Bibliographie annotée

Kissau, S. (2007). Is what’s good for the goose good for the gander? The case of male and

female encouragement to study French. *Foreign Language Annals*, *40*(3), 419-432. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02867

Mots clefs:

Encouragement to stay in French, peer influence, parental influence, teacher influence. gender differences.

Objectif de l’article:

This study seeks to determine if there are differences between genders with regards to the type, the amount, and the source of encouragement to stay in French for junior high students.

Résumé:

Kissau presents a thorough literature review of previous studies that show the significance of parental, peer, and teacher influence on students taking French. He notes that boys are more susceptible to outside influences than are girls. Kissau then presents his study of grade 9 students in Ontario to discover their perception of encouragement received from parents, peers, and teachers to stay in French programs. The results are very interesting.

Kissau’s study showed a significant difference between boys and girls, in that the boys felt that they did not receive encouragement to study French from neither parents nor peers nor teachers. As the students continuing into French 10 felt much parental encouragement, there were few boys who chose to go on. With peer encouragement girls reported a social pressure from peers to take French; boys did not. The same was reported for teacher encouragement, with girls feeling encouraged to continue in French, and boys not. Students noted differences in parental attitudes as well. One student reported that the parents didn’t see any point for their son to go into French, even though they encouraged their daughter to do so.

The feedback from the teachers in this study was very valuable and calls for further study. Teachers reported that guidance counsellors encourage boys to not continue in French, stating that it will not get them anywhere. Instead, they promote math and sciences. There was even insinuation that teachers themselves feel that boys would rather study other subjects, namely physical education, and therefore they support students making that change.

**Méthodologie:**

This mixed-methods study began with a self-selected sample from grade nine students in an Ontario school district. From the 490 students who responded and completed the questionnaire, a stratified random subsample of 8 participants was created to ensure equal representation of males and females for interviews. The questionnaire measured how much encouragement students received to stay in French programs. This questionnaire was a seven point Likert scale developed from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, Clément, Smythe, & Smythe, 1979) and the Grade 9 French Survey (Netten et al., 1999). The questions asked about encouragement from teachers, parents, and peers. After the written questionnaires, the subset of eight participants was interviewed to explore their perceptions further. Data was analyzed with MANOVA to investigate gender based variance, and ANOVA to investigate differences between different influence groups (parents, teachers, or peers). Teachers were interviewed to find their perceptions of how students are encouraged or discouraged to study French.

Pertinence pour les objectifs d’études que vous avez choisis:

Kissau’s study explores a factor that will form an important part of my presentation: encouragement to stay in French. Social influences play a large role in adolescent choices. It is entirely relevant to include the results from this study which show how junior high students are encouraged or discouraged from studying French by their parents, peers, teachers, and guidance counsellors.

What strikes me the most about this study is that it mirrors the personal experiences that I have had. In my 30 years of teaching Core French and 5 years of teaching French immersion I have encountered discouragement for boys to be in French. In Core French I have had parents tell me in front of their sons that they did not see any reason for their sons to learn French; that it was a waste of time. I have seen boys trying to encourage their friends to drop French once they reach high school. In the past 10 years at my current school French immersion has been scheduled at the same time as Outdoor Education, forcing boys to choose immersion of the popular Outdoor Education course. Many times I have experienced career counsellors and colleagues advising students to drop French in order to pursue more science or mathematics courses, and Language courses are considered less important than math, science and history. I believe that Kissau’s study is valuable to my research.

References

Gardner, R., Clément, R., Smythe, P., & Smythe, P. (1979). *Attitude motivation test battery-revised*. London, Canada: Language Research Group.

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Netten, J., Riggs, C., & Hewlett, S. (1999). *Choosing core French in the secondary school: A student perspective.* St. John’s, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland.j