Attrition in Secondary Immersion: Possible Solutions

Obadia, A., & Theriault, C. (1995). *Attrition in French immersion programs: Possible solutions*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED400674.pdf:

**Key Words:**

Drop out of French immersion, boys, junior high, academic difficulty, lack of choice, social-emotional difficulties, quality of teaching and programs

**Objectives**

This report offers insight into why and when students tend to drop out in Canadian French immersion programs.

**Resume**

This report offers insight into why and when students tend to drop out in Canadian French immersion programs. I am reporting on only those that are connected to my study.

1. Action taken by district / coordinators to diminish attrition: Many districts list communication with parents and CPF projects. Only a couple of districts reported trying to increase choice of courses and hire more qualified teachers.

2. Action taken by principals: Many reported communication with parents, meetings with students, and encouraging exchanges.

3. Action taken by teachers: Many reported talking with students about the merits of staying in the programs and participating in exchanges. A few listed having a reduced teaching load to focusing on quality instruction, and consistent recognition of the students and their achievements.

Perceived Reasons for dropping out of French immersion

Many reasons for dropping out were suggested by all of those who responded. The reasons most listed were:

1. Academic difficulties

2. Quality of teaching

3. Parent’s Influence

4. Limited choice of courses

5. Peer Pressure and other social reasons

6. Too much work

Out of the many suggestions to improve the situation, these are the most relevant to my project:

* Timetable to allow more course choices
* Diversify teaching techniques
* Engage students in a cooperative, collaborative theme-basis exciting curriculum.
* Increase of cooperative strategies.
* Promote teamwork activities where students can use their French
* Recognize and design activities for individual learning styles.
* Develop strategies to recruit and hire best possible teachers
* Hire teachers with different specialties
* Train teachers into immersion methodology and second language teaching
* Avoid split classes

**Methodology**

Four districts in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia were chosen for detailed study. In addition to this, questionnaires were sent to all of the French Coordinators and assistants throughout the entire province. Within the four selected districts, questionnaires were distributed to all of the principals and French immersion teachers. There is no tracking of which questionnaires were returned. The questions were subjective and qualitative in nature, asking about interventions being taken to diminish attrition in French immersion, perceptions about reasons for the attrition, and suggestions on how it could be reduced.

**Pertinence to my study**

Despite the fact that this report was done in 1995, the information is very relevant. The same issues arise now in our French immersion classes. All of the problems and suggestions in this report match my own findings as a teacher in the immersion program in British Columbia. My project is focused specifically on boys in high school French programs, but I plan to lead it into the subject by starting with this general information and then leading into the specific focus on my study.

References

Obadia, A., & Theriault, C. (1995). *Attrition in French immersion programs: Possible solutions*. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED400674.pdf: