Students with Exceptionalities Learning a Second Language: A Case Study of Three Children's Experiences in Quebec's Intensive ESL Course

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ABSTRACT

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Alexandra Imperiale

This study explores the learning experiences of three francophone students with diagnosed disabilities who participated in a 5-month intensive English course in Quebec. Each student exhibited a unique exceptionality: Dysphasia and Dyslexia, Attention defecit hyperactivity disorder and developmental delay and finally Tourette syndrome and high anxiety. The aim of the study was to provide a better understanding of how students with exceptionalities experience learning a second language (L2) in an intensive setting. The three main research questions were: a) How does the three students' L2 English develop over the course of the IEC, with respect to: listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary?; b) What are the students' perceptions of their ability to learn English and their attitudes towards the language at the outset of the intensive course and do these perceptions change over time?; and c) What factors associated with the intensive experience enhance or challenge learning for these students?

Students completed a number of English language measures and participated in one-on-one interviews and classroom observations. This is the first longitudinal study in intensive to document students' perceptions on their own learning over time. A teacher interview was also conducted. All three students made learning gains and demonstrated confidence in their ability to learn a second language. For students with exceptionalities, key factors enhancing learning in the intensive experience included: intensity, student-teacher relationship, oral interaction, explicit learning, classroom involvement, the communicative classroom and English considered as an "academic" subject.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Quebec currently offers an intensive English course (IEC) to grade 5 or 6 francophone students. The course is an extension of the regular ESL course where students would usually receive a total of 36 hours (60 minutes a week) of ESL instruction a year, where in the intensive model, students receive half of their academic year in English instruction (400 hours or more) and the other half focuses on the regular French curriculum. The IEC is differs from immersion in that students focus on learning the language itself through a communicative approach where "emphasis is on meaningful interaction and little attention is paid to syntax or morphology" (Spada & Lightbown, 1989, p.15). This allows students to focus more on interpersonal communication skills such as speaking and listening as opposed to more "academic" skills such as reading and writing through the use of games, cooperative activities and themes.

Currently, most IECs only allow students with successful academic records to participate. More recently, researchers are beginning to explore the suitability of the IEC for a wider range of learners. For instance, Collins and White (2012) conducted a study in an IEC where students were non-selected. This meant that many different students were permitted to participate. They found that the initial gap in L2 performance between strong and weak students had narrowed at the end of the IEC. The authors looked at differences in language proficiency of students at the beginning of the five-month IEC. This enabled them to distinguish strong students from weaker ones based on English proficiency only. The researchers speculated that perhaps individual differences such as academic and cognitive abilities, or L2 aptitude, might have played a role in students' different proficiency levels. This was assumed because all students had the same amount of

English exposure prior to their entry in the IEC. Collins and White hypothesized that the intensive learning conditions may have allowed the weaker students to “catch up” to their stronger peers in their L2 skills. The authors claimed the intensive model was perhaps more suited to weaker students than the regular "drip feed" classes (limited amount of language exposure over a longer period of time) they had previously experienced because it provided sufficient time for them to learn the target language.

A limitation to the Collins and White (2012) study was that no measures were taken to identify individual differences in academic performance or L2 aptitude. Thus the researchers were unable to determine if the weaker students were indeed academically weaker, had lower language aptitude or specific learning disabilities, and/or were unmotivated.

There is a common misconception that students with exceptionalities (SWE) will be unable to learn or will face great difficulty in learning an additional language (Arnett & Mady, 2010; Genesee, 2007) There is some research that has revealed that SWE can indeed be successful L2 learners given appropriate learning context and pedagogical approaches. SWE in L2 contexts, such as general second language/foreign language classes where instruction can vary between 2-4 hours a week have been investigated (Downy, Snyder & Hill, 2000; Sparks, Humbach & Javorsky, 2008). Researchers have also investigated more “concentrated” L2 settings such as immersion programs where students learn content subjects (e.g. math, social sciences) through the second language (Bruck, 1978, 1982 &1984; Genesee, 1976b; Mady & Arnett, 2009). Other more “concentrated” contexts such as intensive L2 settings, and SWE participation within these settings have not yet been empirically studied.

In previous literature, SWE have been defined as students with mild disabilities that are highly incidental such as learning disabilities, emotional/behavioural disabilities and mild intellectual delays (Estell, Farmer, Irvin, Crowther, Akos & Boudah, 2009). In this study, SWE are defined as students who experience *learning* difficulties (due to the presence of a condition such as attention problems, dyslexia, ADHD), *chronic* disabilities (i.e. autism, cerebral palsy, Tourette syndrome) and *speech and language* difficulties (difficulty speaking and/or being understood, dyslexia) (Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, PALS, 2006). All exceptionalities mentioned above affect typical language development in some way (Sparks, 2013) and are also the highest reported disabilities found among school-age children between 5-14 years old in Canada (PALS, 2006), which is the population investigated in this study.

THE PRESENT STUDY

This study follows up on the research reported on in Collins and White (2012) in that it follows three SWE over the course of Quebec's IEC. Although there are studies on SWE and L2 learning, there is currently no research that directly documents the L2 performance and the experience of SWE in an intensive language-learning context. However, researchers have suggested that the IEC can be beneficial for this population of students (Lightbown & Spada, 1989; Collins & White, 2012). The research questions related to the present study are as follows: a) How does the three students' L2 English as a second language (L2) develop over the course of the IEC, with respect to: *listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary*?, b) At the end of the IEC, how does their progress compare to the average of their classmates in the same IEC?, c) What are the three students' perceptions of their ability to learn English and their attitudes towards the L2 at

the outset of the IEC and do these perceptions change over time? And d) What factors associated with the IEC experience appear to *enhance or challenge* the learning of an L2 for these students?

A case study approach was adopted in order to provide a rich description of all three students. This approach is appropriate for the current study because there is an absence of research on SWE and L2 learning, particularly in intensive settings. Additionally, multiple cases are focused on in this study in order to lead to a better understanding of this unexplored area.

Students' L2 learning was assessed by measuring listening, speaking, writing and vocabulary development over time and also by comparing their progress to the rest of their classmates at the end of the IEC. Additionally, through semi-structured interviews, students' perceptions of their ability to learn English and their attitudes towards the language were examined. Factors associated with the IEC experience that either enhance L2 learning or present challenges were also documented. Interviews with the students' teacher and the school's ESL pedagogical consultant provided an additional perspective on the students'L2 learning experiences and the intensive context.

The thesis will be organized in the following way: Chapter 2 provides an overview of the relevant literature on L2 intensive learning contexts as well as what research has found regarding SWE and L2 learning. It concludes with the research questions that motivated the study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology, outlining the components of the case studies and analyses of the data, which will help in answering the research questions. Chapter 4 reports the findings from each individual case study as well as the cross-case analysis. Chapter 5 provides a discussion on the findings from the

individual and cross-case analysis. Finally, Chapter 6 provides final conclusions, limitations and suggestions for future research. The aim of the current study is to provide a better understanding of SWE L2 experiences, and how researchers and educators can facilitate their participation and promote their success in L2 programs.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Two bodies of literature will be reviewed in order to set the stage for the current study. First, an overview of findings on the benefits of intensive instruction, with particular attention to Quebec's IEC and its components, will be provided. This is followed by a synthesis of research findings on the type and amount of progress students make in this course, concluding with the absence of attention to the experiences of SWE in the IEC. The second body of research will focus on SWE and L2 learning, identifying the outstanding issues the current study is designed to address. This section will conclude with the research questions.

OVERVIEW OF INTENSIVE L2 INSTRUCTION

Most research in SLA has found that massed learning conditions are favourable for optimal L2 learning. This means that more learning takes place in a concentrated period of time than in conditions where the same amount of instructional time is spread out over a longer period of time, such as the drip-feed model. This has been found for grade 5-6 francophone students enrolled in Quebec's IEC (Spada & Lightbown, 1989; Collins, Halter, Lightbown &, Spada, 1999; White & Turner, 2005) The following section will provide a brief history of Quebec's IEC.

OVERVIEW OF INTENSIVE ENGLISH IN QUEBEC

A series of experimental IEC's were implemented in the 1970's and continued to increase throughout the 1980's. The course was initially implemented in order to provide students with an opportunity to acquire a higher level of English proficiency upon completion of primary school (Spada & Lightbown, 1989). The expansion of the course was the result of pressure from francophone parents who felt that what was offered in the

regular ESL program implemented by the government was not effective enough. That is, their children were not provided with adequate English skills during primary school. The IEC was simply an enrichment of the regular program in order to improve the quality of English instruction. Francophone students in grades 5 or 6 were now receiving a total of 350-400 hours of English instruction within a five-month period. This was in contrast to the regular ESL program that offered 35-40 hours over the entire academic year (Spada & Lightbown, 1989). Over the next 20 years, thousands of francophone students experienced IECs. Today, ten percent of Quebec's schools offer IECs in a variety of models with the five-month/five-month model being the most widely used (SPEAQ, 2012). The Ministère de Éducation, Loisir et Sport (MELS) allows school boards and local schools to decide if they would like to implement IECs or not.

Studies have compared L2 learning outcomes of students enrolled in the IEC with outcomes in the regular "drip-feed" ESL course (e.g., Spada & Lightbown, 1989; White & Turner, 2005) and have found that students in the IEC consistently outperform students in the regular program on all L2 skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students enrolled the IEC have also been found to make substantial L2 progress in a short amount of time (Collins & White, 2012). Furthermore, researchers have found that some of these language gains are maintained long term (Spada & Lightbown, 1991).

The success Quebec has experienced with the course has also led other provinces to adopt a similar model. Since 2009, intensive French has been offered in nine provinces and two territories (Carr, 2009; SPEAQ, 2012). Researchers have also found similar evidence in terms of L2 gains and program benefits for their English-speaking students enrolled in the intensive French course (Germain, Lightbown, Netten &, Spada, 2004;

Germain, Netten &, Movassat, 2004). The model is similar to Quebec's IEC with a few differences with regard to selection criteria and organizational structure (Germain et al., 2004). A difference is that unlike Quebec, New Brunswick's intensive French course does not have any restrictions on selection criteria and is open to all students regardless of their learning profile. A similarity that is shared is the communicative approach to language teaching in the intensive classroom. Although the development of literacy skills is still present in this approach, the main goal is on the development of interpersonal skills and oral activities rather than English for academic purposes (which is the goal for immersion programs). Researchers have found that focusing less on traditional grammar and more on meaningful interaction makes the IEC more "enjoyable and motivating" for students (Lightbown, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 1989). These are key elements in the intensive classroom.

The increased popularity of the IEC and the five/month-five/month model has led to it being offered to a wider range of the student population, including SWE. The following sections will provide a review of student outcomes that have been observed in the IEC, including those with relevance to the SWE population.

L2 PROGRESS OBSERVED IN IEC

Several studies have documented the positive effects on second language (L2) learning outcomes of increasing and concentrating the amount of hours of exposure to the target language in the IEC in Quebec (e.g., Collins, Halter, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999; Collins & White, 2011; Spada & Lightbown, 1989). Spada and Lightbown (1989) were among the first researchers to empirically study the L2 outcomes of francophone students enrolled in the IEC. The authors wanted to compare the L2 outcomes of students who

received the same number of L2 instructional hours, but over a different distribution. A more detailed description of this study follows.

Spada & Lightbown (1989) aimed to assess L2 outcomes in listening, reading and oral. The longitudinal study comprised of 1000 students between grades 5 and 6 (between 10 to 12 years old). Some of the students were enrolled in the experimental IEC, and the remainder were students in the regular ESL program. Both groups of students had received the same amount of ESL instruction up until the start of the IEC. Another group was added to further compare distribution of hours. This group was comprised of grade 9 students who had followed the regular English program throughout their schooling and had accumulated between 400-500 hours of instruction (which was the same amount intensive students accumulated at the end of the five months).

Three different pre/post measures were used to test English development. The first was a listening comprehension test developed by a school board, which was usually used to place students in the appropriate ESL level. A second listening comprehension task was also used to compare listening comprehension between the grade 9 students and the two other groups. Finally, a picture-describing task was used in order to measure oral proficiency.

Results showed that the intensive group did not differ from the regular group on the pre-tests for listening comprehension, confirming that the groups were comparable at the outset of the both the IEC and regular ESL program. However, there was a significant difference in performance on the post-test where the intensive group greatly outperformed the regular group. This finding was also evident on the oral-production task. The intensive group produced more complex language and structures and also used

a wider variety of vocabulary. The intensive group also outperformed the grade 9 group (who had received the same amount of instruction, but distributed over a longer period of time) on the post test for listening comprehension. This study made it clear that the new experimental intensive course was effective. Students made quick and significant gains in their English language skills. This was believed to be due to the increased number and concentration of hours of English instruction they had received.

Similar results were found by White and Turner (2005), who compared the oral abilities of students in the regular ESL course to those of students in the IEC. Researchers used three oral tasks: and Audio-Pal where students talked about themselves into a tape recorder, a story retell where students watched a short video and had to retell the story and finally, an info gap where students had to describe items missing in their partners pictures. These tasks were used to compare the oral abilities of these students at the beginning and at the end of their programs. There were a total of six groups involved in the study, three in regular ESL and three in IEC. Selection criteria for two out of the three IEC groups were based on academic ability. The third school's selection was based on student motivation rather than previous academic performance. Participation was not mandatory; students had a choice whether they wanted to take part in the IEC.

Results showed that the IEC groups performed significantly better on all three oral tasks. This is no surprise since in the IEC students have many more opportunities to engage in meaningful oral communication as opposed to the regular program. Students are not as rushed and have more opportunities to recycle vocabulary and structures, and the teacher has more time to re-explain things that may not have been understood (p. 507).

Overall, these studies have shown that students make considerable L2 gains in the intensive course versus the regular ESL course, especially in terms of oral ability. However, the IECs in the above studies were from schools that preselect their students based on certain criteria, most often academic ability. Therefore, the results of learning from the studies described are from a skewed population. No study addressed the presence or absence of SWE in the IEC, which creates a gap in L2 intensive setting research. The following section will provide details on the selection process in the IECs. Following this, research that has investigated IECs without selection criteria will be reviewed to provide insight on the successes that "weaker" students have experienced. Finally, the limitations that the current study will be presented.

SELECTION CRITERIA

School boards generally leave it to the individual school's discretion to decide on how students are to be selected to participate in the IEC. Some schools have very strict criteria in that only high-achieving students may participate. Other schools set their criteria to include only highly motivated students regardless of their academic profile. For example, in some cases, students have to write a letter explaining why they want to participate in the IEC. If a student showed enthusiasm towards learning English and other academic subjects, then they would be granted permission to participate. Students who are bilingual, low achieving academically and who have a disability are often not accepted into the IEC and furthermore are discouraged from even trying (Collins, Halter, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999; Germain, Lightbown, Netten &, Spada, 2004).

In the IEC, students are expected to be autonomous learners and be able to keep up with the quick learning pace of the course. Some professionals argue that it is not

possible for every student to be able to achieve that. However, the Association Québécoise des Troubles d'Apprentissage (AQETA, n.d.), along with many parent advocate groups, have clearly stated in the media their support for including children with learning disabilities into the IECs. In a statement, AQETA expressed the importance of intensive English access for all. The association further stated that imposing a selection criterion supports an elitist society where children are being deprived of the full potential of their education (AQETA).

Some professionals are concerned that by making the IEC mandatory, it may create problems for students who already have learning challenges or who experience difficulties in their L1. The intensive French program in Newfoundland and Labrador grants access to the course to all students; this includes SWE. The program is based on the idea that L2 acquisition can help foster acquisition in the L1 (Germain, Lightbown, Netten &, Spada, 2004). Therefore, it is believed that children who face difficulties acquiring their first language may in fact benefit from learning an L2 in the intensive program.

In 2003, Commission Scolaire Lac-Saint-Jean made the IEC mandatory for all students including those with exceptionalities (SPEAQ, 2012). It is the only school board in Quebec that has adopted this access-for-all policy, and has a 95% integration rate. Only students with a severe cognitive impairment do not participate (S. Boudreault, personal communication, June 14th, 2013). This school board strongly encourages parents and students to follow through with the challenges that come with the grade 6 curriculum. The school board is a strong advocate for the participation of SWE in the IEC. The ESL pedagogical consultant from the school board has described the success and enthusiasm

SWE experience in the IEC (S. Boudreault, personal communication). However, there has not yet been any empirical research that has looked at SWE within an intensive L2 learning context that would put to rest the concerns mentioned above.

The goal of the proposed study is to explore the performance and experience of SWE in an intensive L2 context, specifically Quebec's IEC. The following section will review some studies that have investigated non-selected IEC classrooms and have found that "weaker" students experience success in the IEC.

NON-SELECTIVE IEC RESEARCH

Some of the participating schools in Collins, Halter, Lightbown and Spada (1999) study allowed for children with low-academic ability and problematic behaviour to participate in the IEC. They were the first researchers to systematically investigate the different L2 outcomes between massed and distributed learning within the IECs in Quebec. The researchers argued that it was not only the increase in instructional hours, but also the concentration of the hours that explained the L2 learning gains.

This was a large-scale study with over 700 grade 6 students participating. The study included three different learning settings. The first was the IEC, which followed the typical five-month/five-month model and only admitted students with a certain academic ability. The second was a distributed course, which was open to all students (below average academic ability and problematic behaviour) and involved the same number of hours of L2 instruction as the IEC, but spread over a ten-month period whereby students received intensive English alongside their regular French curriculum. The third was a course that was similar to the IEC; this course, however, did not limit English to only the classroom but promoted the use of English in other aspects of school

and also within the students' daily routine. In the study, this was referred to as the "massed-plus program" and was also open to all students similar to the distributed program.

Students were initially administered an aural vocabulary recognition task to determine their state of English proficiency at the outset of their courses. In order to assess L2 outcomes, three instruments were administered toward the end of their courses: a vocabulary recognition task, a listening comprehension task and a written narrative. Overall results of this study showed that although all students made L2 gains, students in both intensive courses outperformed students in the distributed program on all post-tests.

Aside from the distribution of hours, the fact that students enrolled in the intensive courses were not exposed to as much French as the distributed group may also have played a role in their final L2 performance. Students in the distributed class also received part of their French curriculum during different parts of the same day as their English. This didn't allow students to be fully immersed in the target language. Although these students still made L2 gains, the two other intensive groups outperformed them.

The difference in selection was noticeable when within group variability in performance was found in the pre aural vocabulary recognition task. Collins, Halter, Lightbown and Spada (1999) hypothesized that individual differences could explain the variability in the pre-test results because all participating students had been exposed to the same amount of English at the outset of the program. Students who were bilingual or who had additional exposure to English outside the classroom were not retained for the study. Therefore, the authors considered the possibility that the difference in final performance outcome may have been due to other factors than just the IEC itself,

concluding that: "…superior academic ability is not a requirement for successfully learning English in intensive communicative classes" (p.672).

Collins and White (2012) also provided indirect evidence in support of the benefits of intensive instruction for learners with a range of abilities. The authors found that the initial gap in L2 performance between strong and weak students had narrowed at the end of the IEC. They speculate that intensity of instruction can minimize IDs between learners such as language learning aptitude and its multiple subcomponents (p. 46).

The goal of their study was to show the difference in L2 attainment at the end of the five-month IEC between students who began the course with different amounts of English knowledge. Data were collected at five different points throughout the study. Three different measures (aural vocabulary recognition, cloze task and a dictation task) were used to establish a baseline, which grouped students in either low, mid or high levels of English knowledge at the beginning of the program. Data were collected four additional times at 100-hour intervals using multiple tasks to assess learners L2 knowledge (mainly listening, reading and writing) and progress throughout the program.

The baseline tasks revealed a clear gap between students starting out the course with different levels of L2 knowledge. However, results at the end of the program revealed the gap had narrowed. Collins and White (2012) noted that gap began to decrease after only 100 hours of instruction. The low-group students showed an increase in performance over time on both the aural vocabulary recognition and cloze task. The authors noted that this finding highlighted the quick gains low-group students made on building vocabulary and simple sentence structure in English (p.58). On listening measures, it was found that low-group students caught up to the mid-group students, but

not to the high group. Overall results indicated that students who began at a lower level were now more or less at the same level as their stronger peers.

Although Collins and White's (2012) proposal that it was the intensity factor that may have decreased IDs between the students is a plausible explanation, it cannot be certain since there were no data collected that allowed for identification of individual differences such as academic abilities, language aptitude or other cognitive traits. The participating school did not have selection criteria and therefore included students with a wide variety of individual differences. The authors recognized and addressed the fact that the literature on individual differences and intensity of L2 instruction is rather scant, and they suggested the need for future research in this area in IEC. However, SWE have been investigated in other L2 learning contexts. The following section will provide an overview of what is currently known about SWE and L2 learning and will provide further insight into the benefits of intensive L2 settings for this population.

SWE AND L2 LEARNING

There are a number of studies that have directly examined the language learning outcomes of SWE enrolled in L2 programs. Some have examined general second/foreign language classes where hours of instruction range from 2-4 hours per week. These courses are considered as "drip-feed". These are usually university courses or elective courses in secondary schools (Downey, Snyder & Hill, 2000; Helland & Kaasa, 2005; Sparks, Humbach, &, Javorsky, 2008). Researchers have also investigated more "concentrated" contexts such as immersion programs; an example of this would be French immersion in Quebec where students receive their content instruction (math, science) in the second language (Genesee 1976b; Bruck, 1978, 1982; Mady & Arnett,

2009). Results from such studies demonstrate that SWE can be successful L2 learners given the appropriate learning contexts and pedagogical approaches. The findings reaffirm that learners who present difficulties in their L1 are still able to learn an L2. Furthermore, learning an L2 does not hinder the development of the L1.

The following sections will provide a synthesis of the existing literature. First, L2 contexts such as general second/foreign language classes that have been researched with respect to SWE and L2 learning will be reviewed. Second, more "concentrated" contexts such as immersion and the existing literature on intensive, which has indirectly looked at SWE and L2 learning, will be reviewed. Thirdly, pedagogical approaches, which have been found to be successful in teaching L2s to SWE, will be reviewed. Finally, the last section will highlight the gaps in the existing literature that the current study is designed to addresses.

Second/foreign language classes. A longitudinal study by Sparks, Humbach and Javorsky (2008) followed four groups of English-speaking students learning Spanish as an L2 from the end of elementary school through the beginning of high school. The groups consisted of high-achieving students, low achieving students, learning disabled students and finally, students diagnosed with ADHD. The authors used a combination of different measures to compare L1 reading and writing and cognitive ability skills along with L2 aptitude, oral and written proficiency skills, word decoding and spelling and finally, L2 grades. Results revealed that high-achieving students who scored higher on all L1 measures also scored higher on all L2 measures than low achieving and learning disabled students. However, no significant differences were found between low-achieving students and learning disabled students; they all performed similarly on both

L1 and L2 measures over time. Also, all groups passed the first-year secondary Spanish class. This finding is significant because it revealed that although L1 skills can predict L2 outcomes to a certain extent, students classified as learning disabled exhibited the same language patterns as their low-achieving, non-disabled peers.

Results from Sparks, Humbach and Javorsky (2008) revealed that learning-disabled students did not exhibit more severe learning problems than low-achieving L2 learners (Sparks, 2013). However, this does beg the question of what it is that is making the low-achieving students "low-achievers" in this study. It could be that the low-achieving students were never officially assessed for any type of learning disability, in which case we can't be sure that they are indeed "non-disabled", which would then mean the two groups were not comparable. Unfortunately, this issue was not addressed in the study. Finally, few differences were found between high-achieving students and students with ADHD on all measures. This finding revealed that ADHD might have little effect on the L2 learning. Kormos (2013) further states that: "Although we must not underestimate the difficulties involved in learning another language…we have to note that a large number of students with SpLD (specific learning differences) become competent L2 users" (p.4). Sparks (2013) suggests that similarly to different academic subjects, instructed L2 learning occurs along a continuum of very strong to very weak language learners and that learning-disabled students are found along this continuum (p. 3).

