethnicities and cultures co-exist with the aspiration that language be the main unifying factor. In many cases, this unifying factor is tenuous as it is the regaining of the language for many families and not the maintenance of it. They do not benefit from a general societal influence whereby a majority can impact learning and ways of being with proximal influence because that majority is English (Lave & Wenger, 1991; CTF, 2005). There are students from the rural surroundings of the city as well as from the urban, underprivileged landscape of the downtown core. There are students from families of long-standing Francophone traditions in Canada (called *"pure laine"* or "dyed in the wool"), students of Francophile (middle-class, non-Francophone) families seeking prestige in a bilingual academic background for their children, exogamous families (families where only one parent is a native speaker of French) as well as recently landed immigrants and refugees from countries that were once French colonies, and for whom that language is either their mother tongue or the only official language in Canada for which they have a working knowledge, however sparse that may be.

Within the ranks of the teaching staff these same ethnic identities are present (with the notable exception of the former French colonial Arabic cultures, which are prevalent in the student population but completely absent from the personnel): two staff members are originally from African nations, one from Haiti, two from France, some from Francophile backgrounds and still others from majority Francophone regions of Canada such as Québec. Despite the variety of ethnic identities, the majority of the staff is originally from southwestern Ontario. It is apparent that despite the unifying language, multiple cultures co-exist on site creating a unique institutional identity.

Two published reports confirm that teachers in minority Francophone environments face shared challenges unique to this setting. In the first, the Canadian Teachers' Federation ([CTF], 2005) found that the heavy burden of teaching was cited as the number one issue for teachers in these environments. The lack of resources was cited as the second most prevalent concern for Francophone teachers (CTF, 2005). Although a lack of resources is also a complaint of teachers in majority settings, in this instance, the lack of resources is described as the combination of: a physical lack of French language educational resources (unavailability of French textbooks) and the increased costs associated with those that are; the lack of infrastructure (lack of French software for information technology); the added costs associated with maintaining smaller school buildings as well as costs related to greater geographic distances (CTF, 2005). Finally, the impact of assimilation and the anglicization of students in French schools and the lack of human resources, namely qualified personnel, were cited as challenges particular to minority French language schools (CTF, 2005).

In the second report, published by the "*Association des Enseignants Francophones de l'Ontario*" [AEFO], the "White Paper: Our Schools, Our Future" from 2006 confirmed some of these same challenges among their membership. The burden of teaching multi-level classes occurs more frequently both in elementary and secondary schools in the French-language systems in order to accommodate scheduling options for smaller student cohorts. The direct result is human resource strain that more often falls on novice teachers' shoulders. Furthermore, the report confirms that recruiting and retaining students is a major factor affecting the daily practice of teachers in French schools. Beyond the responsibilities expected of them to campaign for enrollment, this also has a tremendous impact on novice teachers because if recruiting or retention is ineffective, their positions are the first jobs to be threatened.

C. Definition of Terms

"Ayant droit" (**Literally: He who has rights**) – Canadian citizen who has the right of educational instruction in either official language when theirs is the minority language of their province.

Francophone – generally defined as a person whose first language of communication is French.

Franco-Ontarian – a person living in or originally from Ontario who is a native French speaker and who identifies with the history and culture particular to that identity.

Novice teacher – for the purposes of the study, a novice teacher is considered to be any teacher having less than five years experience but who is currently employed full time.

"Politique d'aménagement linguisitique" (**Linguisitic development policy**) – systemic intervention by means of the French language schools to ensure promotion, protection and transmission of Francophone language and culture.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction to Challenges in Teaching

An overview of the literature shows that teaching in minority Francophone

schools presents unique situations for teachers in that milieu. For example, in a national

survey completed by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, 93.7% of respondents stated

there were challenges specific to teaching in French language schools (CTF, 2005, p.9).

The AEFO found that "teachers need to be aware of the dual challenge of providing

support to children who are having trouble with language acquisition while not penalizing

those who are already proficient in French" (AEFO, 2006, p. 5). Teachers reported

sometimes feeling as though they were "working against the Anglophone community"

and that they were "affected by the majority community's rejection of a Francophone

presence in Ontario" (AEFO, 2006, p.2). Ewart (2009) outlines several challenges met in

Manitoba that are parallel to Ontario, citing difficulties with a lack of resources, unequal

language competency of students and the overall burden of teaching. Despite the unique

challenges to minority Francophone teachers presented in the research, no evidence exists

that attrition affects novice minority Francophone teachers the same way that has been

noted for the majority group elsewhere in the literature (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004;

Ingersoll, 2001). The OCT (2003) published findings that only 34.7% of beginning

teachers reported being satisfied with their teacher education programs, but these figures

are not broken down into linguistic groups.

Since limited research literature pertaining specifically to the minority

Francophone teacher group exists, this research will present the main challenges

identified in the extant literature. More specifically, this study sets out to ask novice educators whether they felt they were adequately prepared to face the particular challenges of the minority Francophone environment and how these challenges shape their daily practice, an area currently lacking in the academic arena. This work will identify the complexity of unique minority Francophone challenges and what they entail and whether novice teachers perceive that Faculties of Education in Ontario respond to them. I begin with a detailed outlining of the identified challenges from the literature so as to provide insight into the daily complexities of teaching in minority Francophone schools.

Challenges related to the Burden of Teaching

As a direct result of being in French language schools, the minority Francophone environment experiences a heavier burden of teaching related to added teaching tasks. While English and French language teachers report frustrations with multi-level classes (Ontario College of Teachers [OCT], 2007) the prevalence of the phenomenon is more significant in French language schools (AEFO, 2006). Sub-sections exist in that multi-level classes can be determined on an academic level as well as their linguistic ability (AEFO, 2006). For example, in Francophone secondary schools, classes may have students from several academic ability levels in one class, whether "Applied" and "Academic" level, or else year levels, such as combinations of multiple grade levels in the same class. Within that same multi-level group, teachers must also differentiate between fluent Francophones and their more anglicized counterparts, yet ensure that both maintain a high standard of French despite requiring different types of support to attain this. The OCT (2007, p. 25) reports that French-speaking teachers have "more sanguine

attitudes towards many job challenges" compared to their Anglophone counterparts. That is, for certain challenges that both Francophone and Anglophone teachers face, those employed in minority French language environments report being less affected by shared teaching challenges (OCT, 2007), though no evidence suggests why this is so.

Beyond the multiple-level classrooms, the burden of pedagogical and instructional roles is not being made clear to new teachers prior to entering the profession (Gérin-Lajoie, 2006b). The reality is that Francophone "schools must fulfil a dual function: their students' social and academic development and the community's linguistic and cultural development" (AEFO, 2006, p.5). Furthermore, "French language schools in Canada's minority settings have a unique mission: they are expected to be tools for identity-building for young Francophones for the reproduction of social models" (CTF, 2005, p. 6). Arguably, majority English language schools are responsible for setting these same societal norms. The vast difference between the two realities, the effects of Bill 17 notwithstanding, is that majority English schools get unconscious support by being surrounded by their cultural and linguistic markers. For example, learners in majority language schools have the benefit of same-language media communications and are surrounded by it in their daily lived experiences. Lave and Wenger (1991) make the case of proximal learning, whereby learning occurs unconsciously by what surrounds us. Without the omnipresence of cultural and linguistic markers that Anglophones enjoy, minority Francophone teachers are at a distinct disadvantage in setting the cultural and linguistic norms for their students in comparison. The burden of these challenges should not be underestimated.

Challenges related to the Lack of Resources

The CTF (2007) reports that French-language schools face a lack of resources in minority environments. For examples of the physical lack of pedagogic material for teachers in these settings, one need only verify the Trillium List of academic resources for Ontario (Trillium List). In this province, teaching manuals must meet guidelines in order to be approved for academic use in Ontario schools. If they do not meet the published criteria and subsequently are not approved for the list, they are not to be used in schools in accordance with subsection 264(1) (k) of the Education Act (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). The list of all the approved manuals that schools can order is available to the public on the Ministry of Education website (Trillium List). When this researcher made a simple, but notable comparison of the availability of resources for the same courses in English and French, distinct differences were identified. For example, in 2010 for one specific secondary school mandatory course (grade 10 History), there are 8 approved options for textbooks for the academic, or advanced stream in English, while there are only 2 for the same course in French—and those are translations of two of the available English texts. The importance of this fact alone must not be overlooked—not one textbook in History classes in Franco-Ontarian classrooms is an original French work and the biases chosen to present the work therein will therefore reflect the majority cultural group.

Another example of the contrast of availability of resources would be the grade 12 college preparation level math course (MAP 4C). The Ontario curriculum in this subject was revised in 2007 and only two textbooks have been approved to support this curriculum, both of which were published in 2009. In June 2010, not a single textbook

has been approved for this course in French language schools. The course must be offered in secondary schools as it is a pre-requisite for many college programs, yet teachers of this course in French language schools do not yet have access to approved materials. This means they must use professional judgement and resourcefulness in creating or obtaining materials to appropriately convey the content of the course, as outlined in Regulation 298, Section 7(2) of the Education Act:

> "Where no textbook for the course of study is included in the list of the textbooks approved by the Minister the principal of the school, in consultations with the teachers concerned, shall, where they consider a textbook to be required, select a suitable textbook and, subject to the approval of the board, such textbook may be introduced for use in the school." (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008)

This is a challenge faced more frequently by Francophone teachers than their English language colleagues which contributes to the overall burden of teaching for minority Francophone teachers.

Difference in availability extends to supplemental additional online resources. Some Trillium approved English-language textbooks offer free online material for teachers, including study quizzes for students, lesson plans for teachers and pre-made assessment rubrics for their units of study. The same cannot be said for French teacher resources for Ontario. While it may be said that online resources are available to all, French-language teachers and in particular, novice teachers in minority Francophone environments, are at a disadvantage in having to continually find and translate authentic, meaningful material (whether from English Canadian contexts or, if they exist, French

content that is not in conjunction with the Ontario context or its curriculum) thus taking

valuable time away from the other important preparation activities of a beginning teacher.

Challenges related to Assimilation

In the Canadian Francophone context, assimilation generally refers to the

minority French group gradually adopting the customs, attitudes and prevailing culture of

the dominant English group. Assimilation, by definition in the Concise Oxford

Dictionary, is said to occur when one group becomes absorbed into a larger group, is

made like the larger group so as to be indistinguishable from the majority. Evidence of

this in the educational setting is the challenge of working in an English-dominant

environment where teachers describe classroom management as the management of an

anglicized school population (AEFO, 2006). Although assimilation is "a concept that has

defied all statistical definitions," (O'Keefe, 2001, p.9) a high percentage of teachers in

minority Francophone settings in Ontario state that the greatest challenge to their daily

work is maintaining the language and culture in the face of ever increasing pressures to

assimilate (O'Keefe, 2001; Gilbert, LeTouzé, Thériault & Landry, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie,

2006a).

In response to these pressures, teachers undertake activities to counter-effect

assimilation either consciously or unconsciously and these tasks form an unwritten, or

"hidden curriculum" (Kentli, 2009). A hidden curriculum is "identified by the social

interactions within an environment" and "is in operation at all times, and serves to

convey unspoken messages to students about values, attitudes and principles" (Kentli,

2009, p. 86). These added tasks are "integral to the possibility of either the reproduction

or transformation of any social order. In other words, cultural practices matter" (Simon,

1992, p. 37). Teachers in minority Francophone environments are responsible for the reproduction of this culture as "the transmission of the French language and culture is often largely, if not entirely, left to the school" (CTF, 2005). The true impact of being in an anglo-dominant region is underestimated (Gérin-Lajoie, 2006b).

Challenges related to Limited Human Resources

There has been an overall acute shortage of qualified French first-language teachers in Ontario (OCT, 2007) though recently there appears to be a reduction in demand (OCT, 2009b). Contrary to existing literature supporting a high attrition rate among novice educators (Ingersoll, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), Ewart's (2009) work provides evidence that minority French language teachers rarely leave the profession. In the province of Manitoba, 96% of respondents in Ewart's study (n=130) claimed they would stay in the profession despite sharing many of the same concerns and stresses of the majority Anglophone teaching population. Ewart attributes the low attrition rates to satisfaction with pre-service preparation at the Francophone Faculty of Education in Manitoba and the shortage of teachers to a dearth of graduates from the program, rather than attrition. In 2007, the OCT reported that 71% of first-year Francophones acquired regular positions, in sharp contrast to their English language counterparts. In 2009, this figure dropped to roughly 50% and while dramatic, their entry rates into the workplace were still double that of their Anglophone counterparts (OCT, 2009b). Francophone response to a question related to oversupply indicated by a difference of 2:1 that they were "not really aware" of a problem (OCT, 2007, p.15).

It is noteworthy that by definition, the Ontario College of Teachers' only considers its members who request their communication in French as being part of their Francophone population. Therefore, it could be assumed that all reported OCT figures do not account for "invisible" Francophones, that is, those that speak fluent French but who, for various reasons, communicate professionally with the governing teacher body in the majority language. In terms of the employment figures, there is no evidence of how many teachers pursued their pre-service teacher training in English language Faculties of Education only to find employment in the French first-language system indicating the actual employment numbers may be even more divergent than previously suggested. The findings may have implications for the future preparation of Francophone educators in Ontario, as well as how the French language boards go about recruiting and retaining their teachers as well as providing professional development opportunities in alignment with the Action Plan of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF, 2007).

Challenges related to Recruiting and Retaining Students

The issue of recruiting and retaining students in the French language school systems is multifaceted (AEFO, 2006; CTF, 2005, 2007; Gérin-Lajoie, 2006b). The number of children eligible to claim Charter rights for French language instruction (known as "*ayants droit*") consistently outnumbers actual registrations. Province-wide, only 63% of all children eligible to register with Charter rights under Section 23 do so, with the strongest concentrations in the more dominant Francophone regions of eastern and central Ontario (OAF, 2005). The loss of nearly half those registered in elementary French education to English secondary schools greatly affects the makeup of minority Francophone schools through the continued occurrence of multi-level classes, loss of

potential teaching positions and funding. This creates pressure to respond to the attrition of students; a challenge that is particular to Francophone schools and consequently, adds still more to the burden of its teachers.

Another facet of this challenge surmised by Francophone teachers is the negative view the public holds of its schools (CTF, 2005). Provincial test results are inconsistent and provide misappropriated information with an appearance of confirming academic weakness. The study school is given a weak rating by the Fraser Institute in its yearly "Report Card" of schools as a result of these inconsistencies (Fraser Institute). In reality, the smaller cohorts of tested students in French language schools mean that any variation in success rates leads to statistically significant changes in overall results which lead to negative views of the French language system in the English media. For instance, the local English newspaper reported that the study school was performing dismally in 2008 due to a dramatic drop in success rates on provincial standardized linguistics testing (Lajoie, 2008). Provincial policy states that students missing the test for whatever reason are automatically given a failing grade, which is what had affected that year's results for the study school. The same writer failed to mention in his annual report in 2010 that the same school had risen to achieve the second highest results on provincial standardized tests in this region (92%), going so far as to exclude the study site from a list of schools belonging to the "90 per cent club" contained in the article (Lajoie, 2010). The failure to report the story fully contributes to the negative view the public hold of Francophone schools identified by teachers.

Adding to the negative view affecting retention of *"ayants-droit"* students is that the existing advantage of having smaller schools in terms of staffs' ability to build

relationships with students is negated by limited course offerings in comparison with local, larger Anglophone schools (AEFO, 2006). The direct competition between systems gives an advantage to the English schools, which may mean the financial and human resource burdens to recruit students remain prevalent with the French language schools. Given the various pressures to recruit and retain students, such as in the face of assimilation, novice educators in minority Francophone environments appear to have increased pressure to help maintain positive views of the French-language system through as many means as possible, including standard test preparations. Being concerned with recruitment and retention on so many levels may influence the daily praxis of novice educators in minority Francophone environments.

Clearly, the literature points to a different experience for teachers in minority Francophone environments. The combination of the same burdens that affect all educators in modern schools with those specific to being in minority Francophone ones leads to the question of who is going into these schools to take up the challenge.

Who Will Face These Challenges?

By combining the general pressures of novice teacher transition as experienced by both Anglophone and Francophone teachers in Ontario with those specific to the Franco-Ontarian minority environment, we should expect that French language Faculties of Education would strive to recruit only the strongest candidates in order to better cope with the situation. This raises the issue of teacher quality, since determining which of the candidates are strongest requires knowing the attributes of the desired result.

The complexity of teaching requires much more than academic prowess, so does it stand to reason that a person achieving at a high academic level will automatically have

the skills required to convey that knowledge effectively to classroom learners? Despite this question, academic achievement appears to be the single most heavily weighted factor in admissions to Faculties of Education in Ontario. By using a results-oriented approach, how does one measure effectiveness in teaching so that an objective metric with which to recruit future educators could be used?

Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005) outline various attempted methods of measuring teaching effectiveness, notably differentiating between "good" and "successful" teaching, but within these theoretical measures, they admit that "perhaps we cannot define quality teaching, but we know it when we see it." Berliner (2005) states that there is no effective measure to test the three key components to teacher quality: the logical acts of teaching, the psychological acts of teaching, and the moral acts of teaching. How does one measure the level of compassion, honesty and tolerance of a teacher, for example? And if they are difficult to measure objectively but are desired traits, how should they figure in the practice of recruiting and preparing future teachers?

Experience, it seems, is the single best indicator of the quality of a teacher because the recognition of all three key components of teaching become qualitatively discernible in teachers over time (Berliner, 2004). Furthermore, test scores of students improve consistently until the end of the first seven years of teaching (Lopez, 1995, as cited in Berliner, 2004) giving a certain quantitative legitimacy to experience of teachers as a factor contributing to quality (Clotfelder, Ladd and Vigdor, 2007). Despite this, most teacher preparation programs in Ontario take less than one year and only provide between ten and fourteen weeks of pre-service practice teaching, or approximately 300 to 450 hours of in-class student contact time. In comparison, auto mechanics in Ontario must

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complete 9000 hours of apprenticeship before being allowed to undergo their certification exam (see: www.edu.gov.on.ca). By such a measure, one might assume that automobiles are more important to Ontario society, than the quality of teaching its children receive. Without a clear definition of what quality teaching means, recruiting for quality is not possible.

Both Ontario Francophone Faculties of Education (Ottawa and Laurentienne) require lower entrance grade point averages in comparison to the English language Faculties. For Ottawa, entry into the French language program of its Faculty requires that candidates first pass a linguistic competency exam (made up of three components: a dictation, 380-420 word composed text and an interview to assess oral capacity) after which candidates must possess a 66% (C) average for their best twenty undergraduate university half-courses (University of Ottawa). Experience is heavily weighted in the process: half of the consideration is on grade average, the other half on quality of prior experience (although a definition of quality is conspicuously absent). Access to Laurentienne requires a 67% (C+) average in the ten best courses of undergraduate studies as well as a linguistic competency exam made up of a written and oral component (Laurentian University). As well as this initial competency, candidates must pass a linguistic exam upon completion of the program in order to obtain full certification. Although language competency does exist in the English language programs, such as at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, it is generally referred in admissions as being for "non-native" speakers; that is, people whose first language is not English. This distinction does not exist for the Francophone programs and

even first language French speakers must prove their ability upon entry and in the case of Laurentienne, upon exiting the program as well.

Interestingly, a simple comparison of admissions standards online show that Francophone Faculty of Education entrance grade requirements at Laurentienne are an entire grade point average lower than many Anglophone Faculties. This suggests that the Ontario Francophone Faculties may be attempting to increase enrollment at the expense of attracting equal or better academically able candidates to respond to the high demand for Francophone teachers. Sarason (1999) bemoans such practices of responding to supply and demand, rather than quality of candidates as related to specific professional needs, making poignant comparisons to other elite professional programs. In the case of future teachers, they will "embark on a career in which what they do or do not do will affect two or more generations of children" (Sarason, 1999, p.103). If the French language Faculties wish to help respond to some of the challenges facing the minority Francophone reality, such as the public's negative view of French schools, recruitment practices would be a pertinent starting point.

In summary, many challenges related to education in Ontario encountered by novice teachers are the same, whether in French or English language schools; however, the literature points to some challenges that are uniquely attached to the Francophone reality. These include: a burden of teaching that is particular to French schools, the physical lack of resources and the costs associated with them; the limitations of the available Francophone infrastructure to meet the needs of students; in the face of assimilation, existing as a linguistic minority where the pressures to adopt the language of the majority are constant, yet vague; the effects of the dearth of available qualified

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personnel and related difficulties in recruiting more; and finally, the pressure to recruit and retain students who detain the right to French language instruction. Cumulatively, these Francophone challenges indicate that the experience of being a minority Francophone teacher consists of several factors not experienced by the English majority in the province.

Challenges specific to minority Francophone educational environments are important to investigate. The flawed Faculty of Education recruitment practices outlined here relate to the undefined quality of candidates being admitted into teacher preparation programs. In the absence of research pertaining specifically to the minority Franco-Ontarian group, this study will examine for the first time, whether selected novice teachers in a Francophone Ontario secondary school feel they were adequately prepared to face selected challenges specific to teaching in minority Francophone environments.

B. Research Question and Hypothesis

The central question of this study will extend the literature by addressing whether novice teachers have been adequately prepared to address selected challenges unique to the minority Francophone experience. This study approaches the problem by asking and attempting to respond to the following related questions: Are there special pre-service programs to address specific minority Francophone challenges prior to engaging in those professional environments? In the daily practice of the profession, to what degree do selected challenges of working in a minority Francophone environment impact the experiences of novice teachers? Do novice teachers in these environments feel their pre-service programs were effective in preparing them to meet these challenges? And, lastly,

to what degree do these challenges influence the daily practice and policies related to teaching in a minority Francophone environment?

The current study has a small sample size that was selected to provide a more in-depth analysis of individual considerations of the participant responses in the research design. The in-depth analysis involves detailed perceptions of nine novice teachers (4 male, 5 female) from a teaching staff of 34 who work in a minority Francophone school with enrolment of 370 students. Among the 34 teaching staff, four other teachers met the definition of "novice" (two of whom were invited) but did not participate and still three others narrowly surpassed the time restraint in the definition of "novice." This indicates a significant turnover of staff, since one half of the teaching staff had less than seven years' experience, or the amount that would be needed to be able to be considered "expert" teachers (Berliner, 2005).

It is hypothesized in this study that the participant novice teachers will express having experienced specific challenges of being a novice teaching in a minority Francophone environment and that the added responsibilities for language and culture contributed to these difficulties. Further, it is postulated that novice teachers have not been adequately prepared to face selected challenges related to their responsibilities of teaching in a minority Francophone environment.

C. Significance of Study

The most widely reported common difficulties faced by novice teachers are in relation to the reasons for high attrition rates of teachers within the first five years of taking up the profession (Darling-Hammond, *et.al.*, 2002; Garza & Wurzbach, 2002;

Gonzalez, Brown & Slate, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001). These difficulties include: the perceived lack of support by administration and colleagues (O'Connell-Rust, 1998; Schuck, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Zeichner, 2003); the high levels of behavioural, social and affective issues presented by students (Winstead-Fry, 2007; Merrill, 2006); the increasing difficulty obtaining employment in certain districts (Ontario College of Teachers [OCT], 2007, 2009); the lack of resources to effectively manage the demands of education (Consortium on Chicago Schools Research [CCSR], 2007; Ewart, 2009; Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu & Peske, 2002); and, the tension between developing subject content mastery and pedagogic expertise (Burn, 2007; Rushton, 2004). These difficulties are also reported for teachers in minority Francophone teaching environments (AEFO, 2006; OCT, 2003, 2007) with the dramatic addition of challenges that are unique to that environment (CTF, 2005, 2007; Gérin-Lajoie, 2006b; Gilbert, *et al.*, 2004; Ewart, 2009).

From the outset of my research, it appeared to me that novice teachers in minority Francophone environments face far more complex realities than their English counterparts yet very little literature exists that pertains to this group. For example, we do not know how many Francophones graduate from English language Faculties of Education in comparison to French ones. We cannot infer whether Francophone Faculties of Education in Ontario better prepare teachers for minority Francophone education. Currently, no published studies were found that related attrition rates for this specific group. One study (Ewart, 2009) gives insight into the minority Francophone novice educator's reality in Manitoba, but there is no equivalent in Ontario even though it has the largest French population outside Québec in all of Canada. Several studies over a

long period report commonalities of problematic entry into the profession for beginning

teachers (Goddard & Foster, 2001). This suggests Faculties of Education have not

responded to the issues identified by novice teachers. These gaps in the literature need to

be addressed so that practice can improve. The starting point is being addressed by the

current research to begin to fill these gaps: to gain insight on whether minority

Francophone novice teachers feel they were adequately prepared for the various

complexities addressed in the literature.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A. <u>Study Context</u>

This study employs a research design to examine whether novice teachers in a

minority Francophone environment will indicate they were adequately prepared by their

pre-service programs to face selected challenges of teaching in a minority Francophone

environment. The use of critical ethnography as methodological approach allows this

research to define and further explore the recognition of specific challenges experienced

by the defined group within a larger professional community in terms of their shared

daily experiences. Social relationships between individuals shape practice, interactions as

well as self-perceptions within a given structure (Jenkins, 2008). In this sense, each

individual's viewpoint, or truth, lends itself to the construction of meaning within that

specific community. It is the critical analysis of this construction of meaning that the

current research has examined. In the tradition of critical ethnography, this study relies on

the richness of the details within the data collected. The analysis of these details

throughout the collection process will add to the body of knowledge related to teacher

preparation and particularly to help fill the void of knowledge related to the experiences

of novice teachers in the minority Francophone environment of Ontario.

The main difference between conventional and critical ethnography is rooted in

the types of topics that are generated for this methodology (Thomas, 1993). It "begins

with a passion to investigate an injustice (e.g. racism); social control (language, norms or

cultural rules); power; stratification; or allocation of cultural rewards and resources to

illustrate how cultural meanings constrain existence (Thomas, 1993, p.36). Critical

ethnography requires the acknowledgement of ever-present value systems making it a value-laden approach to human endeavours (Madison, 2005).

Critical ethnography is grounded in empirical evidence that permits a critical approach to a native's point of view of a social problem processed by the data collector (Thomas, 1993). "It is precisely because the qualitative researchers are working in their own culture that they can make the long interview do such powerful work" (McCracken, 1988). This requires a critical approach because "we do not take each others' accounts at face value...we question, disagree, bring in counter-examples, interpret, notice hidden agendas" in our everyday ways of knowing (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p. 3).

Post-positivist in nature, critical ethnography does not necessarily sum up its research with generalizable findings nor is this desirable since localized knowledge is seen as a substantive framework in itself. To seek reliability in the sense of a quantitative or positivist view renders the study less relevant (Golafshani, 2003). Participant observation, interviewing and studying relevant texts garner data for the critical ethnographer, but the descriptive data remain "fact," sufficient on their own and just as valid as quantitative data (Wolcott, 1994; Denzin, 1997; Silverman, 2001). Making sense of co-constructed group knowledge, as in standpoint epistemologies, is outside the realm of strict quantitative data collection: "it begins with the knower located in the world, caught up in a web of invisible social relations that shape...experiences" (Smith, 1992, cited in Denzin, 1997, p. 59).

To understand the viewpoint of novice Francophone teachers in Ontario and the challenges they face, the ontology of the group is one point of interest to be critically approached. These "naturally occurring phenomena" are locally produced in the

"activities of a particular people in particular settings" (Silverman, 2001, p. 70) and depend on the variables inherent in social construction. "The goal is to make sense of what goes on, to reach out for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 10). Despite this, some quantitative measures may aid qualitative research and so should not be categorically excluded.

Critics of this methodology have suggested that the data are "unstructured," small in number, that "analysis involves explicit interpretations" (Atkinson & Hammersly, 1994, as cited in Silverman, 2001, p. 56) and that due to poor generalizability, are limited in their usefulness (Hammersly, 1991). In response, supporters argue that comprehensive data treatment makes it more complete than statistical analysis where deviant cases are purged when not statistically significant. Instead, "every piece of data has to be used until it can be accounted for" (Silverman, 2001, p. 240). Use of triangulation as a means of conferring reliability in qualitative research may include multiple methods of data collection, as well as analysis from several perspectives. Respondent validation of transcribed text, extensive quotations, repeated viewing of video as well as repeated verification of text all provide triangulation, and the constant comparative method is employed whereby other cases are used to test a hypothesis.

For the current study, two previous works are of importance: Goddard and Foster's (2001) "The experiences of neophyte teachers: a critical constructivist assessment" and Ewart's (2009) "Retention of new teachers in minority French and French immersion programs in Manitoba." Goddard and Foster (2001) collected data using interviews and texts from nine beginning teachers to attempt to determine why

beginner teachers left the profession by critically constructing a framework to describe their experiences. The sample size in their work was the same as this study and one of the authors was the vice-principal for some of the participants, as is the case with the current study. Their findings indicate that novice teachers tend to develop through six "gates" towards making a decision in their professional lives about whether to continue as reflective practitioners, complacent educators or leave education altogether (Goddard & Foster, 2001). Also, their findings describe *the existence of communities of practice in the teaching profession*. In Ewart's work, a mixed methods approach provides insight into minority French teachers in Manitoba, having both interviews and statistical analysis of relevant census and survey data to support findings. This study reports that minority Francophone teachers rarely leave the profession in that province, in sharp contrast to majority linguistic groups and purports that satisfaction with an alternative two-year pre-service preparation program is an important factor for this.

B. Theoretical Framework

Critical ethnography permits the value-laden interpretation of data (Madison, 2005) which is the key to gaining a better understanding of the perceptions, or truths, of the novice teachers in this study (Thomas, 1993). Being grounded in descriptive empirical data provides the foundation for the critical evaluation of the challenges identified by these novice teachers (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Drawing upon the frameworks of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002) enables the researcher to explore novice teacher narratives within the complexities of minority

Francophone education precisely because of this type of data. Exploring novice teachers' construction of meaning using critical ethnography within these frameworks allows the researcher to attempt to answer the main questions of this research: what are the challenges novice teachers in minority Francophone environments face in the practice of their profession and, given their experiences, were they adequately prepared to meet these challenges?

A critical approach to these perspectives serves as a bridge between naturalistic and humanistic approaches to analysis and is "multi-paradigmatic" (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 6). This type of ethnography looks at social issues of justice, therefore inherent value systems come into the process. Morrow and Brown (1994) argue that "analysis could not take the form of an indifferent, value-free contemplation of social reality, but should be engaged consciously with the process of its transformation" (p. 14). In order "to do justice to the complexity of [the] subjects an interpretive approach is unavoidable" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 3) given the array and combinations of education, skills, other dispositions and especially the relationships of the participant novice teachers.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) work states that situated learning must be part of an activity, a context and a culture and "is not something that can be considered in isolation, manipulated in arbitrarily didactic terms, or analyzed apart from the social relations that shape legitimate peripheral participation" (p. 97). Situated learning develops with members of a community of practice being introduced on the fringes, or periphery, and then drawn into the praxis of the group as they increasingly construct meaning. They do this by using the specialized language and learning to utilize the repertoire of resources which help to identify the group. This learning requires sustained interaction between

members of the community of practice because "learning is not the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, it is a process of social participation" (Smith, 2003, 2009). The result of this social interaction is the creation of a community of practice.

Wenger (1998) elaborates on the community of practice as the locus for learning, and that knowledge is based on four premises: first, that learners are social beings; second, that knowledge is a matter of competency in a valued enterprise; third, that knowing is a matter of actively participating in such enterprises; and fourth, the related experiences create meaning or evidence of learning (p.4). To participate in communities of practice, it must occur in authentic milieus that directly relate the learning to the various applied purposes it will serve. Social participation is always contextual and located within the interactions of the community of practice (Smith, 2003, 2009). Like the novice teachers of this study, Lave and Wenger's (1991) work contains examples that focus on various types of apprenticeship where initiates collaborate in formal and informal learning within social networks where learners become part of a community of practice. Three key characteristics must co-exist for a social network to be considered a community of practice, such as this study's novice teachers: a commitment to a domain of interest (minority Francophone education); engaged discussions, relationships and activities that create community (shared features of identity); and lastly, that members of that community have a shared repertoire of actions or practice (as related to effective teaching practices in a minority Francophone environment). Communities of practice occur naturally in the social world, but can also be developed with purpose to obtain specific outcomes (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). Wenger (1998) states it this way: "collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our

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enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise" (p.45). For example, "New Teacher Induction Programs" (NTIP) are implemented at school board level but can create communities of practice that are either local to a school where several novice teachers are employed or board-wide for all novice teachers to share in their experiences. These may or may not flourish depending on the social interaction within them, but always the goal of such targeted communities of practice would be to increase capacity during novice teacher integration into professional life.

By identifying the challenges these novice teachers face in their community of practice, the shared identity, shared interests and shared practices of the participants will serve to highlight possible solutions to these challenges. Critically approaching the circumstances of these novice teachers' situated learning provides insight into this community of practice. The interaction of different levels of communities of practice they belong to help the participants to construct meaning. For example, they belong to a community of novice teachers but they simultaneously belong to the larger community of qualified teachers working in a minority Francophone school. This interaction provides this research with a gateway to better understand the experiences of novice teachers in minority Francophone environments within the study site, as well as novice teachers in minority Francophone schools province-wide.

C. Researcher Context, Setting and Participants

Researcher Context

Due to the qualitative nature of the work it is common for the researcher to write using first person pronouns in studies such as this one utilizing the methods of critical ethnography. As outlined in the introduction, it is clear that this researcher is politically involved with the mission of the school and personally involved in the setting and participants' lives. As such, this voice will be interspersed throughout the work.

When the project began, I had been teaching at this school for 7 years already and was a promoted teacher—*"chef de département"*. I was on good terms with the personnel and more particularly, the participants, several of which I have come to consider as friends. During the progression of the study, I was promoted further to the role of vice-principal in this same school. The multiplicity of my roles was addressed with each participant. Sometimes it was discussed informally, although I made a point of underlining the importance of open discourse during the data collection by reminding participants of the confidentiality agreement (Appendix 7) at the outset of each interview. If I sensed hesitation in the responses during interviews, I stopped the questioning and reminded participants of this Agreement. At other times, I was taken aback by the candour of participants, as they shared details I did not anticipate. I am fully confident that the relationship of trust that was established with the participants will be reflected in the data.

Setting

The site used for the study is in a city in southwestern Ontario, which identifies it in a cultural and linguistic minority within the general population. The research site was

particularly appropriate because of the number of novice teachers on staff, as well as the historical context of the school that underlines the minority status and attitudes present at the site. The school was opened in 1990 under the auspices of the Windsor and Essex Catholic District School Board who deemed fit to situate the school in a condemned building in its possession—a symbol of the status given to the Francophone community within its then-governing board. When the physical conditions in the building became unbearable (it is noted by veteran members of staff still teaching in the school that at times it rained inside the classrooms as heavily as outside them) the students themselves went on strike to demand better conditions. Many members of the majority community expressed fierce resistance to the spending of any funds for a new site for Francophones going so far as students receiving death threats. The result of the struggle was the acquisition of the present, renovated location in 1994.

The historic distinction of the setting for this research is important on multiple levels but specifically with respect to the attitudinal approach teachers bring to their tasks in this setting. Many of the implicit challenges this population presents to the novice teacher have roots in the origins of its minority environment. Even Francophones from this region are not always aware of the historic impetus for the current state of affairs for Franco-Ontarians in southwestern Ontario. Historically, the region had a strong Francophone presence from the foundation of European settlement but this has been threatened due to its minority status and steady assimilation over time.

Participants

Novice teachers in the school were approached first and foremost according to the definition of that term, that is, teachers having less than five years' experience yet

teaching in a full-time capacity. They all were teaching at the same school as the researcher, were approached informally and invited to participate. Two more candidates were invited than participated. Reasons for not participating included not wanting to do interviews in English, as well as time commitments. Of those who chose to participate (n=9), a wide array of experiences and backgrounds make up the composition of the group, although none of these factors accounted in the participants' being approached for the study. For example, of the nine participants, four come from *"pure laine"* Francophone backgrounds, two from exogamous families and three from Francophile families where neither parent spoke French nor were descended from French heritage. Also, four of the nine joined teaching as a second career and five of the nine attended English language Faculties of Education. Interestingly, of the four who attended French language Faculties of Education, only one completed undergraduate studies in French. Finally, four of the nine were male.

Throughout the analysis used in this study, pseudonyms have been applied to personally identifiable information of the participants in order to respect their privacy in accordance with protocols of the Research Ethics Board of the University of Windsor. Table 1 is a collection of the participants' key attributes with respect to the study.

"Alex" joined the teaching profession as a second career after having worked in his trade for several years. In his 5 years of teaching at this school, he has taken on several alternative education initiatives and obtained qualifications in areas outside his initial area of expertise related to his first career.

"Yvette" participated in the study although she did not strictly meet the criteria as she had only partially obtained her teaching qualifications and was filling in for a long-term supply contract. Her comments on the education received by new teaching professionals

TABLE 1: Key Attributes of Participants						
Partici-pant	Teaching as first or second career	Complete years as teacher at study completion	Male (M) Female (F)	English (E) French (Fr) post-secondary	English (E) French (Fr) Faculty of Education	"Pure laine" (P) "Exogamous" (X) "Francophile" (Fp)
Alex	2nd	5	M	E and Fr.	E	P
Yvette	2nd	< 2	F	E	Fr.	Fp
Clark	1st	2	M	E	Fr.	P
Emma	2nd	2	F	E	E	Fp
Zoe	1st	2	F	E	E	Fp
Louise	1st	4	F	Fr.	Fr.	P
Kaleb	1st	4	M	E	E	X
Dave	2nd	3	M	E	E	P
Doreen	1st	2	F	E	Fr.	X

were that much more interesting given that she was still in faculty and living a "double life." During the course of the study, Yvette actually took up a full-time post in an elementary school in the same school board, completed her qualifications and agreed to continue in the study.

"Clark" was in his first year of teaching at the start of the study and had completed his second year when the study was completed. He was hired straight from his Faculty of Education. Popular with the students, Clark was involved in extra-curricular sports and prior to beginning the study expressed his pleasure at having been hired in this particular

school and that he unexpectedly enjoyed the challenges and the relationships the students presented to him on a daily basis.

"**Emma**" also became a teacher as a sort of second career having first followed her passion into professional sports. She was in her first year of teaching at the outset of the study and completed her second year at the end of the study. She commanded tremendous respect from the students from very early after her arrival.

"**Zoe**" was in her first year of teaching at the outset of the study and completed her second year at the end of the study. She was hired directly from her Faculty of Education. Zoe was the most candid in her journaling regarding the difficulties encountered in her first year but despite these, remained optimistic. Extra-curricular activities seemed to motivate her when other aspects of the profession were demoralizing for her.

"**Louise**" was in her third year of teaching at the outset of the study and completed her fourth year at the end of the study. She had the advantage of having completed a practicum placement at the same school during her time in faculty. Louise was also involved in extra-curricular activities and in continuing her professional development, obtained several other qualifications within each of her first three years.

"**Kaleb**" was in his third year of teaching at the outset of the study and completed his fourth year at the end of the study. Like Louise, he also completed one of his practicum placements at the school during his time in pre-service. Kaleb was heavily involved in extra-curricular activities that blurred the lines between professional duties and volunteer work. He rarely left the school before 8pm on any given weekday.

"**Dave**" was in his second year of teaching at the beginning of the study and completed his third year of teaching at the end of the study. He came to the profession from a previous career in a trade. Dave was seen as a "breath of fresh air" because of his understanding of the need for a creative approach to teaching students his particular line of work. This flexibility endeared him to staff and students and through his continuing education, expanded alternative education opportunities for the students.

"**Doreen**" was in her first year of teaching at the beginning of the study and had completed her second year of teaching at the end of the study. She was hired straight from her Faculty of Education. Energetic and always willing to see the positive side of things, Doreen struggled with deadlines and matters related to organization. Still, her involvement in extra-curricular activities meant her presence was felt in the school environment.

D. Procedures Used in Data Collection

The process followed to obtain permission for access to respective participants was an interesting example of the professional landscape of this particular school board. Relationships between employees in CSDÉCSO tend to be much less formal and less hierarchical than in the local English-language counterparts. Total time for obtaining access was a matter of days. In consultation with the school board, Research Ethics Board approvals were obtained to permit data collection within the grounds of the research site.

Participants were approached informally and asked if they would be willing to participate in the research study. The topic of the research and the approach it would take, as well as the assurance of confidentiality in the confines of the research design, were

explained to each participant. The methodology for data collection was to engage in a writing assignment (guided journaling) over a two-week period as an introductory activity prior to engaging in two successive researcher conducted individual interviews which formed the principal portion of the data.

Journaling

Journals were provided for the participants and contained a series of questions designed to bring about self-reflexive commentary. Mixing of written assignments with interviews is a methodology used throughout qualitative research (Burn, 2007; O'Connell-Rust, 1994; Schuck, 2003). The questions used for the journals were introduced by a quotation giving a context related to teaching and education (Appendix 2). Total time required for this activity depended on the participant, but all participants were given a guideline of a total combined production time of two hours. The content of the journals was meant to expose the participants' explicit and implicit beliefs, allowing familiarity with elements of identity that participants brought into the profession (O'Connell-Rust, 1994, 1998; Rushton, 2004; Schuck & Segal, 2002) and a sense of their agency toward Francophone identity and education. The journal responses were to serve as a platform to later direct appropriate open-ended questioning during interviews. In accordance with Research Ethics Board approvals, access to the journals was limited to the participant, the researcher and the thesis advisor. The journals were kept under lock and key throughout the period of research. Participants were informed that journals would either be destroyed by shredding or returned to the participants, at their request.

Prior to the creation of the instruments for this research, examples were reviewed in the related literature and adapted to fit the desired parameters of the present research.

Examples of reviewed work include Madison (2005), Richardson and Watt (2005) and Hollway and Jefferson (2000). It is important to note that the interview instruments included in the appendices section are merely constructs upon which each interview relied as a "scaffold." The term scaffold is appropriate because of its similarity to the construction of a building, where a scaffold joins the required materials together to form a completed whole, the interview is an aid to the construction of meaning between the researcher and participant. "Social constructionism contends that knowledge is sustained by social processes and that knowledge and social action go together" (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 376). Except for the journaling questions, which were given exactly as they appear in Appendix 2, all of the individual interviews progressed in varying directions according to the meaning co-constructed out of the interviews themselves. The interview questions that appear in the appendices were a guiding tool during the interviews but the course of the discussion led the interviews in varying directions, which is typical for this methodology. Agar (1986), Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and Madison (2005) all suggest that the interview process must remain fluid to attain maximum effectiveness. The interviewer must be sensitive to the various directions the interviewee will want to explore without being limited to the boundaries of pre-determined questions. This interpretation is supported by the fact that: "The interviewee is not an object, but a subject with agency, history, and his or her own idiosyncratic command of a story. Interviewer and interviewee are in partnership and dialogue as they construct memory, meaning and experience together" (Madison, 2005 p. 25).

Interviews

Participants were then scheduled for interviews using email requests according to their availability, and interviewed using open-ended questions in a "free association" format as described by Agar (1986), Hollway and Jefferson (2000) and Madison (2005). While several questions were prepared in advance (scaffold), the format of the interviews required flexibility to follow up results of the journaling, as well as information as it became available during the interview itself (see Appendix 3). That is, in accordance with critical ethnographic practices, "the interviewer follows the content provided by the informant" and "questions evolve out of what the informant says" (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001). Some of these questions pursued the following themes: participants' beliefs surrounding teaching, their motivation to teach, their experiences prior to and since entering the profession, the influence of this experience on the development of their identity, and the degree to which doing this in a minority Francophone environment impacted them.

Participants then took part in two individual videotaped interviews each lasting up to approximately 60 minutes (O'Reilly, 2005) and were conducted at the work site setting outside of teaching hours. Each interview thus had its own setting and sites for the interviews were chosen by the researcher to try to make them as power-neutral as possible. That is, sites were either a classroom in which the participant regularly taught, a neutral classroom which the participant did not use, but which was available, or the staff room. Video was captured with a standard camcorder with the camera attached to a tripod that remained focused on each of the participants throughout the interviews. As with the journals, video recordings of the interviews were kept under lock and key in accordance

with Research Ethics Board guidelines. Unlike the journals, however, videos were to be destroyed upon completion of the project.

After the first interview, responses were transcribed mostly by the researcher and also by a respective third party. All transcripts were verified by the researcher and the faculty advisor. Participants had the opportunity to verify the transcriptions and correct or remove comments that did not reflect the essence of what they were attempting to communicate. The multiple verifications of the transcripts provide credence to their authority (Wolcott, 1994; Denzin, 1997; Silverman, 2001).

In addition to several viewings of each interview video, the transcripts from each interview were read repeatedly and analysed for emerging themes using Conversational Analysis (CA) reported by Sacks (Turner, 1974) as described by Baker and Johnston (1998) and Wang and Roulston (2007). CA is important in the transcription phase as non-verbal cues inform co-construction of meaning (Madison, 2005). Mis-analysis has been proven to have occurred where transcription of audio-only interviews occurred in previously published works that were subsequently re-analysed using CA (Wang & Roulston, 2007). For this reason, CA was deemed a preferred method for the data collection of this study.

Transcribed elements of conversation, or talk, using this method aid to further extrapolate analysis from context laden information (setting is important for the provision of institutional talk) such as a pause, a "repair" (ensuring the normal conventions of conversation occur) and annotated non-verbal cues, such as crossing of arms or frowning. Conversation analysis was preferred as a means for interpreting the data than Discourse Analysis (DA) which leans toward naturally occurring discourse over the constraints

imposed by a prepared interview, even if this is an open-ended style interview (Silverman, 2001).

Analysis of the raw data of the first interview led to a more focused second interview (Appendix 4), again lasting approximately 60 minutes. The direction of the study from certain emerging themes of the Francophone novice teacher's reality informed the second scaffold or series of questions from which to springboard the chosen open-ended styled interviews. A schedule was informally organized via email and the second series of interviews were completed over a two-week period using similar settings to the first series of interviews, that is, chosing power-neutral areas of the school outside of teaching hours. The same approach of video-taping was used, with the camera focused on the participant throughout. Interviews were transcribed by a hired third-party, verified by the researcher, the faculty advisor and again given to participants to approve or ammend as necessary. As with previously collected data, the video tapes were kept under lock and key throughout the research process and participants were reminded that records were to be destroyed following the completion of this study, either by magnetically erasing the cassettes or shredding.

E. <u>Analysis: Characterization of Themes</u>

Qualitative data analysis (QDA) has been described as a non-linear process whereby a researcher "notices, collects and thinks about things" (Seidel, 1998). For Seidel, QDA has a "holographic" characteristic in that each step of the process contains all of the other steps simultaneously. While data are being collected the researcher is already noticing aspects of the data; in turn, creating thoughts about how to organize it

and how it relates to other intricacies that have been noticed in the rest of the data. The goal of the non-linear process is to create themes or categories from the information analysed, upon which critical information embedded in the data can then be organized to allow the researcher to draw conclusions.