Immersion. Similar concerns the IEC is currently facing were also raised about the suitability of immersion for SWE in Montreal (Genesee, 2007, p.656). Immersion differs from the IEC in that it is content-based, all subject matter (math, science, social studies) is taught through the L2. There is little focus on the actual language itself

(Lightbown, 2012) during the subject matter instruction (however, it does receive attention during separate language arts classes). Studies in French immersion have shown that learners with low levels of intelligence, lower academic profiles and language impairments are able to perform well in an intensive L2 content-based setting. Furthermore, learning an L2 in this setting does not hinder the development of the L1 (Bruck, 1978, 1982 & 1984; Genesee, 1976a, 1976b, 1991 & 1992).

In Genesee's' 1976b study, he examined whether intelligence played a role in the success of learning French. Anglophone students in grades 4, 7 and 11 enrolled in French immersion and the regular program were administered standardized IQ tests and placed into one of three groups describing their academic ability: average, above average, and below average. In addition to English language tests and mathematics tests, students were administered a battery of French language tests that covered two types of French language skills: academic language such as reading and interpersonal communication skills such as speaking and listening (picture description task; interview about school experience). The immersion students were compared to students in regular English-medium schools. Results showed that the "below average" immersion students did not score lower than the "below average" English-medium students on the English language tests.

These results are important because they revealed that the below average students did not show any delays in their first language development or in their academic performance despite participating in the immersion program (Genesee, 1976a). Another interesting finding revealed by the French language tests was that although below average students performed poorly on reading tests, they performed similarly to the average and

above average students on listening comprehension and on interpersonal communication skills tests. Genesee (1992) described these findings as the difference between "context-reduced" and "context-embedded" environments.

According to Cummins (1984), a "context-reduced" scenario is one in which the skill is cognitively demanding, such as a literacy-based task where there are no supportive resources other than the text itself. A "context-embedded" task is described as a scenario which utilizes more cognitively simple language skills (i.e. interpersonal communication) and allows the student more access to visual and/or oral cues. Cummins argues that these are two different aspects of language proficiency that develop separately from each other. Genesee's (1976b) findings also revealed that students in the immersion program performed consistently better on all tests than the regular students.

Genesee's (1976b) conclusion includes three significant points that support the need for the current study. First, children are perhaps more motivated to learn language based on its communicative value and not its linguistic nature, that is the specific components which make up language (morphology, syntax, phonology, etc.). Genesee suggests that L2 programs that promote the learning and use of the language that simulate first language acquisition experiences "where a student may use their inherent language abilities" might be more successful. Second, results showed that children of differing intellectual ability were equally capable of acquiring successful interpersonal communication skills. Genesee further suggests that: "…second language learning programs which are oriented towards the acquisition of these kinds of language skills are likely to be more successful with students representing a broad range of academic ability levels compared to programs which stress academic language skills" (i.e. grammar)

(Genesee, p.279). Finally, although Genesee did not explicitly discuss the issue of increased and concentrated instructional hours having an effect on students learning performance, all groups of academic ability in immersion performed slightly better on the majority of tests than did the regular group. These findings further support the argument that increasing and concentrating the amount of instructional hours are effective for a better L2 learning outcome, even for SWE. Genesee's study provides strong support that IQ cannot be used to predict L2 abilities.

In addition to IQ level, L1 abilities have also been an important factor in informing decisions on the inclusion of SWE in immersion programs. Genesee (1992) stated that children who have poor L1 skills often suffer academically; it can be easily assumed these students will face even greater challenges in a program whereby an L2 is used as the medium of instruction. Bruck's (1978, 1982, &1984) early research found that English language impaired children enrolled in French immersion programs develop as they normally would in a regular English program. The goal of the study was to investigate if abilities in the L1 do indeed predict L2 abilities. Bruck followed the progress of children from kindergarten until grade 3. Similar to findings from Genesee (1976b), children with academic or L1 challenges did not experience any delay by participating in an L2 program.

Findings from Bruck (1978, 1982, &1984) and Genesee (1976b) support the notion that SWE should not be denied access to L2 programs such as immersion. The conclusions confirm the suitability of L2 programs for a wider range of students with varying academic abilities and learning profiles. Also, SWE are indeed capable of learning an L2 to the extent that they can and should be given the opportunity to do so.

Intensive. There is currently no empirical research that directly investigates the suitability of intensive English for SWE. There are however, two recent studies, which indirectly address SWE and intensive learning contexts. Joy and Murphy (2011) investigated the experience of SWE within an intensive French course through the perspectives of educational practitioners; and, Collins and White (2012) (reviewed above) looked at the performance of weaker proficiency students compared to higher proficiency.

Joy and Murphys' (2011) main goal was to explore inclusion practices using an Activity Systems Theory framework. The theory aims to explore human activity as a system of different components that interact together within one's environment (Joy & Murphy). The classroom inclusion context chosen for this study was the intensive French classroom. In Newfoundland, the intensive French classroom is not specifically designed for SWE, but for the average student learning an L2 through an intensive approach. This context provided a realistic description of the inclusion of SWE in a classroom context not specifically designed for them. Special needs students included in the intensive French program at the time of the study included the following: cognitive delay, Autism, speech impediment, Attention Deficit Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Down's Syndrome, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (p. 110). Also included were students who had not been officially identified as having exceptionalities but who were below grade level in reading and writing (p.110).

Data collection consisted of interviewing the following key informants: teachers, special education teachers, guidance counsellors and administrators. All of these professionals were identified as being knowledgeable about the inclusion of SWE in the

intensive French program. The interviews focused on three aspects of the program: first, demographics of the school and program, such as the number of students enrolled, the community, and professional development in the intensive French program; second, the organizational structure of the program within the school and what a typical day in the intensive classroom was like; lastly, the interviewee's perceptions of positive outcomes as well as the key factors that played a role in the success of SWE in the program. The data were analyzed according to different themes that fit within the Activity Systems components.

Their study revealed that the intensive, communicative, more hands-on approach to learning an L2 proved to be effective for SWE in a number of different ways. All students began the intensive program at the same level and shared the common goal of learning French. Informants reported that SWE felt as if they had an opportunity to start over, to be on the same playing field as their typically developing peers (Joy & Murphy, 2011, p.111). They were less aware of the differences that may have existed between them and their peers and the gap of IDs decreased (p.112). The intensive French program shares the same communicative approach as the IEC in that language is learned in a naturalistic way, similar to how we would learn our first language.

Teachers were also asked to share some of their personal observations concerning the intensive experience of their SWE. First, students attained a basic level of proficiency in French and maintained a positive attitude towards the language. Second, teachers claimed that students ended up being more successful in the intensive program than in other academic areas. Unfortunately there was no mention in the study as to how this was measured. It was reported that these children made a great deal of progress in a short

amount of time and were able to: "…jump two grade levels in terms of their reading and writing, although their level may still be seriously below grade 6 outcomes" (Joy & Murphy, 2011, p.112). Finally, students were more motivated and confident, which was observed by their participation in class and willingness to take risks. They were less afraid of making mistakes because they were aware that all students were making mistakes, and this was acceptable since everyone was working toward a common goal. Observations of individual students were not collected in this study. Overall, results revealed that the communicative L2 intensive environment proved to be a positive experience for SWE.

SWE might experience challenges in "particular aspects of learning if their environment does not accommodate their needs" (Kormos, p.1, 2013). Kormos (2013) stated that attention is a crucial factor for successful language learning. It was found that children with certain learning disabilities such as dyslexia and ADHD have trouble sustaining attention (Fletcher, Morris, & Lyon, 2004). SWE might have difficulties sustaining attention and extracting any information from a language class that provides only one hour of instruction per week. Once again, the intensive model provides SWE an opportunity for increased attention by providing more time for exposure and to integrate knowledge. This could result in increased L2 learning. Joy and Murphy (2011) suggested the urgent need for further research on SWE in L2 intensive contexts.

Given the success SWE have been shown to experience in academic based immersion programs, along with the success SWE experience in an intensive L2 context reported in Joy and Murphy (2012), then one can assume that SWE perform quite well in the L2 intensive classroom. However, this is an empirical question that remains to be

answered. It is also important to acknowledge that it is not only the context that can have an effect on the L2 learning for SWE, but the pedagogical approach and classroom environment that is adopted to transmit learning. The following section will highlight some of the pedagogical approaches that have been adopted or have been thought to be beneficial for SWE learning an L2.

Pedagogical approach. Classroom environment and instructional strategies are also known to play a large part in the success of L2 learning for SWE. Demuth and Smith (1987) found that directly teaching language skills (e.g. grammatical structure, contrastive analysis) and skills related to reading (e.g.. decoding and comprehension) can be effective in teaching an L2 to low-achieving and learning disabled students. Sparks, Artzer, Patton, Ganschow, Miller, Hordubay, & Walsh (1998) used this approach to teach Spanish as an L2 to high school students who were either low achieving or who had learning disabilities, and students exhibited successful learning in all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). However, the pedagogical approach and description of the language program is not explicitly discussed in these studies; therefore, it is difficult to determine whether the learning conditions had any influence over these students' L2 success.

Younger students, mainly in elementary grades, are at a different point in their development. Kormos (2013) claims that younger children with ADHD have reduced attentional capacities, which affect how much attention they can apply to various aspects of linguistic input (p.3), and this in turn may affect their language learning ability. Given this, perhaps for younger SWE, a communicative approach to learning an L2 may be more appropriate than learning specifically through language skills described above. As

previously mentioned, the communicative approach offered in the intensive classroom allows students the opportunity to learn language in a more naturalistic way. Perhaps because younger students are still in a critical period of development, the naturalistic way may be more appropriate for them.

Previous literature has revealed that SWE do not experience such attention difficulties in the communicative classroom. Genesee (1976b, 1992) found that SWE perform better in L2 classrooms which focus more on skills such as interpersonal communication and which utilize more "context-embedded" tasks which promote those skills by utilizing cognitively simple language and providing students with support and resources. The communicative approach found in the IEC focuses directly on those skills. This combined with the intensity of the program could provide SWE the learning experience they require to successfully learn an L2. This is of course an empirical question, given the lack of research with younger learners. It is quite possible that the communicative classroom poses other types of learning challenges for these students.

Although the communicative classroom does provide a rich and relaxed environment for learning, this does not imply that it is any less cognitively demanding for SWE. The communicative approach involves constant negotiation of meaning between speaker and listener or author and reader (Hendrickson, 1991, p.197). In addition, students are required to notice form while focusing on meaning. Students are also expected to self-monitor, participate in cooperative learning and become autonomous learners. Finally, students are encouraged to communicate orally as much as possible, even if that means making errors.

MOTIVATION AND GOALS FOR THE STUDY

If SWE can demonstrate success in immersion programs that are more content-based and thus more academically challenging, then they should perform well in the IEC context which places more of an emphasis on the activity types that they are believed to excel in; this includes oral and listening activities with a focus on meaning as opposed to form. As noted above, however, this remains an empirical question. Furthermore, none of the existing literature has directly looked at SWE own perspectives on their own L2 learning and their L2 classroom experience. Finally, none of the research addresses the possibility of co-morbidity within an individual. In Sparks, Humbach, and Javorsky (2008), students either had ADHD or a learning disability, but not both. However, it is quite common for children to experience multiple disabilities.

The motivation for this case study is that there currently does not exist any research that directly investigates SWE within an intensive L2 learning context. Many researchers have acknowledged the need to investigate SWE in intensive L2 settings because they speculate that this L2 learning environment is beneficial for SWE in many ways (Bayan, 1996; Joy & Murphy, 2012; Collins & White, 2012). Furthermore, many professionals are still uncertain if the IEC is an appropriate for SWE.

Investigating how SWE experience the IEC has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically it can contribute to what is currently known about the role IDs play in SLA as well as its relationship with intensity of instruction. Practically it can contribute better information on planning curriculum to accommodate different learners with different needs so that they can achieve a level in the L2 that is appropriate for them. Also, teachers can become better informed and trained on how to work with different

learner profiles in a language classroom. More specifically, studying how SWE perform in the IEC may open doors for several research opportunities, which could lead to future changes in policies and practices of the intensive program. If evidence shows SWE respond well in IECs, then more schools might make the program more accessible for those students, allowing for more educational opportunities, which will in turn provide these students with more skills and qualifications for future endeavours.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions in this study directly address the performance and experience of three SWE in Quebec's IEC. The questions are exploratory and descriptive. The goal in answering these questions is to advance the field's knowledge, further develop theory, build and test hypotheses for future research. The data analysis and the interpretations were guided by the following set of questions:

1. How does the three students' L2 English develop over the course of the IEC, with respect to: *listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary*?
2. At the end of the IEC, how does their progress compare to the average of their classmates in the same IEC?
3. What are the three students' perceptions of their ability to learn English and their attitudes towards the L2 at the outset of the IEC and do these perceptions change over time?
4. What factors associated with the IEC experience appear to *enhance* the learning of an L2 for these students?
5. What factors associated with the IEC experience may make the learning of an L2 *challenging* for these students?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Qualitative research methods were used to develop descriptive case studies for each of the three students in the study. A multiple exploratory case-study approach was chosen for two reasons. First, case studies can provide a rich description of particular phenomena. Second, multiple cases are focused on in order to lead to a better understanding of an unexplored area in research. The goal in using an exploratory case study is to lay the groundwork for future, possibly, more quantitative studies with more defined research questions and hypothesis (Heigham & Crocker, 2009, p.70).

Data collection consisted of a triangulation of multiple sources of data and methods (both qualitative and quantitative): measures of L2 progress, students' final English grades, semi-structured interviews (both teacher and students), classroom observations and teacher input. Heigham and Crocker (2009) define triangulation in qualitative research as: " to gain the broadest and deepest possible view of the issue from different perspectives" (p.81). The school board's pedagogical consultant (PC) was also present during some of the data collection, and informal conversations with her regarding SWE in IEC in general constituted an additional perspective.

SITE

The school that was chosen to participate in this study has made the IEC mandatory for all students, including those with exceptionalities. The region where the school is located is one where English is rarely encountered outside of the classroom. Indeed, English can be considered a foreign language in this region because students are so infrequently exposed to the target language outside of the classroom.

The study took place in an IEC that began at the beginning of September 2013 and ended in January 2014. The IEC followed the five-month/five-month model. This meant grade 6 students received English instruction from September until mid-January and then transitioned to French where they pursued their regular French academic curriculum until the end of the school year.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited primarily based on convenience and availability. However, there were some criteria that had to be met. For this study, only students who presented a learning, speech or chronic disability were recruited. This was for three reasons. First, as previously mentioned, the prevalence of these disabilities is the highest within the populations' age group. Therefore it is most likely that students with these exceptionalities will be present in the classroom. Second, all are related to the underdevelopment of language and other related cognitive areas (Sparks, 2013; Kormos, 2013). Thirdly, learning and speech disabilities are the most present in SLA research, allowing for comparisons to similar population in L2 learning contexts.

According to the Direction de l'Adaptation Scolaire et des Services Complémentaires, when a child is identified as having a particular disability, they are assigned a code. Code 34 represents a speech or language disability. Students assigned this code demonstrate the following characteristics: limitations in verbal comprehension/ expression, cognitive verbal functions and overall language development. These characteristics lead to limitations in socialization and learning at school. A child with a learning disability is categorized as "at-risk" (code 99). At-risk students display difficulties that may lead to failure, show signs of learning delays, and also may

experience a mild developmental delay or a mild intellectual impairment. Also within this category are students who experience emotional and/or behavioural disorders.

The school board's ESL PC chose one classroom with three identified students that best matched the above criteria. It was decided to choose a single classroom in order to control for teaching and context effects. Additionally, the teacher in that classroom was very open to having me come into her classroom. Participants' real names were changed in order to protect their identity. A description of the students' backgrounds is provided in Table 1. Further reference to this information will be made during the description of the instruments, below, and in the analyses of each student's progress and experiences in the following chapter.

All students had received the same amount of English instruction prior to the commencement of the IEC. They all received 120 minutes a week of ESL instruction starting at grade 1 (age 6-7 years old). By grade 6, they all had received between 90-100 hours of English. They were thus not absolute beginners, but had had very limited exposure and practice.