To achieve this, the model most heavily relied upon for this research is Thomas' "general inductive approach" (2006). Thomas' work is extensively cited and warrants being quoted at length. The general inductive approach "refers to approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). This differs from deductive research where "a specific hypothesis, theory or model is being tested" (Thomas, 2006, p. 240). Thomas is able to apply the generic model to several well-established traditions of qualitative research, including critical ethnography. He narrows down the analysis procedure to five underlying strategies, all of which apply to the research approach used in the current study.

First, QDA is guided by evaluation objectives which identify the topics to be investigated. Analysis occurs through multiple readings and interpretations of raw data and findings arise directly from analysis of the raw data, not from a priori expectations. Second, the primary mode of analysis is the development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework, constructed during the coding process. These resulting categories have key features: a category label, category description, data belonging to each category, links between categories and lastly, a model-type or category framework which emerges during analysis. Thirdly, the results come from multiple interpretations made from the raw data by the researcher who codes it; the findings are shaped by the

researcher who makes critical decisions about the importance of certain sets of data. This particular strategy means that different researchers may come up with different results and have nonoverlapping components or codes. Last, the trustworthiness of findings derived using the general inductive approach can be determined using the same methods used for any qualitative analysis, including critical ethnography (Thomas, 2006, pp. 239-240).

Thomas outlines the procedures commonly used for the inductive coding of qualitative data. First, data cleaning is required to put the information in a common format with backup files for each raw data set. Second, close reading of the text is undertaken until the researcher is familiar with and gains a holistic understanding of the events contained therein. From this point, the researcher defines and creates categories; upper-level or general categories first, and then more specific categories as more detailed re-readings of the data ensue. Category names are often borne from actual phrases of the data. Also, a single portion of the data may be coded into multiple categories, while much of the text data in qualitative research may not be put into any category depending on the relevance assigned it by the researcher. Finally, ongoing revisions of categories are desirable and may highlight contradicting viewpoints or new and unexpected insights. Ultimately, these five steps should provide the researcher with a manageable number of categories (suggested as anywhere from 3 to 8 categories) into which evidence from the text will be grouped to convey the underlying meaning of each category (Thomas, 2006). This depiction of a general inductive approach clearly outlines the method of QDA used in this research study. Outlining the processes in the analysis of the data, the following

section will show how the research was collected and through the general inductive methods, eventually converged on five main categories.

Data were collected between March 2009 and January 2010, beginning with reflective journals from each participant. Journaling was used to elicit a starting point to gain an understanding of participant attitudes and prior experiences as related to education in general (see Appendix 2). Participants were each given identical questions (sometimes in person, sometimes left in their mailbox at the school) and provided with a notebook in which to write their responses. The instructions for the activity were included with the questions and participants were encouraged to ask for clarifications if needed, prior to submitting their journals for analysis.

When the two week period for journaling had passed, some participants readily submitted their journals with the requested work completed. For participants taking longer than the recommended time, they were given informal reminders, either in person or by email. Two participants were especially late in submitting their journals for analysis and interestingly, neither made use of the notebook they were provided, but re-used discarded student notebooks instead.

Journal entries were photocopied and re-read many times, highlighted, underlined and otherwise marked up with notes by the researcher in this study to gain an understanding of the participants. Through an initial coding process and analysis, certain prevalent themes were identified such that they led to further lines of possible questioning for the subsequent interviews. For example, some of the prevalent ideas included: the belief that personality played an important role in the delivery of professional duties and the underlying belief that much of what teachers do best cannot

be measured quantitatively. From the responses provided, possible questions for the interviews were adjusted to address the meaningfulness of work being completed by teachers, as well as the importance of a sense of community developed through cultural identity as it related to motivation. Three months passed between the completion of the journals and the first interviews.

The next step in the data collection process was the completion of individual interviews. From the journal analysis and interviewing methods outlined in the literature, a scaffold of questions was created to prepare for these interviews (see Appendix 3). An interview schedule was organized over a two week period in June via email with the participants. There was no pre-determined order or priority given, only availability according to each participants' ability to be present for the interviews. The exact location of the interviews varied according to its suitability for the participant and availability of locales. Interviews were, for the majority, completed in the participants' classrooms. If they did not teach in a single classroom, one of the rooms they taught in and was available at the scheduled time was used. Some of the interviews were held in even more neutral parts of the school, such as the staffroom on a Saturday for one, or a classroom that a particular participant had never used for another.

Transcription occurred over the course of the summer months when the school was closed. The text of the transcriptions were made to be as accurate as possible, re-read multiple times and videos were watched several times during both the transcription process and initial analysis. The repetitive nature of the verification process is necessary not only to ensure accuracy of the data but also to increase knowledge of the data during analysis by the researcher. Depending of the length of the interview and the complexities

of the speech patterns employed by participants, transcription took anywhere from ten to eighteen hours per interview for total time of approximately 120 hours. After transcription and verification, a similar amount of time was spent re-reading and analysing the data for each individual interview. When the whole of the first series of interviews was completed, transcribed and organized into identical formats, they were printed and verified by the participants, each one giving signed approval on the final version before proceeding to analysis.

At first, commonalities or marked differences were identified among these data. There were certain tendencies that became apparent, and these led to the recognition of some of the larger themes or categories, as Thomas (2006) suggests. For example, most of the participants elaborated on challenges related to limited resources in some form or other, which allowed the question to be put more specifically in the second set of interviews. Also, in terms of frequency, many references occurred relating to being novice teachers dealing with the realities of minority Francophone schools. The process of having the journals contribute to the creation of questions for the first individual interviews was repeated and the content of the first interview transcripts led to the creation of some of the questions for the second individual interviews.

Six months' time had passed before the second series of interviews took place. Although the interviews could have taken place in late autumn, I decided to wait until after the Christmas holidays in 2009 to continue with the interviews as the level of fatigue on staff at that time of year was similar to the level seen during the first set of interviews in June. Using email, all the participants were scheduled into their second interview in January, 2010 over a two week period. Similar to the first set, interviews

were completed in power-neutral sites of the school inasmuch as possible, with a few notable exceptions: one participant was working in a different school and the interview was completed at the new school; one participant had gained the use of an office and that interview was completed in their office; one participant requested to do the interview outside the school on a Saturday, and this resulted in meeting at my residence. Although one might anticipate that an interview at my residence may have influenced the individual's responses, the participant was in fact much more forthcoming in the second interview than the first one, sharing far more details and seemingly more at ease to express more intimate information related to being a novice teacher.

Overall, participant responses were more relaxed for the second interview. Although this may have been partially due to the time of year, as previously suggested, other factors need to be considered: participants were more confident having gained several months' experience; many more participants had by this time gained the use of a single classroom which also gave them more confidence; and, they had lived the experience of the first interview, which put them more at ease with the process simply by better knowing what to expect.

When it came to transcribing the second set of interviews, time constraints made it difficult to complete the transcriptions alone. A third party was hired and fulfilled a contract to transcribe several of the interviews. Each of the transcriptions were similarly verified and corrected, as some sections of the interviews contained French words which the contracted party did not understand and could not transcribe. When corrections were completed, participants were once again supplied with a copy of their interview for verification. They were instructed to give them back signed along with any changes or

suggestions they felt necessary. Minimal changes were made with the feedback from the participants, signed approval was then obtained and analysis proceeded.

During analysis, frequency and "power" of data were the principal criteria by which I determined major themes and from which, categories were later developed. By "power" of data, I mean that when a participant made particularly striking comments, the data were compared with other responses to see if there were similar or contrasting tendencies. By using this approach in analysis, certain categories or themes began to emerge. Broad themes were developed, filtered and tested against other responses to verify and substantiate their selection. With each progressive step, category names changed, were adjusted and re-tested against the whole of the data. As the analysis continued, the first general and then increasingly specific themes, or categories, were identified. The emergent themes are reported in the results section of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A.   Expression of Themes

Five themes emerged as to the challenges that these novice teachers face in their minority Francophone environment: the politics of identity (related specifically to the assimilation problem), the limited resources of their professional environment, attitude with respect to the challenges of Francophone praxis, the hidden Francophone curriculum and lastly, pre-service and ongoing professional development issues. The methodological approach employed for the study permitted the emergence of these themes through the critical approach to participant narratives. This permitted the researcher to analyse and interpret the intricate play between multiple perspectives, nuances of context and settings. In this way, data are analysed and common themes emerge, allowing for a critical response from the researcher (Morrow & Brown, 1994; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Each narrative collected contributes a component forming a meaningful aspect of the whole, like pieces of twine that contribute to a much larger rope (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These pieces of twine shall converge to allow a critical analysis of the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs for teachers entering the minority Francophone education environment.

In the creation of themes, initial stages of analysis involved reading and coding journal entries for each of the participants and eventually led to the development of questions seeking more specific data in the interviews. Variation in journal responses provided the researcher a rich context to work with, since even upon initial reading, a series of possible themes were apparent. Reflections relating to identity, whether on a

personal or professional level, were common. The meaningfulness or importance of the profession as it related to value sets was also apparent throughout the journal entries. A sense of community, of belonging to a bigger group or even multiple levels of groups was present in the responses, naturally linking the methodology to the theoretical framework of "communities of practice." Finally, praxis was a major theme due to the frequency it appeared; the link between theory and practice had varying degrees of importance for these novice teachers, but all expressed related needs for their professional development.

Other variations in responses were particularly interesting. Some of the participants entered the educational arena as a second career with a breadth of life experiences that younger teachers did not possess. Those who decided to become teachers later in life were far more philosophical or self-reflexive in their responses than the younger teachers who immediately went on to Faculties of Education from their respective university programs. For instance, Alex commented: "learning is not sitting at a desk reading a text but rather going out there and experiencing, living, doing 'life.'" His experiences also made him more aware of students' emotional baggage and life challenges, mentioning, among others: "students…arriving at school after being thrown out [by the parents], working part-time jobs 20-30 hours a week, self-mutilation, verbal attacks, physical confrontations…" all of which influenced his praxis. Similarly, Dave wrote that: "as a teacher, I now find myself reflecting on how I was taught and influenced by my teachers" and how, to his surprise, "I actually enjoy discussing this with others."

Another interesting variation among participants having less life experience: these participants were better able to share vulnerabilities related to their professional development, while second career teachers were guarded and expressed themselves using

jargon so as to ensure a more distant, professional image. For example, it was apparent that the more guarded responses were not only more concise; they had also been rehearsed and corrected before being given in. Several younger participants admitted to having feelings of inadequacy or of feeling discouraged by the prospect of an entire career struggling to survive lesson planning and corrections and living up to "impossibly high standards" and feeling "overwhelmed and tired." On this point, the variation was remarkable. Emma wrote that the profession required "constantly going between being exciting and satisfying to exhausting and frustrating." For some, the professional standards were lofty and difficult to attain while for others, the impact teaching had on their person or on the students themselves was what mattered most. Clark stated in his journal that his focus had been to "find myself (my place) in this profession" and that "it is not the risks I take or the mistakes I make that matter; but *how* I handle those risks and *deal* with those mistakes" [emphases his]. Clark often commented in his journal of the continuous learning curve involved in being an educator and related this to the individual personality of the educator, a sentiment echoed by Yvette who stated: "Some [teachers] are gifted. Others have a will and will put forth the hours to achieve success." Zoe commented at length in her journal of the connection between personal and professional identity:

> "Whenever I force myself to do extra work, whether it be planning or workshops or extra marking, I hate it in the short term but it eventually leads to the betterment of my overall technique. I feel that unfortunately this is a field that requires an extreme amount of hard work, since one can only truly lead by example. A truly good teacher is methodical, prepared and thorough, but still

flexible and versatile—I still feel I have a long way to go toward achieving that goal but at least I feel I have made some progress. My overall sentiment on the subject is that the quest to be a good teacher is ultimately the quest to become a good person."

Most of the participants had variations of this last sentiment in their journal responses, of the importance of being a good person.

By way of contrast, Alex related an extensive list of the professional development he had undertaken in the creation and delivery of his programs since being hired yet offered little personal interaction in his entries. His journal entries placed a high value on professional competency with respect to meeting students' needs but rarely brought his personality to bear on his praxis. Similarly, Dave gave very little insight to his personal identity within his praxis, but underlined the importance of having "creative ways to reach out to [students] and help them learn" otherwise, "our knowledge in the subject is irrelevant to their learning." For some participants the link between personal identity and professional ability was inextricable, while for others, there was an obvious perception of separation of their person and their professional identity.

One prevalent theme in the journals that was developed further in the interviews was that of a sense of community. Whether they wrote of a professional community in their subject matter or related it to being Francophone and from the region, most participants wrote of being part of a larger whole. On this point, some were more poignant than others. Clark wrote that "due to my experience, I feel as though I have a good understanding of the students' perspective which enables me to gain their respect with more ease." He had mentioned that his elementary school was segregated, divided

on linguistic lines but also physically divided with a fence in the school yard separating the French speaking children from the English speaking ones during play times.

Whenever questions based on emergent themes from the journals were put more directly in subsequent interviews, the data were very rich and provided the following succinctly defined themes: the politics of identity and assimilation, limited resources, attitude related to Francophone challenges, the hidden Francophone curriculum and lastly, pre-service and ongoing professional development issues.

The politics of identity and assimilation

"This is a different world, whereas in the English system, it's the same world. Nothing is different."(Kaleb)

A recurring topic from the interview responses was the way in which the participants related their views on the cultural and linguistic identity of what it is to be Franco-Ontarian. For some, it was a badge of honour, historically important and worth fighting for. With others, it was practical and encouraged as a valuable skill-set more than a parameter which helped define their person. For all participants though, the issue of assimilation and the challenges of countering that in the school was clearly a matter of utmost importance and all were obviously concerned with the future of the language and the culture. This led to the naming of one of the more frequent themes: the politics of identity and assimilation.

The term "identity" is the combination of cultural factors such as history and language as they relate to the self understanding of an individual or social group as a discrete entity (Jenkins, 2008; Rimstead, 2003). Social markers affect the parameters of

such a definition, such as gender or race, as do the power structures attached to these as "cultural realities are always produced in specific socio-historical contexts" (Friedman, 1992, p. 837). Indeed, teachers coming from majority Francophone environments experience a redefinition of their own identity when they enter the minority Francophone educational environment (Gérin-Lajoie, 2006a). The accumulation of experiences help to shape culture as it evolves and this contributes to determining identity. It has been reported that the greater the minority status lived by the group, the greater the role and value given to the school that defends it; however, the paradox is that it lacks the resources to do so effectively (Bernard, 1997). This is especially so in terms of its capacity to distance itself from the majority (Dubé, 2002). In this sense, the Franco-Ontarian identity is in flux and is redefining itself in light of certain demographic and socio-historical changes.

Within the group of participants, those of *"pure laine"* backgrounds spoke of the central role language and culture played in their own development and how they identified with it. As a result of the ongoing assimilation of the student body, these participants felt dismayed at times, feeling the weight of responsibility as front line defenders of the Franco-Ontarian identity. Alex expressed a separation from the students saying: "I am Francophone, it is my reality, it is my culture, it is my background. I know where I'm at [and]...it's very difficult to see students not identify with it at all yet be here every day." For Alex, central aspects of culture such as language, food and attitude were so different in the everyday experience of his students to his own life that he struggled with how exactly to bring this to bear on his professional responsibilities: "It's a challenge—a nuisance sometimes—to teach kids in an environment that is not theirs, a

reality that is not theirs." Louise felt exhilarated by the difference, if also overwhelmed at times. Her own *"pure laine"* life experience was one where: "everybody was French background. Everybody was Catholic. Everybody was White. That's just how it was." Both expressed difficulties putting pedagogy into practice when the primary language of students was other than French. In the case of Alex, the students challenged him by always asking what the English terms were for the courses he taught arguing that they would be far more useful to them "in the real world."