Table 1

Description of Students' Backgrounds

Factors	Scott	Mark	Gerry
Age (At Time 1)	12:11	12:2	11:8
MELS code	Code 99	Code 34	No code
Official Diagnosis	ADHD/learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties	ADHD/Dyslexia/Dysphasia	Tourette Syndrome/Anxiety
Medication	Yes	Yes	No
Final grade ESL grade 5/class average	65/85	71/79	93/85
Final grade French grade 5/class average	60/79	56/73	84/79
Reading/Writing	Below grade level	Below grade level	At grade level

In order to protect the three students' reasons for participating in the study from the rest of the class, the teacher advised the whole class that a researcher was coming to conduct a study and that only three participants were needed. The teacher told the whole class that it was up to her to decide which students could participate and by random draw, she chose the three in this study. Also, the consent form that was sent home to the rest of the class was different than that of the three children. The form simply stated that the general L2 learning outcomes of students enrolled in the IEC were being investigated. This was to prevent parents and other students from suspecting the three participant's reason for participating in the study.

INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

The study began at the end of September, once students had had approximately 100 hours of instruction. It involved four visits to the school, at approximately 100-hour intervals of instruction. Table 2 outlines the data collection procedures, including the instruments and the research question(s) each instrument was intended to address along with the duration of each task. Table 2 further identifies the language assessment instruments administered to all students in the IEC at the end of their intensive experience, to provide a benchmark of comparison for the three students followed longitudinally in this study.

Table 2

Overview of Data Collection Procedures

	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Duration (min)
Language measures					
CELF-CDN-4	X	-	-	-	60
Yes/no vocabulary	X	X	X	X-C	15
AVR	X	X	X	X-C	15
AVR (adapted)	-	-	-	X	15
Dictation	-	-	X	X	10 ≤
Written narrative	X	X	X	X-C	15 ≤
Oral narrative	X	X	X	X	15 ≤
Final Grades	-	-	-	X	-
Perceptions, L2 enhancement or challenge					
Student Interview	X	-	X	X	25 ≤
Teacher Interview	-	-	-	X	90 ≤
Teacher Conversation	X	X	X	X	On-going
Classroom observation	X	X	X	-	10-40

Note. X-C refers to the whole class completing the measure in addition to the three participants. Only 19 participants completed the final measures (out of a possible 22), 4 students did not participate.

All materials used in this study were adapted versions of materials used in previous studies within the IEC context. The following section will provide a full description of the language measures used to answer research questions 1 and 2, and the instruments used to identify research questions 3, and 5; that is, students' perceptions and

factors that enhance or challenge the learning of an L2 in an intensive setting. I administered all of the measures and conducted all of the interviews and observations.

LANGUAGE MEASURES

The language measures used assessed a number of different knowledge areas, including vocabulary, listening comprehension, writing and oral abilities, word order, word segmentation and awareness of sound/symbol correspondence.

Overall language ability. The French version of the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF-CDN-4) (Wiig, Secord, Semel, Boulianne, & Labelle, 2009) was used to measure overall language ability. The test is used to determine if a child exhibits language disorder or delay. The French version has been standardized specifically for francophone Canadian students between the ages of 4 to 16. This particular measure was chosen to address the limitation in Collins and White (2012) in that they had no measure of initial overall language abilities of their participants. The test was individually administered during time 1 and took 60 minutes to complete. The scores from the following four sub-tests: (1) Concepts and following directions, (2) Recalling Sentences, (3) Formulated sentences and, (4) Word Classes 1 and 2 (Expressive and Receptive) were calculated to obtain a Core Language Score (see Table 3 for description of subtests) which identified the presence or absence of a language delay/disorder. According to the CELF-4 technical report (2008), those four sub-tests best "…discriminate typical language performance from disordered language performance" (p.4).

Table 3

Description of CELF-CDN-4 tests

Sub-test	Task	Evaluation
Concepts and following directions	Student points to pictured objects in response to oral directions	Ability to interpret, recall and execute oral commands of increasing length and complexity
Recalling sentences	Student repeats sentence presented by the administrator	Ability to recall and reproduce sentences of varying length and syntactic complexity
Formulated sentences	Student formulates a sentence using a target word or phrase	Ability to formulate compound and complex sentences when given grammatical constraints
Word classes 1 and 2 (expressive and receptive vocabulary)	Student chooses two related words and describes their relationship	Ability to understand the relationship between words

Note. The information under "Task" column is from: The Psychological Corporation. (2008). *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Technical Report.* Pearson Education Inc. The information under "Evaluation" column is from: The Psychological Corporation. (2003). *The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Scoring Assistant. A Harcourt Assessment Company.*

Yes/no Vocabulary test. This vocabulary test assesses students' self-reported recognition of a randomly chosen subset of the 1000 most frequent words in English using the yes-no vocabulary test (Meara, 1992) (see Appendix A). This test was also used in Collins and White (2012), and has been used in previous research in IEC (e.g. Collins et al, 1999). Knowledge of the 1000 most frequent words used in English demonstrates a basic level of competence. Meara claims those students who score less than 75% on this test: "are not really functional in English, but they should be able to cope with some

limited and predictable situations" (p.4). Students were presented with 180 words listed in three columns, 120 real words and 60 nonsense words. The nonsense words were included to minimize "guessing", as students were told that not all words are real words in English. Students had to place a check mark next to words they knew or recognized (Collins & White, p.51). An example in French familiarizes the students with the process of real versus nonsense words, and the importance of only checking those words they believe they recognize as English words. This was to prevent guessing. All the items on the yes/no task that were correctly identified are tabulated. Any nonsense words checked off were subtracted from the total of real words. The final score is converted to a percentage score. The test was administered four times and each time included a different subset of the 1000 most frequent English words.

Aural vocabulary recognition task. The AVR test (Collins & White, 2012; first used in Lightbown & Spada, 1997 and then again in Collins, Halter, Lightbown & Spada, 1999) (See Appendix B) was administered all four times. This measure has been used in several similar studies (Collins et al., 1999; Collins and White, 2011) and Collins and White (2012) deemed this measure suitable to distinguish among students' different levels of English knowledge. The test requires students to match orally delivered words to the appropriate pictures. A tape-recorded voice said the target word one time and students had a few seconds to write the letter of the corresponding picture in the appropriate box (Collins et al., 1999). There were a total of 80 items in this task. Due to the consistently poor performance on the same 20 items by each student, it was decided to eliminate those items from the final count, making the AVR total score out of 60. Those items consisted of verbs (e.g. pour, burn, blow) and nouns (e.g. hammer, nest, log)

that the teacher confirmed that the students had not explicitly learned and would not be familiar with. The total number of correct responses was tabulated and then divided by the total number of items to get a percentage for each student. Please see Collins et al. (1999) for full-description and examples of the task.

Finally, an adapted version of the AVR was presented to the participants at time 4 The adapted version was less visually demanding and required less shifting of attention, and was created to verify whether this would make the test more accessible to the three learners (see Appendix C). The boxes where students had to write the appropriate letters was placed at the top of each corresponding page as opposed to being on a completely different worksheet. This was thought to make the task a little less visually demanding since students only had to attend to one page as opposed to shifting their attention on two pages. Since individuals with ADHD experience difficulty with sustaining attention and short-term memory (Gomez & Condon, 1999; Sciberras, Efron, Schilpzand, Anderson, Jongeling, Hazell, & Nicholson, 2013; Sowerby, Seal & Tripp, 2011), it was thought that participants might have an easier time navigating through adapted version of the task.

Dictation task. The dictation was used in Collins and White (2012) and was adapted from one used in the Barcelona Age Factor study (Muñoz, 2006). The task consisted of twelve lines for a total of fifty words (see Appendix D). In Collins and White (2012), an audio-recorded version of the dictation was used when administering the task to an entire classroom. Due to the poor quality of the audiotape, I delivered it orally. The dictation was read aloud three times. The first time the participant was expected to listen only; the second time each line was read twice with a three second pause in between, and the participants had to write down what they heard; the third time the dictation was read

with no pauses so the participants could verify their work. I did not face the students while reading the dictation so they could not see my lips move. This was to make sure that the dictation resembled the audio-recorded version as much as possible. Students were given one point for each recognizable word. This included words with a phonetic error (i.e. *wick* instead of *week*) and also words that were not accurately spelled due to assimilation (i.e. *the girl_ spent the days*). Homophones were given a half point (i.e. *two* instead of *too*) because the participants demonstrated phonological knowledge of the word but failed to demonstrate orthographic knowledge (Roeltgen, Rothi & Heilman, 1986).

Written narratives. Two of the four picture-prompted narratives used in Collins and White (2012) were administered. (This task is in fact an expanded version of the task originally used in Collins et al, 1999). The student was asked to look at the image and think about what happened, what is happening, and what will happen. One picture was used for the first two visits, and another for the last two visits (see Appendix E). In order to encourage the students to write as much as possible, they were allowed to write a word or idea in French if they had difficulty expressing it in English. Also, no dictionaries were allowed in order to gain a sense of what the students were able to produce on their own

In Collins and White (2012), written narratives were analyzed for use of verb inflections measuring grammatical competence, and length of narrative measuring fluency. In this study, because the narratives were quite short, the productivity and lexical diversity were analyzed. Productivity was measured by analyzing the following: total number of words (TNW), total number of French words (TNFW) and total number of English words (TNEW).

The total number of English word types (TNET) was used to measure lexical diversity. In previous research, lexical diversity has often been measured by using a type/token ratio; however researchers have found that this method is not always effective in demonstrating learner's knowledge because the ratio varies widely in according with the length of the text; longer samples tend to have lower type/token ratios because words may repeat (Scott & Windsor, 2000). Therefore, for this study, using a simple tally of number of different English words used without comparing to length seemed appropriate, since tasks were not controlled for length.

Instances such as "Once upon a time" were counted as one word since it was most likely a learned formulaic chunk. Proper names and words that were provided to the particpant during the task were not included in final totals. English words that shared the same spelling as French words (e.g. "question", "police") were included in the final counts as English words. Students were not penalized if they spelled a word wrong, the misspelled word still counted if it was a recognizable word. It is important to remember that the objective was to measure the students' attempt to use English, not their grammatical or orthographic accuracy. Lastly, Mark often used "in the" as a filler. This was coded as a formulaic chunk since it appeared to serve a pragmatic function.

Oral narrative. Collins and White (2012) did not include an oral measure but this study did for two reasons. First, the IEC places heavy emphasis on oral communication; therefore it is important to assess the students on their oral progress in the IEC. Second, as previously mentioned, research on children with language difficulties and L2 learning show that most perform better on speaking/listening tasks than on tasks involving reading/writing (Genesee 1976a, Genesee 1976b).

Although most pedagogical activities students encounter in the IEC are pair/group tasks, due to the logistics of the study it would have been difficult to organize paired activities with so few participants. It is also difficult to assess a single child's language (only one child's language) in paired oral tasks. In studies which included paired oral tasks, such as Collins & White (2011) and White & Turner (2012), researchers were unable to come up with scores for individual students; rather pairs were given a joint score based on their language exchange. For these reasons, an individual oral task was decided upon as the best option for the current study.

The specific picture-cue task used in this study was an adapted version of the book *Frog, Where Are You?* by Mercer Mayer (1969) (see Appendix F). This is a wordless storybook and consists of 24 pictures that depict the story of a boy and his dog and their search for the missing frog. The adapted version, created by Leif French at the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi, was composed of a series of 14 images and designed specifically to reduce the time needed to tell the Frog Story in a classroom situation while maintaining the integrity of the original storyline. This book has been extensively used in linguistic research (e.g., Bamberg, 1987; Bamberg & Damrad-Frye, 1991; Sah, 2007) and has also been used in studies with children with specific language impairments (Reilly, Losh, Bellugi, & Wulfeck, 2004; Norbury & Bishop, 2003). The pictures in the storybook provide a rich context for language.

The oral narrative task was divided into two parts; the first part was a written prompt task to set up the oral narrative; and the second part was the story retell. For the first part, students received the "Where's my frog booklet" and were told that the images are divided into three events in the past (Part A), present (Part B), and future (Part C).

Students were allotted 10 minutes to brainstorm and construct an outline for their oral narrative by writing down any vocabulary or useful expressions they may need in order to retell the story.

Students were encouraged to write as much as possible. Allowing the students to plan ahead reduced the cognitive load students' might experience with the multiple pictures. In the second part of the task, students had to retell their story without using their notes, using the pictures only. Additional information related to specific images was sometimes elicited by prompting the students in order obtain a larger language sample. Some sample prompts included asking the participants to describe how the boy was feeling at certain moments; to imagine what happened after the boy went back home (this prompt allowed for students to use their imagination since there was no image); and also to describe images in more detail by asking what certain things were called. While prompting, I did not use any vocabulary that the students had not spontaneously used themselves. However, if a student asked for a particular word in English, it was provided to them. Any words provided to the student were not scored because those words were not part of the student's spontaneous language.

Oral narratives were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. A bilingual speech-language pathologist verified the narratives. Since previous research has shown that SWE tend to excel more in L2 oral skills rather than written skills, by having students produce both written and oral data on the same set of pictures, it was possible to contrast written and oral abilities. Oral narratives followed the same analysis as the written narratives, for lexical diversity and productivity.

Final grades. Students' final English grades were obtained at the end of the study. Students in the IEC are graded on their ability to: interact orally (45%), reinvest understanding in oral and written texts (35%) and write short texts (20%). The standard deviation was calculated using the final grades from the entire class. Finally, the z-score was calculated for each of the three participants in order to determine how many standard deviations above or below the class mean they were. The entire class was used for the final grade calculations, 26 students in total (including the three participants).

PERCEPTIONS, L2 ENHANCEMENT OR CHALLENGE IN IEC

Student Interviews. The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to gain insight into individual students' perceptions of their own abilities in learning English in the intensive classroom, to document their motivation and attitudes towards learning the L2 in the intensive experience, and to identify the enhancing and challenging aspects of learning English in the intensive format (see Appendix G). The interview was conducted at times 1, 3 and 4. It was decided not to conduct the interview at time 2 so that students would not be tired of answering the same questions. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed by myself, and verified by a bilingual speech and language pathologist.

At the beginning of the course, it was anticipated that some students might not be able to do the interview in English, given their low proficiency. Consequently, students were told in French that that the interview would begin in English but that they would be allowed to answer questions in French or English and request clarification of questions in French at any moment during the process. The interview also served as an informal measure of each student's oral and listening proficiency in English. Some of the interview questions relating to the student's perceptions of their ability to learn English

were borrowed and adapted from Spada and Lightbown (1989) (See Appendix C). The remainder were constructed for this study. The interview content evolved over each time. Some questions remained the same; however, some were not asked a second time, such as general language background questions. Additional questions were asked at time 3 and 4 that addressed the students' experience at that particular point in the course.

The interview was broken down into four sections:

1. Questions relating to the students language background, their frequency of English use as well as their attitude towards the L2.
2. Questions related to the students' general scholastic competence and self-perceptions of competencies such as reading, writing and math in their L1. The goal of this section is to obtain information on students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses in learning in general, and of their awareness of their exceptionalities and the possible roles they may play in their academic experiences. These questions were only asked at time 1 since they were to gain a general sense of the students overall competencies.
3. Questions related specifically to their thoughts and opinions on the IEC and also how it compares to their language learning experience in the regular ESL program.
4. Questions related to the students' perceptions of their ability to learn English.

Classroom observations. At each of the four times, the three students were observed during their classroom interactions. Originally, a real-time-sampling approach was planned to gather classroom observation data using an adapted version of The Classroom Orientation of Language Teaching scheme (COLT) developed by Spada and Fröhlich (1995). This observation scale has been used in previous studies working within the same

context and population as in the study done by Collins and White (2011) (see Appendix H). Observations were to be noted every five minutes for five minutes per student in order to ensure that each student would be observed during the same activity. A check mark or a symbol would be put in the appropriate category every time certain behaviour occurs. More frequent observations of each individual student within one activity would allow for a richer description of that student's behaviour and use of language within a group activity.

Unfortunately, this procedure could not be followed due to some issues that arose. The students' daily schedule and the need to complete all tasks during each visit did not always allow for extra time to be spent in class to observe any communicative activities. During time 3, the students were writing exams all week so there were actually no communicative activities at all to observe. Also, to focus on one child's language in real-time was very challenging. The amount of noise in the classroom made it almost impossible to really hear what students were saying. Usually one would audio-record a group activity, transcribe it and then analyze it. However, this would also pose a problem because through a recording, it is difficult to distinguish who is saying what.