In terms of assimilation, the daily challenge participants faced most was in terms of how to address the issue of students' not speaking French. The issue was raised frequently during interviews about whether teachers should encourage positive modelling for students to gain a genuine desire to speak French or to take the disciplinary route and enforce it as a steadfast rule. All participants admitted that despite the expectations for them to function entirely in French at all times, they sometimes sidestepped this either to gain favour with students or out of a genuine feeling that acknowledging the majority cultural and linguistic identifier in the lived experience of the students would reach them on the affective level in order to better press the "multiculturalism is a strength" argument. Although this was reported generally, there was a stronger tendency among participants belonging to the exogamous or Francophile groups than those of *"pure laine"* backgrounds. They did this in various ways.

These participants were particularly sensitive to the lived experiences of the students because it was so similar to their own. Participants with Francophile backgrounds admitted having upsetting memories of the negative reinforcement tactics they themselves experienced when they were in school and so chose not to partake in

those tactics. All of the participants expressed the importance of achieving a positive experience with the language and culture for students to want to maintain it. Kaleb said he "had to fight like a madman to speak French" and that success in the Franco-Ontarian assimilation battle depended on creating that fight in the students. "I think we have to make our students fight for their languages, not fight to make them do it." Emma went on to express difficulties balancing encouraging Francophone participation without the threat of punitive action: "How do you connect them to the culture, the French culture, but not disconnect them to the culture they live in, which is also English?" In support of these comments, Kaleb expressed dismay that the students who were the frequent culprits of not speaking French were not the "worst" students, but "my very best students...The A plus students in my class cannot, when I am five steps away, stop themselves from transferring to English." For the participants, an affinity for the language was key as it would help define the identity of the students in the long run. On a daily basis, though, battles with students to speak French were cited by all participants as exhausting. Sometimes they chose to fight the battles; sometimes they preferred winning increased cooperation from students using different tactics.

Kaleb used English as a marker of when he was "serious." If students did not listen or were un-co-operative in class, he would tell them in English that this was important and he noted that students would then pay attention and he could then bring them back into functioning in French when he was satisfied they were "on board." Doreen was somewhat embarrassed to admit that in her own extra-curricular experiences, she was never taught the French terms for the various activities she participated in and so did not have the facility of the language to pass this on to her own students as their coach.

Technical terms and instructions related to her activities were usually given in English because that was how she learned them and whenever there was conversation or more personal interaction with students, she would revert back to French. Similarly, Zoe stated that when students have personal issues and: "if I sense that there's an urgency, I'll speak to them in English." This collective response may well be the result of teachers themselves falling prey to the pressures of assimilation and certainly the question of legitimacy is raised.

All participants mentioned several times throughout the interviews that the only consistent French influence for most of the students was the school environment. Very rarely do the students speak French in the home (this is supported by census figures) or in the community. They do not watch television, listen to the radio or modern music in French, nor do they live in a region where French is language of communication. In part, students' lack of participation in Francophone culture was explained by the participants as being related to the challenge of obtaining access to modern Francophone culture, which automatically discourages many Francophones from pursuing these cultural supports. This perception is difficult for front line defenders to change if there are limited cultural outlets available with which to compare or towards which students can be directed.

Interestingly, when some of the participants were asked in the interviews who their favourite French language music artists were, they had great difficulty in naming any. The complexities and realities of pedagogical praxis were succinctly stated by Kaleb: "This is not something they listen to on TV. Not something they look at online, or listen to on the radio. This is uniquely here [school]. This is a different world, whereas in

the English system, it's the same world. Nothing is different." By extension, the language and cultural references available to teachers in English schools give them a certain legitimacy with students that novice teachers in minority Francophone environments do not have or obtain with greater difficulty than their counterparts. That legitimacy is crucial if teachers are to be effective front line defenders of the language and culture. The next major theme to be developed was Limited Resources.

Limited Resources

"I think in our board you have to be a kind of jack of all trades." (Zoe)

A frequent theme brought up by participants was with regards to the challenges of having limited resources when working in a minority Francophone environment. They related great difficulties physically obtaining teaching resources more often, but also reported the impact that limitations on human resource organisation had on their daily practice. All of the participants expressed that they and their colleagues had to play multiple roles in a minority Francophone school in order for desired outcomes to be attained.

As noted in the review of the extant literature, the issue of limited resources is one that is generally experienced by minority Francophones, and so it is not surprising to see the same challenge identified by participants of the present study. The AEFO (2006) reports that "the face of technology is English" and that it has quickly become an added factor of assimilation in the absence of French language software support. Francophone teachers do not see "the acquisition of necessary resources as also part of the assertion of the implementation of their rights under Section 23" (AEFO, 2006, p. 10) even though

the Canadian judicial system has reported in more than one decision that Section 23 has not been litigated aggressively enough, suggesting that this could be remedied (AEFO, 2006; CTF, 2005; Cormier, 2002). In order of importance, teachers ranked the lack of educational resources available in French as the second most difficult challenge they faced while working in minority Francophone environments (CTF, 2005, p. 7). What is interesting in the analysis of the data is the consistency and frequency with which it is brought up and the response to the challenge noted by the participants.

In terms of physical resources, two main arguments were expressed by participants. The first confirms what the literature states: that French resources for their respective subject matters are scarce and difficult to obtain. Willinsky (1998) presents a critique of education saying: "this sort of effrontery has long distinguished national education systems which typically and shamelessly make the dominant culture [that] of the whole curriculum" (p. 387). The critique is still relevant. Louise expressed at length in both interviews that she had put a lot of effort into finding additional resources for her classroom but with little or no success. All of the posters in her classroom were hand-made by students because she "looked everywhere to order some in French" and "they don't exist." She even had friends and family members search for her while in Montreal. Zoe expressed envy towards those working in English in this region:

> "because we live in this community where as an English teacher, I can take from the public library. I can take from the community. I can take from pop culture. But as a French teacher, I have to really find those resources that [sic] it's not always there."

Part and parcel of teaching in minority Francophone settings, then, is the time required to find or develop one's own resources or to translate available English ones.

The time required for translation of available resources was the focus of the second theme of participants related to dearth of resources. Dave mentioned that, having gone to a majority Faculty of Education, he could not use excellent resources that he developed as a pre-service teacher "because they're not French...it kind of makes you think a little harder because now you have to translate everything you built in English into French." All participants stated that translating took time out of their preparation that their English counterparts did not have to worry about. Doreen expressed a deep frustration with the lack of resources in comparison to her English school board colleagues and that "half the battle of my prep is trying to find resources...Not having the necessary tools to make my job easier for me and interesting for the kids makes it really tough." Furthermore, participants found that this limited them in terms of timely and efficient use of audio-visual supports. Several participants admitted to using English video clips or pop songs when suitable French ones could not be found and stated they preferred not to withhold the positive educational value of resources, even if it was contrary to the French-only mission of the school. "I would feel like I was letting my students down if I was to [with] hold these really good resources." In some instances, student safety was cited as the main reason as training videos for use of equipment were either irrelevant, unavailable in French or the teacher wanted to be sure the students understood the rules rather than "lose a finger."

Related to the theme of limited resources were the observations that participants vocalized related to human resource issues. The necessity of being a multi-tasker was

raised by most of the participants. It was expressed in various ways: whether in terms of scheduling issues, specialty skills required but that too few possessed and comparisons with English language school board structures and the specialization of tasks in those systems that did not exist in the French one. Each of these is worth developing in turn.

Scheduling issues

Many of the participants expressed having a common frustration of novice educators, referred to in the literature as "hazing" (Patterson, 2005). The institutional practice is common in schools and occurs in different ways, generally resulting in poorer working conditions for novice teachers than their veteran colleagues. One example of hazing is when the more desirable schedules are given to teachers with seniority leaving disparate or difficult timetables for teachers that are as yet unassigned, usually novices. Emma stated: "Last year I was a first year teacher and I was teaching Math, Science and French and I was moving classroom to classroom." Doreen noted that senior teachers had timetables with repeating course offerings, translating not only into less preparation time but more stability in that they often taught out of one location in the school. "When you are in your first year and you have three [classes—in a semester] and some of those classes were split levels so I'd have three preps per class..." One of the participants contended that initial courseloads were so severe, that friends asked whether the employer was trying to "get rid" of them by making the working conditions so miserable they would leave. "If every year was like that, I would probably quit this job." Zoe referred to some of the other participants' timetables stating: "That usually doesn't happen in...other high schools. Here it does because they are kind of like—where can we put you? We need somebody and we have a teacher and this teacher is qualified or maybe

almost qualified…We just need more people." The concerns related to hazing have been noted by English language teachers, but they are different in minority Francophone schools because within these difficult timetables are classes that have a higher incidence of multi-level learners as well as the ever-present challenges of maintaining the language. Interestingly, the comparison presented by the participants is in relation to the majority rather than suggesting solutions within a Francophone frame of reference.

Specialty Skills

Despite such demands on novice teachers, Francophone schools still offer a myriad of services for students. In the context of this school, with a staff of 34 teachers, the list of activities available for students that enrich their educational experiences was just as complex as schools in the region with double or triple the number of staff available. Emma commented that "even compared to a really big high school…The fact that we have the coaches [on staff] to run all of them is impressive." Of the novice educators involved in this study, eight of the nine participants were heavily involved in extracurricular programming, often multiples of activities. One of the participants shared an anecdote that a former coach of hers currently employed in an English language school had written a letter to their school board entitled "Where have all the coaches gone?" because they were having such problems recruiting novice teachers who were willing to take up the work of maintaining extra-curricular activities. These responsibilities, in conjuncture with the realities of the classroom in a minority Francophone school produce tremendous challenges that are not equivocated in the English school systems.

Besides having complex or undesirable timetables along with expectation of running extra-curricular activities, some participants also mentioned the difficulties associated with the limitations of human resources and the influence this had on their teaching. Alex "hardly ever taught what [he] was qualified in. It was a HUGE challenge" [emphasis his]. More than any of the participants involved in the study, Alex had been given the largest array of courses to teach and completed the most extra qualifications to adjust to the ever changing realities of his teaching assignments. "We are thrown into teaching subjects that we're not experts at but there's nobody else to do it because nobody else speaks French." He contrasted his experiences with those of colleagues in the English school boards as giving him opportunities for advancement that would otherwise not have occurred because "we do three jobs and they're one per job." His logic brought him to the conclusion that by doing this, one becomes a "big fish in a little pond" with the result that novice educators are conferred greater responsibilities very early in their careers. Zoe added that this required teachers "to be a kind of jack of all trades" because the needs exceeded the means within the board.

I have coined the next major theme realized as Hidden Francophone Curriculum.

Hidden Francophone Curriculum

"Their answer is 'Oh, you don't have to speak to us in French. We are not at school anymore...but I know that I speak French and I know that you speak French." (Louise)

Participants frequently commented on the necessity of being role models and teachers of the language and culture at all times, not just in the classroom. This refers not only to theories of "legitimate peripheral participation" and learning (Lave & Wenger,

1991) but also of the "hidden curriculum," a phrase coined by Jackson in "Life in Schools" (Moon & Mayes, 1995). The formal and informal roles of teachers and the unofficial, unintentional learning that occurs through them has a rich literature as it relates to pedagogy and social normalization (Delpit, 1995; Freire, 1992; McLaren, 1994; Noddings, 2002; Simon, 1992). For this study, the theme is called "Hidden Francophone Curriculum" by the researcher as a tongue-in-cheek commentary on both the difficulty of finding resources for minority language schools and the relentless effort required by teachers in these environments making it seem an "overt" curriculum, rather than "hidden." Still, the participants related with frequency that they became keenly aware of the informal requirement of being Francophone role models at all times—in the hallways outside normal class times, during extra-curricular programming, while in public and not in the formal school setting.

The *"politique d'aménagement linguistique"* attempts to create opportunities for teachers in minority Francophone environments in order to support the vitality of the language and culture for their students. Special events are planned with the main purpose being to celebrate and improve the relationship of students with French Canadian language and culture. During interviews, participants were asked if these events were useful for student learning, or simply a nuisance because they interrupted classroom teaching. Some participants were decidedly in support of such activities, while others were frustrated with them; it was not clear whether it was due to the interruption to classroom delivery of curriculum for the students, or because those participants were often asked to organize said activities.

"We have special events...but they actually help because we're having family moments as a school together...I think one of the strongest things our school does is those family moments; when we have Thanksgiving, Christmas together..." (Kaleb)

"[like] the celebration for the Franco-Ontario flag where at our school we celebrate it with costumes and the students make up songs in French, dances and everyone celebrates. Everyone's in a good mood, and it's the positive celebration where everyone's having fun associated with the French language...It's that subtle relation that we're providing the students where they're subconsciously understanding that, hey, there's nothing wrong with being French." (Clark)

"Honestly? I think it's a joke...it's not positive for me...I'm supposed to be convincing them and preparing them [for the real world] and I can only do it with French colleges. I have to take them to Cité Collégial in Ottawa...[when only] 0.01% go to that college...my hands are tied." (Alex)

"It takes a lot of effort. The fact that you have teachers that want to do these things in a small school, and you have lots of them, I think is really impressive...I think the single hardest thing is with the kids, the disconnect they feel with the culture around them." (Emma)

For participants who were once students in minority Francophone schools, they also shared fond memories of the province-wide "Franco" sports tournaments, where only the Francophone secondary schools are invited to participate. Others mentioned their involvement in "camps de leadership" where they modelled Francophone behaviour for younger students from elementary schools—activities that not only reinforce the hidden Francophone curriculum, but also serve to recruit and retain students within the Francophone school system. It is worth reiterating that eight of the nine participants in the study were involved in extra-curricular programming. Although these activities are technically considered extras, that is, outside the contractual obligations of teachers as such and of a voluntary nature, most of these activities form the crux of the support for the Francophone identity outside the classroom. Without the affective element drawing students into the Francophone fold in schools, participants reported concern for the continued assimilation of the Francophone population. This leads into the next major theme identified, the attitude of the participants toward Francophone challenges.

Attitude Toward Francophone Challenges

"You know how they talk about teachers that get burnt out? Now I understand how teachers get burned out." (Dave)

Working within a community of practice, these participants share the domain of advancing Francophone interests, identify with the struggles of that cause and together, share effective teaching practices with the aim of constructing meaningful Francophone learning. The participants universally pointed to the perceived higher degree of difficulty related to working in a minority Francophone environment compared to their majority

language counterparts. Despite this perceived increased difficulty and the sheer magnitude of the minority Francophone tasks they related, the participants were mostly optimistic and enthusiastic of facing them in the interest of the greater good. There is a concern however, that attitude can only balance the demands of the profession to a certain point. "There is certainly a great desire [to respond to challenges] in minority Francophone environments, but this desire may diminish if fatigue becomes a factor" (Cormier, 2002, p.61).

Gérin-Lajoie (2006b) reports that new teachers in minority Francophone environments mostly figure out the challenges and difficulties once they are entrenched in the school; they are not prepared or forewarned. This is not uncommon as majority groups report the same phenomenon for novice teachers in those settings (Goddard & Foster, 2001) and it constitutes a recurring topic in the critique of teacher preparation programs. In the case of this minority Francophone environment, the combination of the demands of the profession that were unique to it created an unexpected burden for which these novice teachers were not well equipped.

Factors of assimilation and lack of resources combine to contribute to a sense of distress among novice teachers. Zoe expressed in her first interview that working in French

> "presents its own set of difficulties because you're forging an identity. Sometimes it feels as though you're beating them over the head with it and I get sick of myself…It's a responsibility on top of already being a teacher. You almost have a cultural ambassador kind of responsibility on top of everything else and it gets overwhelming."

Similarly, Louise expressed excitement at doing the work of "hidden Francophone curriculum" relating that surrounding the students with Francophone cultural references and activities is "a great idea." She went on in the same interview to hint that the persistent nature of the work wears teachers out:

> "I think we should have more things like [the Francophone magician] come to our school…Honestly, I don't think we do enough but I understand it's hard to get the kids motivated. And, even to get the teachers motivated to get the kids motivated."

Each of the challenges identified by the participants do not occur in isolation, but rather in a cumulative manner which affect the attitude that teachers in this setting bring to bear on their daily practice. If, as Zoe stated, it all gets "overwhelming" and Louise spoke to the motivation of teachers, Dave brought a more direct perspective. Having come to teaching as a second career, he related how much harder teaching was than he initially thought as an outsider looking in. In his third year of teaching Dave shared this insight: "You know how they talk about teachers that get burnt out? Now I understand how teachers get burned out." And yet, despite the explicit understanding of teacher fatigue, Dave stated categorically, when asked, that he would only ever consider teaching in English "if this school burned down" which speaks to the strong sense of identity he and others attached to working in Francophone schools.

There exists no published research at present to corroborate the attrition rates that teachers in minority Francophone environments experience (Ewart, 2009) or whether burn-out occurs at higher incidence rates, than majority language groups. Certainly, the theme was a recurring topic for the participants in their interviews, suggesting an

awareness of the issue within this community of practice. Goddard and Foster (2001) found that novice teachers ultimately progress to a stage of deciding whether to continue in this profession or not and that professional development had an impact on this decision.

The last major theme identified is associated with the entrance into the teaching profession and the ongoing professional development. I've named this theme: "Pre-service and Ongoing Professional Development Issues."

Pre-service and Ongoing Professional Development Issues

"There's not much more than experience I think that really helps in this job." (Doreen)

While the first four themes identified through the in-depth analysis of the data provide insight into the unique everyday experiences of novice teachers in minority Francophone settings, the fifth and final theme of the study is set slightly apart. Issues related to preparedness for the profession are at the crux of the research question and provide the most intense findings. From the outset of the study with the completion of the journal question related to attaining expertise and throughout the interviews, participants expressed passionate opinions as to the effectiveness of the professional development they received as pre-service teacher candidates to the moment of sharing the data. There were significant differences in paths taken during this development. Some participants combined all their experiences, including extra-curricular activities, in the ongoing development of their skills as novice teachers. Others shared extensive lists of professional development they undertook and framed their ongoing development strictly in these terms. Many expressed the concept that experience is the best possible method of

developing professional skills in the educational arena. The contribution of the previous four themes to the overall challenge of teaching in minority Francophone schools and the lack of knowledge or preparedness for each relates directly to the paths of professional preparation that each participant undertook. It is through the critical analysis of these combined data that the main questions of this research are brought to light.

Some of the sharpest, critical commentary came with respect to pre-service preparation programs and this was true regardless of the language of delivery of those programs among the participants. There was a repetition of the phrase "they don't teach you that in teachers' college" by several of the participants at various stages of the research. Disparaging comments were made regarding disconnect between faculty staff, and the reality of life in schools. Indeed, few positive comments were made regarding the curriculum of Faculties of Education. Alex was particularly critical of his preparation, often mocking the usefulness of several courses, for instance, those that identified how to keep organized as a teacher. "I don't mean to belittle it, but if my job was just making lesson plans and grading papers, God, it'd be easy!" By this, he and others thought there were more important things to learn after experiencing their entry to the workplace: effective strategies for establishing classroom climate (discipline), how to effectively differentiate lessons and, interestingly, the psychological side of entering the teaching profession. Dave alluded to the difference between working in the trades where a supervisor "is breathing down your neck" and making sure the work gets done, whereas in teaching, practitioners are often left to their own devices. Alex expressed a more severe sense of isolation than the other novices in the study because the year he started,

he was the only first year novice. He felt that his Faculty did not address the probable sense of isolation sufficiently.

Louise and Doreen thought a more realistic picture of schools would have been effective. Having attended one of only two Francophone Faculties in the province, they commented that these Faculties tended to prepare candidates in light of localized needs experienced near the Faculty and not necessarily in view of being the only Francophone providers for the whole province. In her interview, Louise shared: "I know it was naïve on my part but they didn't even speak once of having students that can be speaking a different language that I don't even understand. It's not a reality up North, I guess." The multicultural aspect of schools is very much a reality in central and southern Ontario as noted in the description of context section.

When there were any positive comments, they were generally participants who experienced alternative preparation programs where novice teachers were working in the classroom in a two-year process of completing their course requirements for qualification. Yvette compared the process to trying on clothes before buying them in order to get a better feel for them. Dave reiterated that the best way to learn is through experience. Having come from a trade prior to becoming a teacher, the "hands-on" approach was the best option for him and he felt that in-class discussions at the Faculty were richer as a result. Pre-service candidates had a broader range of experiences in the classroom and strategies to share in light of that experience, which he felt made for authentic professional growth. In contrast, Doreen disparaged what she considered to be the inadequate amount of practice teaching time in traditional Faculties.

> "There's not much more than experience I think that really helps in this job. You can talk about things, and you can read things…but until you can really involve that in your classroom and make mistakes and learn, you're not going to go much further."

Most of the professional learning occurred once novices were in schools, whether during practicum time in Faculty or once they were established in schools. This formed the basic perception of the group with respect to pre-service preparation.

Ontario's Ministry of Education has sought to support learning during this transition by paying for New Teacher Induction Programs (NTIP in English, PIPNPE in French). By linking novice teachers with veteran teachers as mentors, the program is meant to create communities where successful practices are shared for the ongoing professional development of novice teachers. The participants in the study were no less critical of this program than they were of pre-service preparation. In theory, the participants universally liked the concept of pairing up with veteran teachers to glean valuable strategies from their experiences. They disagreed with the structure of the program in that designated mentors were sometimes not willing participants or were not appropriately chosen according to the novice teacher's needs. Doreen was especially passionate about mentoring and stated: "I think my mentor was wrongly chosen but I do see how it helps…I ended up having another teacher that was basically just my mentor. I liked the idea of a mentor." Also, the unfortunate calendar of meeting days was a common complaint which Doreen expressed clearly:

> "In terms of all the *"formations"* [in-service training] that I've gotten, I can't say they've helped. If they want to make it useful and not a wasted day, especially the

day before report cards are due...make sure that the subject matter isn't

something we just saw in teachers' college."

On the other end of the spectrum, Emma expressed great admiration for the novice

teacher retreat organized prior to the start of the school year. The retreat was prepared in

carrousel format with strategies and curriculum resources being shared by school board

consultants and novice teachers stayed overnight.

"At the end of the day, an older teacher dressed up as Captain Francophone and

she ran around the camp. She was trying to get us excited about working for the

French board...we had a bonfire and talked about our histories...that was

definitely cool."

Not all novice teachers participated in the retreat, but those that did expressed gratitude at

having had the experience. Participants in the study were adamant that experience was

the key and that insertion programs should be better prepared to respond to this.

In seeking any related authentic experience, some participants perceived extra-

curricular activity time as the most valuable professional development they could do as it

gave them a more holistic view of the students and more meaningful relationships leading

to better professional judgement. In others, anything outside of strict classroom contact

time was not taken into consideration of time spent in professional activities. Louise

wrote in response to a journal question theorizing that expertise could be quantified as

10,000 hours of experience in any given activity: "if it takes 10,000 hours to become an

expert, that means that it would take me 15 years! That is demoralizing." Alongside the

comment in the journal were calculations based on classroom contact time alone. In

another response, every life experience calling upon the use of pedagogical skills was

taken into account such as teaching swimming lessons which, along with teaching and coaching sports teams led to Emma's conclusion: "When I think of it, [it] will likely take me 4 years to feel like I am an expert in my field…which is encouraging because it's always nice to have a goal to strive for." The timeline she arrived at coincides with the approximate amount of experience Berliner (2004) attributes to being able to attain the level of "competent" teacher leading into the possibility of "expert" status.

The elusive "expert" status was contested by the participants in their journals and again during interviews. Despite this, they were keen to acquire professional development at every turn. Alex provided an extensive list of development and responsibilities he took on in his first two years of teaching: 3 pilot projects (2 of which had substantial scope), co-ordinated new curriculum programming for a major provincial initiative, attended multiple conferences and special skills courses related to the program but also took Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQ) related to his changing timetable at the school, attended anti-bullying workshops, differentiated instruction conferences, helped administer standardized tests that were not his subject specialty and beyond these, also ran after school extra-curricular activities. Considering the combined difficulties and challenges of working in a minority Francophone environment along with the shared challenges that all novice teachers face, the list is extraordinary not only in its scope, but that it is not unique. Louise also completed several ABQ courses in her first three years of teaching on top of the extensive list of extra-curricular activities and responsibilities bestowed upon her at the school. However, none of the participants were aware of, nor had sought out, professional development related to teaching in a minority Francophone setting despite being aware this caused many of their day-to-day challenges.

In summary, the in-depth analysis of the data using critical ethnography as methodology yielded five main themes that these novice teachers face in their minority Francophone environment: the politics of identity (related specifically to the assimilation problem), the limited resources of their professional environment, their attitude with respect to Francophone praxis, the hidden Francophone curriculum and, pre-service and ongoing professional development issues. These themes are related to and confirm challenges that have been identified in previous studies, providing validity to the outcomes. The study helps to build the literature in this area through an inductive approach and it is the first known attempt at this topic using this approach.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

A. Relationship to Literature

Key findings noted in this study were that challenges identified for minority

Francophone educators in past research continue to be significant for teachers entering

the profession in these settings. Looking at the five themes identified by this community

of practice presents the participants' narratives within the theoretical framework of

Wenger's (1998) four main premises for social participation and learning in a community

of practice. These narratives were derived from journals and (principally) interviews

which show that the identified themes had tremendous impact on the daily practice of

their profession, particularly adjusting to the reality of insufficient resources as well as

the extent of assimilation and the responsibilities of a "hidden Francophone curriculum."

The meaning of these themes is important to understand for French language school

boards in Ontario, Faculties of Education catering to the Francophone population and

indeed, future minority Francophone teachers if the challenges identified are to be met

effectively. Further to issues identified in Goddard and Foster (2001) for beginner

teachers in majority language groups, challenges identified by the CTF (2005, 2007) and

the AEFO (2006), the findings call for a re-evaluation of pre-service programs for

teachers, specifically those entering minority Francophone environments. Ewart's (2009)

work already suggests a two-year alternative program is more effective for minority

Francophones.

Much like the components of learning identified by Wenger (1998), each of the

themes identified in this study are keenly interwoven, each having undeniable links with

the others. Wenger (1998) postulates that for learning to occur, four components interact: meaning (the way we experience life), practice (sustained mutual engagement in action), community (the social configurations our enterprises take on, and the competency ascribed to being a member), and lastly, identity (learning changes who we are in the context of our communities) (p.5). When each of these interconnected and mutually influencing components functions, learning occurs and brings the learner into the broader theoretical framework of the community of practice. For instance, meaning and practice combine and alter the other in mutually affecting ways. Likewise, it would be difficult to maintain, for example, that the rate of assimilation in students was not linked with attitudes of teachers to that particular challenge. Similarly, it is concurred that pre-service and ongoing professional development was bound to the problems of limited resources being experienced in minority Francophone teachers. The relationships between themes do not detract from each challenge's individual importance or merit of being identified as a challenge for Francophone teachers in its own right. The complexities of working in these settings become evident through these interconnected challenges.

Interpreting the data revealed in the five themes provided interesting results when assessed through the theoretical framework of communities of practice. Lave and Wenger's (1991) important work shows how legitimate peripheral participation helps to construct meaning and that this is intensified through belonging to a community of practice. Wenger (1998) further develops this theory and predicates knowledge and its creation on four main premises: that learners are social beings, that knowledge is competence, that knowing occurs through participation, and that meaning is constructed through experience (p. 4). The participants in this study belong to their own community

of practice (novice teachers in a minority Francophone school); they shared their experiences, resources and information among the group members. While belonging to this identified group, they were simultaneously obtaining deeper knowledge of the profession by using their social capital to seek these same things from other, more experienced teachers, a second community of practice to which they belonged (the staff of the school in which the research took place). As advanced by Smith (2003, 2009), the greater one's social capital, the greater the knowledge sharing, which leads to increased performance. Looking at each premise of the community of practice, the themes derived from the data may contribute to the possibilities for increased performance.

In Wenger's (1998) model, all learners are social beings and he focuses his theory on the basis that learning occurs in the context of social participation. He states the key to this first premise for communities of practice is "a process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities" [emphases his] (p. 4). In this study, the data provided by Alex are an example of this. In his first year, he was the only first-year teacher on staff. He did not yet have the social capital to obtain the resources he so desperately needed and he did not have the social network of a more narrowly defined (whether spontaneous or contrived via NTIP) community of practice to help increase his effectiveness as a novice teacher. This shaped his practice at the outset, and influenced him to actively engage new teachers that began after he did. This was sharply contrasted by other participants who mentioned having worked in informal groups with other novices to find solutions to common problems, of being invited into more experienced teachers' classrooms to experience their best practices first-hand, and of their collective experiences related to NTIP workshops.

Continuing with the next premise, that knowledge is deemed as competence in a specific domain, I saw variation in the self-perceived knowledge that novice teachers expressed in the study. Although seen by colleagues as a particularly effective teacher, Louise felt that she was still far from being an expert teacher. She limited her knowledge to in-class events without considering the informal and social interaction related to the further development of professional knowledge. Other participants were more apt to look at their combined competencies related to teaching, whether formal or informal, and felt in the aggregate, they were competent considering their recent start in the profession. The following premise in Wenger's framework ties in to this point since several participants felt that their expertise was being developed through increased participation in the greater school community; that is, extra-curricular activities. As was developed in the findings, eight of the nine participants were heavily involved in these activities. For Wenger, knowledge is deepened through increased participation, and the data certainly provide evidence to this effect.

The fourth premise, that meaning construction comes from engaging experience, is the most fruitful of the four premises in showing how this community of practice was active. Throughout the research project, the participants were critical of the pre-service training they received as well as ongoing professional development opportunities. The majority of participants spoke of increased experience as the best way to prepare teacher candidates for the real world of teaching. Despite the criticism, all of the participants expressed ongoing commitment to the profession and more specifically, of the larger Francophone community in Ontario. In other words, their engaged experiences of working in a French language school permitted them to identify with that larger

community and they derived meaning from being part of it. They also derived meaning from being part of the more localized community of practice of novice teachers in this school. They were facing similar struggles, helped each other out with solutions and shared experiences to further improve the performance of the group members. This contributed to the collective memory of the community of practice and the participants identified having obtained satisfaction of being part of that group, including Alex who wished he had that opportunity sooner in his novice experience.

In this brief description, the four premises upon which Wenger bases communities of practice are evidenced in the data provided by the participants. Within this active community of practice, a recurrence of certain themes led to the development of five main themes experienced by the group.

For the theme called "politics of identity and assimilation", I had identified in the responses of the participants that, they deemed themselves to be members of a larger community that was being defined (or categorized) in terms of the struggle to defend the language and culture in the face of the threat of continued assimilation. They responded that they were taking "on all the prejudices" and "taking up the cross" of being part of the elusive Franco-Ontarian identity, yet constantly expressed that this identity was in a state of evolution, both for themselves and their students. In Wenger's model, the social interaction of staff members among themselves as well as with the students enhances the identity of this community of practice. Francophone Faculties of Education in Ontario need to place a higher priority on responding to provincial realities facing their candidates in this respect. Participants who attended these Faculties experienced difficult transition into professional life because they were unprepared not only for the multi-

ethnic reality of Francophone schools in the south and southwest of Ontario, but were not

given strategies to cope with Francophone assimilation either. These will have to be

developed.

"Lack of resources" as a theme is easily understood by anyone working in

educational circles as it is a common complaint of novice teachers and veterans alike, in

minority and majority group schools. What is more difficult to convey is the importance

of nuance in having textbooks written by Francophones for Francophones if at the most

basic level the rights guaranteed under Section 23 of the Charter are to be fully exercised.

The absence of teaching materials for a recently revised curriculum affects majority and

minority language groups alike, but it affects Francophones more acutely and for longer

periods; and, once the absence of material is solved, it is often a result of having the

English texts translated for expediency. Can an Anglophone author write the history of

Bill 17 for Ontario students belonging to the English majority, and having it directly

translated, effectively portray the lived experiences of the Francophone minority? The

bias in such a situation is obvious and is unacceptable, but the absence of resources make

this solution more expedient in the interest of getting the important work of teaching

accomplished. More needs to be done to ensure that the physical resources available to

Francophone education are not only of equal quality but that they reflect the values and

culture of that group. French language school boards need to demand the full exercise of

the rights enshrined in Section 23 in the Charter from the Ministry of Education who in

turn need to develop an effective strategy responding to this obvious need. Already, the

Action Plan 2008-2012 cited by the CTF (2007) situates priorities that could be targeted.

Faculties of Education preparing Francophone teachers need to raise awareness among

pre-service candidates of this problem and provide them with creative strategies to better cope with the burden as novice teachers.

This research has only focused on teachers in terms of the human resource portion of the "lack of resources" theme. The rest of the support staff network for minority Francophone schools were not examined by this study: social workers, child and youth workers, secretaries, maintenance and janitorial staff. In terms of the legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning of students, this requires that all support staff in these schools be Francophone as well. Otherwise, they will be giving subconscious messages to students about the vitality of their language—a link between resources and the hidden Francophone curriculum. This has an impact on human resources on many levels, not the least of which is the availability of human capital, but also suitable training facilities to increase capacity. Paradoxically, although rights have been enshrined to defend language in this country, community agencies and government services have diminished services available in the minority language and the effects of assimilation mean there simply are fewer qualified personnel to do these jobs in the language required. An example of this is the difficulty the Ontario College of Teachers has had re-organizing its services to better account for the necessity of bilingual positions; an ongoing initiative begun in 2007 and as yet, incomplete (OCT, 2009a).

With comparatively less resources available, the efforts required to imbue schools with "hidden Francophone curriculum" fall ever more on the shoulders of teachers in these environments. Evidence of this in the data collected as part of the research of this study led to the creation of the theme. It was expressed by participants as a feature of working in minority Francophone environments that at once inspired and motivated, but

also that it was a strain as the participants were themselves subject to the tensions of assimilation. Several participants shared comments similar to this one when Doreen stated: "Some teachers remind me how we're supposed to only be speaking French to [the kids]. I agree and I'd like to get better with it. I just want to make the kids…proud…and make them comfortable and like they belong." Many of the participants experienced a lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities, to the point of choosing not to attend post-secondary education in French prior to becoming teachers. Having fallen prey to some of the pressures of assimilation themselves makes them effective role models for students because they live the choice of being defiant, of working in French despite these perceived weaknesses. It also means they experience greater difficulties creating authentic Francophone experiences for students outside the four walls of the classroom. Having a Francophone magician come to the school to create such an experience is laudable, but it requires effort and financial resources—it does not occur magically! Constantly creating these types of actions as well as the usual work of teaching is daunting for novice teachers and expensive for French school boards.

As the difficulties experienced by novice teachers were examined and discussed, participants were very open to expressing themselves about their respective experiences in pre-service programs and the ongoing professional development they felt was required to make the life of novice teachers better. The consensus of the participants, regardless of the language of their pre-service programs, seemed to be that Faculties of Education in Ontario are too far removed from the lives of schools and that experience in schools cannot be replaced by theory. Further social studies outside education seem to provide increasing evidence that experience leads to expertise (Gladwell, 2008) and bolsters

previous claims to that effect within education circles (Berliner, 2004, 2005; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2007). Emma commented that her "first semester was definitely tricky right from the beginning cause you're not the one that establishes discipline in the classroom when you're still in teachers' college." This was an example of strategies that were deemed necessary for professional growth by participants and that would go a long way to improving quality of instruction in the classroom. The current structure of traditional Faculties of Education means the demand for more practicum experience cannot be addressed. Such criticism is not new. When Goddard and Foster (2001) reported their findings, they cited a trail of research suggesting improvements have been called for over a long period but were never adequately responded.

The obvious issue of the culture and language of the pre-service program was repeatedly raised—participants having gone through the Francophone Faculties did not cite this as an advantage (though they all professed to have improved their own linguistic abilities as a result of attending in French) but many participants having gone through English language Faculties did cite this as a disadvantage when it came to the creation of resources and professional networks. To facilitate entry to the profession, issues related to resources and the hidden Francophone curriculum should be more directly addressed in Francophone Faculties of Education. For "invisible Francophone" teachers entering minority Francophone environments from English language Faculties of Education, they could be encouraged by French language school boards to undertake the Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ) called *"Enseignement en milieu minoritaire"* released in January, 2009.

The ABQ course is specific to the topics confronted by teachers in these settings and includes the following learning expectations for candidates: familiarity with the "*politique d'aménagement linguistique*," valuing the history of Ontario's Francophone community, assessing social trends and categorization in the minority Francophone context (issues of identity), recognizing teachers as cultural models and exploring French-language resources in support of student learning (from www.oct.ca). The learning outcomes address directly the challenges identified in the literature as being specific to minority Francophones and confirmed by the narratives of this community of practice. Furthermore, the learning outcomes of the course answer many of the targets set out in the Canadian Teachers' Federation "Action Plan 2008-2012," among them: human resource issues as they relate to giving employees in minority Francophone milieus tools and training specific to those settings. The value of such a qualification seems apparent given the challenges identified in this study, but the question remains why learning outcomes of this course would not simply be incorporated directly into the curricula of Francophone Faculties of Education rather than creating an Additional Basic Qualification for it?

Ewart (2009) found that minority Francophone novice teachers in Manitoba rarely chose to leave the profession and suggested that this was due to the satisfaction they expressed toward the two-year, Francophone teacher preparation program they experienced. The present research contradicts these findings as these novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their pre-service programs yet still maintained that they intended to remain in the profession. Reasons for wanting to continue in the profession are more likely related to the sense of satisfaction and meaningfulness gained from their

communities of practice and the identity that novice teachers derive from working in schools in minority Francophone settings. This was most poignantly expressed in the Attitude Toward Francophone Challenges section when Dave stated he would not leave the study school "unless it burned down." This leads to questions regarding Ewart's results. Did the participants of that study have similar feelings as in this study, of identifying strongly with their Francophone community? If so, this commitment to the larger community may have influenced the results given as reasons expressed for staying in the profession. It should also be encouraging for French language school boards who can assume their teachers are committed to the French language and culture, but who are seeking specific professional development opportunities. Increasing capacity and performance for any employer are easier when the perceived weaknesses of the employees are already identified.

Goddard and Foster (2001) found that "neophyte" teachers developed professionally in six stages, the final stage being the ability to decide whether to continue in the profession and if so, in what capacity. Their novice teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their pre-service preparation, much like the participants of the current study, with some similar challenges being identified. The researchers of that study contended that very little had changed in the structure of pre-service teacher preparation programs in decades despite continued research indicating longstanding dissatisfaction of teachers with these programs. Concurrent with the research of this study, they called for a renewal of the curriculum and structure of pre-service teacher preparation. What makes this study unique is that the research is directed to a specific community of practice that has been previously under-researched and for whom language and culture-specific

Faculties of Education exist. If previous calls for change in majority language traditional Faculties of Education went unheeded, the possibility of enacting such changes in the only two French language Faculties in Ontario seems much more plausible given the limited scope of the undertaking. Francophone Faculties could become leading edge facilities for pedagogy if they were prepared to respond to calls for change from research in ways the majority have not.

A study conducted by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (2005) also motivated this research. The Canadian Teachers' Federation (2005) outlined seven challenges that are unique to teachers in minority Francophone settings across Canada. Many of those same challenges were identified by participants in this study, further confirming the ongoing importance of these challenges for minority Francophones. This contributes to the call for necessary change, not only to better equip novice educators in coping with the identified challenges, but ultimately to help right past wrongs. Access to resources needs to be more adamently demanded by French language Boards from the Ministry of Education and legal challenges to assert Section 23 rights are necessary. Furthermore, that the governing professional body for teachers in Ontario (Ontario College of Teachers) still maintains an incomplete understanding of its Francophone membership appears to the researcher as yet another manifestation of "past wrongs" toward the minority Francophone population of Ontario.

As a member of the minority Francophone community of which this research speaks, and having certain decision making authority to enact agency on the topic, I am aware that other explanations may exist for the findings. The experiences of my family and of my daily professional life are inextricably linked to the subject matter of the study

and less passionate eyes might see different interpretations of the data. For instance, data relating to professional development or "hazing" are typical of any novice teacher and not just Francophones in minority settings. Lack of preparedness for novice teachers is also a shared concern of the majority language group. While my contention is that the manifestations of these challenges present themselves in unique ways for Francophones, most of the post-secondary education attended by these participants was in English, with all the cultural ramifications that may have.

B. Limitations of Design and Future Research

During the process of the study, the researcher was promoted within the study site which may have had an effect on the responses of some of the participants due to the inherent change in the power relation between the participants and the researcher. While the willingness of the participants to share their perspectives is not questioned, choices whether conscious or not, may have been made as to the extent of detail shared for certain situations. For example, some journals were quite clean with respect to their professional language and even physical presentation, which may or may not be an indication of inherent power dynamics. The extent of this phenomenon in the interviews is unknown, and therefore presents a possible limitation on the results.

Another aspect of the first series of interviews to be accounted for in appraising the data was the time of the scholastic year. The two weeks during which the first interviews occurred were near the end of the school year when exams and report cards were in the process of being completed. There was a possible predisposition of the participants being tired and more negative than would otherwise have been the case.

Completing the interviews within the same scholastic year may also have impacted the results differently as constraints on the researcher made this study span over two scholastic years.

Variations in the key aspects of the participants also present limitations (see Table 1). Alex, with five years' experience at the end of the study, had different perspectives than the participants who had only completed 2 years at the end of the study. If I were to do the study anew, I would limit this particular variation if possible and narrow the limits of years of experience in the group to make them more homogeneous. Similarly, variations in types of Faculty—traditional one-year versus alternative 2-year, English versus French—place certain limitations on the results. Comparing either of these variations alone could result in altogether new qualitative studies in this context.

Ultimately, another researcher with the exact same data in hand could interpret them quite differently and reach different conclusions than I have.

The question of whether the language and culture of delivery of the novice teacher's Faculty of Education have an impact on their eventual success in minority Francophone environments is beyond the reach of the current study. Given the high incidence of post-secondary education acquired in English by the participants of this study (72%), it may be worth researching through means of a survey whether the same incidence of majority language post-secondary education is prevalent in other minority Francophone settings in Ontario and what the impact for that might be. It is unknown if the participants who completed their post-secondary in English faced difficulties because the culture and language were different or because the preparation in their respective Faculties was insufficient.

Further research into a more effective definition of Francophones within the Ontario College of Teachers' ranks could help to better identify "invisible Francophones" by means of a survey. The absence of published research in the areas of novice teacher attrition in minority Francophone settings warrants greater attention, if only to measure the effectiveness of NTIP/PIPNPE programs. Particularly, research with respect to possible links between the type of teacher preparation program followed in Ontario, whether traditional single-year preparation or alternative two-year program, and any incidence this has on attrition, as was completed by Ewart (2009) in Manitoba.

Practices employed to recruit and prepare teachers should be re-evaluated, whether in French or in English. How is the quality of candidates being ascertained, for instance? If prior research identifies challenges for novice teachers that continue to be significant over long periods, perhaps research in the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs needs to be addressed more fully. Surveying novice teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of specific aspects of their respective pre-service programs could help answer the calls from previous research. Ontario's English language teacher preparation programs have been consistently oversubscribed for several years (OCT, 2009b) yet the numbers of students being admitted and graduated suggest there are other issues worth researching. The researcher suggests expansion of two-year programs to address the current glut of available teachers. This would simultaneously address the long standing gaps in pre-service teacher preparation noted in the literautre and the demand for greater experience during pre-service by the participants of this study.

C. Conclusions

The findings provide insight into five types of challenges faced by novice teachers in this minority Francophone environment. They seem to replicate challenges identified in previous studies (CTF, 2005, 2007; AEFO, 2006, Ewart, 2009). Data were obtained through the use of journals and interviews over several months and interpretation of the data was informed by the communities of practice framework. The research has attempted to bring to light whether novice teachers in minority Francophone environments were adequately prepared given the challenges they face upon entry to the profession; to what degree these challenges affected their daily practice and finally, what special professional development had they undergone to address these challenges.

Overall, the participants related a sense of being overwhelmed yet optimistic and committed in the face of admittedly difficult tasks. In some cases, participants were well prepared and were able to adjust to unforeseen challenges; while in others, not at all prepared and experiencing great difficulty making the transition. There is no evidence in this study to suggest whether this difference was a result of the type of teacher preparation experienced by the participants or whether innate qualities or skills were at play. With the prevalence of the challenges unique to the minority Francophone setting being exposed during the study, participants expressed not having had adequate preparation in this regard. However, it did not motivate them to enroll in the challenge-specific programs that have become available, such as the ABQ in "*Enseignement en milieu minoritaire.*" It is possible that participants were not aware of the availability of such professional development, although this researcher speculates that for several of the

participants who expressed being overwhelmed, this would not have increased enrollment

for this course.

CHAPTER VI

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CHAPTER VII

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Minority Language Educational Rights: Section 23
(Retrieved from Wikipedia on January 30, 2010:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Section_Twenty-
three_of_the_Canadian_Charter_of_Rights_and_Freedoms)

23.(1) Citizens of Canada

(a) whose first language learned and still understood is that of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province in which they reside, or

(b) who have received their primary school instruction in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province, have the right to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in that language in that province.

(2) Citizens of Canada of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

(3) The right of citizens of Canada under subsections (1) and (2) to have their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province

(a) applies wherever in the province the number of children of citizens who have such a right is sufficient to warrant the provision to them out of public funds of minority language instruction; and

(b) includes, where the number of those children so warrants, the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities provided out of public funds.

APPENDIX 2

INSTRUMENT 1

Questions for 2-week journaling activity

Instructions:

The following questions may be answered in the provided journals in any order and in as much depth as the participant wishes. The answers should reflect the participant's personal and professional philosophies with respect to education and can draw on any prior knowledge or experiences as deemed appropriate by the participant.

<u>Question A</u>

"The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action." (John Dewey)

Reflecting on your experiences thus far in teaching, what actions have you undertaken that contributed to your overall development as a teacher?

<u>Question B</u>

"There is a growing body of research and practice that underscores what parents and teachers have long known: that learning how to 'read' ourselves—and the reactions of others—is as important as learning how to read words and numbers." (Jonathan Cohen)

Think of your earliest memory of school. What is the context of that memory? Was it positive or negative? What connection, if any, exists between this experience and your current role as a teacher?

Question C

"...We want citizens who proceed in responsible, ethical and informed ways—ones who

take seriously their membership in their local community and in the global society as

well. Alas, even the highest IQ or the most rigorous education in the disciplines will not

bring about these virtues—they reflect the character of a person." (Howard Gardner)

Do you agree with this statement? Is it more important for prospective teachers to

have certain desirable character traits related to the profession or to have expertise

in their chosen fields of study?

Question D

Research shows that approximately 14% of adolescents are involved in self-harming behaviour. (Ross and Heath, 2002)

Teachers play a very important role in the prevention of teenage suicide. (Reynolds and Johnston, 1994)

"Next to parents, teachers know the children perhaps better than any other adult." (Clarizio, 1994)

Most bullying happens in or close to the school building (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2000).

"Teenagers in single-parent families and in blended families (stepfamilies) are three times more likely to need psychological help within a given year." (Hill, 1993)

In considering these statistics, do you feel teachers have adequate tools to deal with

these and other related social issues? Is it even a teacher's responsibility to intervene

in such cases?

Question E

"...*get over [the] desire for perfection. Teaching is continually revealed [...] as an intensely human and incredibly complex activity. It is messy; it requires risk-taking and mistakes. It requires constant recalibration because there is so much to learn, but also because students change, every student group is different, and our culture and world continually place new demands upon us.*" (Willhelm, 2008)

How do you feel about this statement? How have your experiences borne this out?

Question F

Malcolm Gladwell theorizes in his most recent book "Outliers" (2008) that the most successful people in the world obtain that success through experience and that the general number uncovered to indicate expertise is 10,000 hours worth of experience in a given domain. Examples in his book include Bill Gates' time in the computer lab as a young man, the Beatles during their early years in Germany and several elite athletes preparing for world-class competitions or professional sports.

Do you feel this theory could apply equally to teachers? Do you find this thought encouraging or demoralizing? If true, according to this number, when would you be considered an expert in your current trajectory of experience? In what other ways do you think expertise in teaching can be judged?

APPENDIX 3

INSTRUMENT 2

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS
[Adapted from: P.W. Richardson & H.M.G. Watt (2005); Madison (2005)]

Besides teaching, what other occupations have you pursued? Were you dissatisfied with your previous career?

Have you always wanted to be a teacher? When did you decide this?

What most influenced your decision to become a teacher?

Does teaching impact your social standing in the community? How so?

How do you feel about the education you received in your faculty of education?

Can you describe the structure of the teacher education program you followed? Why do you think your faculty trained you the way they did?

How long have you been employed here? What is your role in the school? Can you describe an average working day?

Can you give an example of a work day you will never forget? What did you do? How do you feel about it?

Are there any skills teaching has required of you that you did not expect? Tell me about a time when this was made evident to you.

Do you feel the concerns of new teachers are similar to/different than those of more experienced staff members? How so?

Do you feel you currently possess the necessary knowledge to meet the demands of teaching?

What advice would you give to people applying to your faculty of education right now? Do you have any advice for new teachers being hired to this school?

Do you believe you will be able to make a contribution to society as a whole by being a teacher? Is this important to you?

APPENDIX 4

INSTRUMENT 3

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR 2ND INTERVIEW

If you run into a student in a non-professional milieu, what language do you use?
- Do students address you in French or English when they see you in a non-school environment?
- Are there unwritten rules regarding use of French in the school?

Are you involved with Francophone community activities outside of school? Do you self-identify with being Franco-Ontarian?

Outside curriculum delivery, what are some of the responsibilities you feel you need to be accountable for? Is there direct pressure to do these things?

Do French faculties of education prepare teachers better for teaching in French language schools? Why (or why not)?
- Have you ever taken specific development courses for French minority education?

Does provincial testing impact the overall climate in the school? Does it impact your teaching directly?

Does teaching in the Francophone system require different skills than the mainstream English system?
- Comment on what you think the daily practice someone at your exact level of experience teaching in the English board has. Is it similar? Different? Why?

Do you have the tools to adequately perform the tasks of teaching in a minority Francophone environment?

Are the concerns of teachers in the Francophone system the same as teachers in the English system?

What are some of the activities that go on in the school related to being Francophone?
- What is the impact of these on your daily practice?

Does the instruction of your classes differ from the same subject matter in English?

**Each individual interview was rooted in a return to comments in the participant's journal or transcript from the first interview which were elaborated upon.

APPENDIX 5

LETTER OF PERMISSION – DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

University
of Windsor

CONSENT TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

Title of Study: **Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their**

Professional Preparation

You are asked to permit a research study conducted by Roger Lebel, graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, to take place within confines of property under the care of CSDECSO. Results from this research will be analysed and contribute to the completion of a thesis study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Roger Lebel at home (519-XXX-XXXX), at work (519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX) or Dr. Finney Cherian, thesis supervisor for the research, at 519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
Through the use of institutional ethnography, the study's purpose will be to determine perceptions new teachers have toward their respective preparations for the teaching profession after having gained less than five years' experience in the profession.

PROCEDURES
Subjects who volunteer to participate in this study will be asked to do the following things:

To begin, they will engage in a self-reflexive journaling activity. Journals with questions encouraging self-reflexion will be provided by the researcher. This activity will serve to create a context in which rich, textured narrative is encouraged. Over the course of two weeks, they will record their thought processes in response to questions or themes related to the research question provided by the researcher. They will do this at their leisure. Total time related to journaling should not exceed two (2) hours, although the desire to write longer entries may require time commitments beyond those foreseen by the researcher. These journals will permit the researcher to acquire an understanding of background and motivation to become a teacher.

They will then meet with the researcher for an individual, video-taped interview. The interview will take place within the confines of the school in which they currently work. The duration of this interview is not expected to last beyond one (1) hour, although the quality of discussion will be the determining factor and may lead to slightly longer interviews. Once interviews have been transcribed using the "conversational analysis" method (incorporating body language into the transcripts) they will be able to review their responses and withdraw any comments they feel did not reflect their opinions as intended.
At a mutually determined follow-up date, another individual, one hour video-taped interview will take place, using the same format as the first only with focussed questions resulting from responses in the first interview. Likewise, participants will have the right to withdraw comments during the review of the transcripts from their interview which they feel did not represent their intended opinion.

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Following transcription and analysis of all individual interviews, all participants will be invited to participate in a group interview where further narratives can be shared. This session will also be video-taped. This activity will likely last longer than the previous interviews but is not expected to last longer than ninety (90) minutes.

Participants will be contacted individually with results from the research. At the participant's request, their own journals and copies of their transcripts will be given to them; otherwise, all original material, journals and videotapes, will be destroyed within 24 months of the study's completion.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

While it is impossible to eliminate all risk in studies, every effort will be made to limit or minimize risk of emotional discomfort by the researcher. Assurances of confidentiality and privacy will be reiterated, such as the use of pseudonyms, as well as the possibility of withdrawal at any time during the research. Furthermore, participants may choose to omit specific sections of data.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is hoped the research will offer faculties of education, through the perceptions of new teachers, areas for improvement in selection processes and education techniques for pre-service teachers. It is hoped it will also offer boards ways of providing greater support for novice teachers by means of a more informed mentorship. Improvement in both these areas may result in reduced numbers of new teachers leaving the profession. They may also increase the quality of experiences children will live in schools as new teachers will be better prepared to face the challenges of the profession.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
No monetary remuneration is being offered to research participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with a participant will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with permission. All journals and video taped interviews will be kept under lock and key and pseudonyms will be applied to participants in the analysis and writing stages of the thesis. Should findings warrant further publication in academic journals, like manner of keeping the identities of the participants confidential will be strictly adhered to. Original notes and video taped materials will be destroyed within 24 months of completion of the study.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants can choose whether to be in this study or not. If they volunteer to be in this study, they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. They may also refuse to answer any questions they don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw them from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Such circumstances may include conflicts of interest or lack of co-operation by the subject.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS
According to the planned timeline of thesis completion, results will be available in June 2009. A copy of the analysis pertaining to each individual research subject will be emailed to the participants upon completion in .pdf format. If subjects request a full copy of the thesis, such a request will likewise be honoured via email in .pdf format.

Expected date when results are available: June, 2009

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Subjects may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding rights of research subjects, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **"Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their Professional Preparation"** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to permit this study to occur within the confines of buildings under the management of CSDECSO. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Director of Education for CSDECSO – Janine Griffore

_____

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX 6

LETTER OF PERMISSION – RESEARCH SITE PRINCIPAL

University
of Windsor

CONSENT TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

Title of Study: **Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their Professional**

Preparation

You are asked to permit a research study conducted by Roger Lebel, graduate student from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, to take place within confines of property under your care for CSDECSO. Results from this research will be analysed and contribute to the completion of a thesis study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Roger Lebel at home (519-XXX-XXXX), at work (519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX) or Dr. Finney Cherian, thesis supervisor for the research, at 519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
Through the use of institutional ethnography, the study's purpose will be to determine perceptions new teachers have toward their respective preparations for the teaching profession after having gained less than five years' experience in the profession.

PROCEDURES
Subjects who volunteer to participate in this study will be asked to do the following things:
To begin, they will engage in a self-reflexive journaling activity. Journals with questions encouraging self-reflexion will be provided by the researcher. This activity will serve to create a context in which rich, textured narrative is encouraged. Over the course of two weeks, they will record their thought processes in response to questions or themes related to the research question provided by the researcher. They will do this at their leisure. Total time related to journaling should not exceed two (2) hours, although the desire to write longer entries may require time commitments beyond those foreseen by the researcher. These journals will permit the researcher to acquire an understanding of background and motivation to become a teacher.

They will then meet with the researcher for an individual, video-taped interview. The interview will take place within the confines of the school in which they currently work. The duration of this interview is not expected to last beyond one (1) hour, although the quality of discussion will be the determining factor and may lead to slightly longer interviews. Once interviews have been transcribed using the "conversational analysis" method (incorporating body language into the transcripts) they will be able to review their responses and withdraw any comments they feel did not reflect their opinions as intended.
At a mutually determined follow-up date, another individual, one hour video-taped interview will take place, using the same format as the first only with focussed questions resulting from responses in the first interview. Likewise, participants will have the right to withdraw comments

during the review of the transcripts from their interview which they feel did not represent their intended opinion.

Following transcription and analysis of all individual interviews, all participants will be invited to participate in a group interview where further narratives can be shared. This session will also be video-taped. This activity will likely last longer than the previous interviews but is not expected to last longer than ninety (90) minutes.

Participants will be contacted individually with results from the research. At the participant's request, their own journals and copies of their transcripts will be given to them; otherwise, all original material, journals and videotapes, will be destroyed within 24 months of the study's completion.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

While it is impossible to eliminate all risk in studies, every effort will be made to limit or minimize risk of emotional discomfort by the researcher. Assurances of confidentiality and privacy will be reiterated, such as the use of pseudonyms, as well as the possibility of withdrawal at any time during the research. Furthermore, participants may choose to omit specific sections of data.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is hoped the research will offer faculties of education, through the perceptions of new teachers, areas for improvement in selection processes and education techniques for pre-service teachers. It is hoped it will also offer boards ways of providing greater support for novice teachers by means of a more informed mentorship. Improvement in both these areas may result in reduced numbers of new teachers leaving the profession. They may also increase the quality of experiences children will live in schools as new teachers will be better prepared to face the challenges of the profession.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No monetary remuneration is being offered to research participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with a participant will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with permission. All journals and video taped interviews will be kept under lock and key and pseudonyms will be applied to participants in the analysis and writing stages of the thesis. Should findings warrant further publication in academic journals, like manner of keeping the identities of the participants confidential will be strictly adhered to. Original notes and video taped materials will be destroyed within 24 months of completion of the study.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants can choose whether to be in this study or not. If they volunteer to be in this study, they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. They may also refuse to answer any questions they don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw them from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Such circumstances may include conflicts of interest or lack of co-operation by the subject.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

According to the planned timeline of thesis completion, results will be available in June 2009. A copy of the analysis pertaining to each individual research subject will be emailed to the participants upon completion in .pdf format. If subjects request a full copy of the thesis, such a request will likewise be honoured via email in .pdf format.

Expected date when results are available: June, 2009

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

Subjects may withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding rights of research subjects, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **"Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their Professional Preparation"** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to permit this study to occur within the confines of the school under my management for CSDECSO. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Principal of XXXXX XXXXXXXXX – XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

_____

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR
These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX 7

LETTER OF CONSENT - PARTICIPANT

University **U** of Windsor

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: **Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their**

Professional Preparation

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by **Roger Lebel, graduate student**, from the

Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results of this research will contribute to the

completion of a master's level thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact **Roger Lebel at home**

(519-XXX-XXXX) at work (519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX) or by email (XXXXX@uwindsor.ca) or Dr. Finney

Cherian, faculty supervisor for this research at his office (519-XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX) or by email

(XXXXXXX@uwindsor.ca).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Through the use of institutional ethnography, the study's purpose will be to determine perceptions novice teachers (that is, teachers having less than five (5) years experience) have toward their respective preparations for the teaching profession after having gained experience in the profession.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
To begin, you will engage in a self-reflexive journaling activity. Journals with questions encouraging self-reflexion will be provided by the researcher. This activity will serve to create a context in which rich, textured narrative is encouraged. Over the course of two weeks, you will record your thought processes in response to questions or themes related to the research question provided by the researcher. You will do this at your leisure. Total time related to journaling should not exceed two (2) hours, although your desire to write longer entries may require time commitments beyond those foreseen by the researcher. These journals will permit the researcher to acquire an understanding of your background and motivation to become a teacher.

You will then meet with the researcher for an individual, video-taped interview. The interview will take place within the confines of the school in which you currently work. The duration of this interview is not expected to last beyond one (1) hour, although the quality of discussion will be the determining factor and may lead to slightly longer interviews. Once interviews have been transcribed using the "conversational analysis" method (incorporating body language into the transcripts) you will be able to review your responses and withdraw any comments you feel did not reflect your opinions as intended.
At a mutually determined follow-up date, another individual, one hour video-taped interview will take place, using the same format as the first only with focussed questions resulting from responses in the first interview. Likewise, you will have the right to withdraw comments during the review of the transcripts from your interview which you feel did not represent your intended opinion.

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Following transcription and analysis of all individual interviews, all participants will be invited to participate in a group interview where further narratives can be shared. This session will also be video-taped. This activity will likely last longer than the previous interviews but is not expected to last longer than ninety (90) minutes.

Participants will be contacted individually with results from the research. At the participant's request, their own journals and copies of their transcripts will be given to them; otherwise, all original material will be destroyed within 24 months of the study's completion.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Very minimal risk is expected by the researcher, although some emotional discomfort may occur.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

By participating, it is hoped a greater sense of community will result by novice teachers' sharing of stories during the group interview session.
In a broader sense, it is hoped the research will inform suggestions for improved recruiting and education techniques for pre-service teachers. Improvement in these areas may result in reduced numbers of new teachers leaving the profession.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No monetary remuneration is being offered to research participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. All journals and video taped interviews will be kept under lock and key and pseudonyms will be applied in the analysis and writing stages of the thesis. Should findings warrant further publication in academic journals, like manner of keeping your identity confidential will be strictly adhered. Unless you request your journal and transcripts, they, as well as all video taped materials, will be destroyed within 24 months of completion of the study.
The researcher cannot guarantee the confidentiality of views shared during the group interview due to the presence of other participants.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Such circumstances may include your lack of co-operation. This might include insufficient responses to journaling or interview questions or the repeated inability of the participant to make themselves available for interviews given the relatively short period of research being proposed.
If you choose to withdraw during the group interview, recording will continue and any comments made prior to your exit will remain on the record and cannot be withdrawn.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

According to the planned timeline of thesis completion, results will be available in late June 2009. A copy of the transcripts pertaining to each individual research subject will be emailed to the participants upon completion in .pdf format. If subjects request a full copy of the thesis, such a request will likewise be honoured via email in .pdf format.

Expected date when results are available: 15 July, 2009

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data will not be used in subsequent studies. However, if the material lends itself to further publication for academic purposes, do you give consent for the subsequent use of the data from this study?

☐ Yes ☐ No

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study **"Novice Teachers' Reflections on the Effectiveness of their Professional Preparation"** as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject

_____   _____

Signature of Subject   Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Revised February 2008

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR INDIVIDUAL VIDEO TAPING

U N I V E R S I T Y   O F
WINDSOR

Research Subject Name: _____

Title of the Project: NOVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

I consent to my being video-taped during interviews.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the viewing or video-taping be discontinued. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that viewing will be kept strictly confidential. Tapes will be filed by number only and stored in a locked cabinet. Tapes will be destroyed within 24 months of the completion of the study.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and the viewing of materials will be for professional use only.

_____   _____

(Research Subject)   (Date)

VITA AUCTORIS

Roger Lebel was born in 1975 in Southampton, Ontario. He graduated as Valedictorian from St. Mary's High School in Owen Sound, Ontario in 1993. After completing grade 13 in his native Port Elgin, Roger went to the University of Ottawa where he obtained a B.A. with Honours in History (Cum Laude) in 1998. Upon completion, Roger travelled to complete his Post-Graduate Certificate in Education at St. Andrew's College Faculty of Education, at the University of Glasgow, Scotland in 1999. He is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in Education at the University of Windsor and hopes, at long last, to graduate in Fall, 2010.