Classroom observations were limited to simple observations, field notes, and teacher feedback. Classroom observations were done at times 1,2 and 3 for different periods of times (15-45 minutes) and during different activities. No observations were done at time 4 because students were in the middle of doing exams and completing individual work. Observational notes relating to the participants' peer interactions, use of the L2, classroom behaviour, teacher style, lesson content, and student-teacher interactions were written down. The case study approach allowed for close observations of individual students and their behaviour and interaction within the intensive classroom.

Teacher interview and on-going conversations. An in-depth interview with the classroom teacher (in which the ESL PC also participated), took place during the final visit. The goals of the interview were to gain insight into the teacher's experiences working in an intensive context with a focus on SWE she encountered in the classroom, and to get the teacher's perceptions on the progress and challenges the students have encountered in the IEC. The interview was semi-structured to allow for further elaboration on different topics or themes that could come up. The interview questions were borrowed from Joy and Murphy (2012) (see Appendix I). These particular questions were chosen because they directly targeted teachers and other professionals involved in the intensive French program and their perceptions and opinions on the issue of the presence of SWE in the classroom. Some questions required some re-wording to better represent the Quebec intensive context (See Appendix I).

Additionally, informal conversations with the teacher were scheduled throughout each visit. This was to get a general sense of how each participant was performing in the classroom and also whether any issues arose that needed to be taken into consideration. The interview was transcribed and was then reviewed reiteratively for common themes, similarities or differences between what the students reported. Findings will be interpreted in the cross-case section.

Analysis of interviews, observations and conversations. Saldana's (2012) coding methods were used to analyse the student and teacher interviews, teacher conversations and classroom observations. Coding was done in two cycles. The first cycle used was initial-coding, which is an open-ended approach to coding and is generally used in qualitative research that utilizes a wide variety of data sources, such as

this case study. The initial coding process broke down the interviews, observations and conversations into discrete parts and closely examined them for similarities and differences. The data sources were reviewed reiteratively over the course of the study and initial codes were made. However, these codes remained tentative and provisional and some codes were reworded as the analysis progressed (Saldana, p.100-101). The second cycle used Focused-coding, which looked for the most frequent codes that came up during the initial-coding cycle, and developed the most salient themes that appeared within the data (Saldana, p.213). The themes will be provided in the cross-case analysis section in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Before reporting the findings, the classroom context will be described, to establish the students' learning environment. This will include a physical description of the classroom and also the types of tasks and activities that were observed throughout the study. This is followed by the analysis of the data, which was done in two stages: an individual case analysis and a cross-case analysis. The analysis was modeled after Kos (1991) who adopted a similar methodological approach to this study when researching the experience of four middle-school children with reading disabilities. In this study, the individual case analysis will begin by providing a description of each participant's background. Following this, findings will be reported in the following order: student interviews, classroom observations, teacher conversations and L2 progress. It was decided to report the L2 progress last because it was important to first get to know each individual student before reporting on their performance. Finally, each individual case will end with a summary of the participant's overall experience in the IEC and their final grades will be reported. A brief description of the teacher and her experience in teaching English in an intensive context as well as her experiences with SWE will also be provided in this section. The second stage will consist of a cross-case analysis reporting findings and discussing similarities, differences, themes and interpretations that were found across all three cases.

CLASSROOM DESCRIPTION

There were 26 students in the classroom. It was set up so that there were clusters of 4-5 desks around the room. This is a typical setup in an IEC since a lot of group work is involved. The students need to be able to communicate easily. The classroom was

decorated with a wall of images and English vocabulary describing basic body parts, clothes and house items. There were number, alphabet and verb posters as well. The classroom had a corner library filled with English books that were divided by levels “easy”, “medium”, “hard”. Table 4 provides a description of the different types of activities that were observed over the course of the study.

Table 4

Classroom activities

Goal	Activity	Group Size	Description
Speaking	Talk about the weekend	Learner with the class	Teacher asks students about what they did on the weekend.
Speaking	Family Feud	Learner with the class	Class divided into two teams and teacher asks students factual questions.
Speaking	Alien Game	Group	One person from each group goes outside, each group is shown a picture of an alien they need to memorise, the person comes back and the group members describe the alien and the person needs to draw it.
Reading	Reading time	Individual	Students have individual reading time with books for different levels
Writing	Superhero letters	Individual	Students write letters to family members about what superpowers they have.
Speaking	Asking Questions	Learner with class	Students walk around the class and practice asking WH-questions using models on the board and pre-determined topics on their worksheet (e.g. what's your favourite sport?).
Speaking	The weather game	Group	Students work as a group to complete a worksheet on the weather, fill in the blanks.
Writing	Workbook	Individual	Students have worksheets on the different themes and have crosswords, fill in the blanks and matching worksheets to complete.

INDIVIDUAL CASES

Scott. Scott is the oldest of the three participants, and the oldest in his class. He was held back a year in grade 1. In addition to his academic delay, he experiences emotional and behaviour difficulties. He has difficulties establishing and maintaining

friendships at school and also creating a student-teacher relationship. According to the CELF-CDN-4, Scott experiences a severe/extreme language delay (See Appendix J for each students' performance on individual subtests of the CELF-CDN-4). In grade 5, Scott performed below the class average in all subjects. In both French and English, he received much higher grades for oral communication than writing and reading comprehension. The following reports on Scott's interview data.

Student Interview.

Language background/Frequency of English/Attitude towards the L2.

Time 1. Scott's frequency of English use was limited to the classroom and he did not hold any particular opinions about the importance of being able to speak English but he was unable to explain why. He has never traveled and none of his family speaks English. He listens to a small amount of English music that is popular among children his age. He reported watching an English car show that has French subtitles and was quite excited when he described it. He reported not watching any English movies.

Time 3. Scott said that he doesn't particularly like speaking in English but he could not explain why. Scott reported watching some English cop and robber shows on the computer, but that was for his homework assignments. His frequency of English use remained predominantly within the classroom.

Time 4. When Scott was asked if he liked speaking in English, he said that he doesn't mind doing the oral communication activities he does in the IEC. Scott reported to not being very motivated to seek opportunities to use the language. Over the course of the five months, his attitude towards English did not change very much in that he didn't

think it was particularly important to learn or speak English but was unable to explain why, often responding, “I don’t know”.

General scholastic competence and perceptions of competencies such as reading, writing and math in the L1. Scott’s least favourite school subject is math because he finds that it can get rather complicated at times:

Time 1:

R: Pourquoi tu n’aimes pas les maths?

Scott: Ben quand c’est pas facile ben puis c’est pas comprenable ben j’aime pas ça mais quand c’est facile et comprenables, j’aime ça.

His favourite subject is physical education and oral communication in the IEC, specifically doing projects and presenting them in front of the class:

Time 1:

Researcher: Ok quelle était votre matière la plus forte à l’école?

Scott: Ben uh ben uh ben…un petit en éduc ben je suis quand même bon la mais je ne suis pas le meilleur puis uh dans le communication orale.

When asked what he prefers among reading, writing and math, he said reading. He explained that it was because he could take his time in reading and can better understand, if he didn’t understand something then he can go back and read it again.

IEC versus regular ESL.

Time 1. Scott said that when he found out he was going to be doing English, he thought it was going to be really difficult, but in fact he found it much easier and quite fun:

Researcher: Tu n’étais pas nerveux? T’était plutôt excité?

Scott: Mais avant de commencer l'année je pensais aller être dur mais non c'était vraiment le contraire.

Researcher: Alors tu pensais que c'était dur mais quand tu as commencé l'année c'était plutôt –

Scott: Mais c'est quand même un peu plus facile que les autres années.

Scott said that his grade 5 ESL class was not very exciting. Similarly to the other participants, he described it as "niaiseux", meaning not to be taken too seriously. He reported not having learned much the previous year, only simple vocabulary he already knew:

Scott: Ben en faite uh j'ai pas appris de mots, j'ai juste appris des mots que je connaissais déjà puis c'est des mots faciles...Je ne connaissais pas d'autres mots que des mots faciles...Comme les couleurs…et les animaux.

This year, Scott mentioned he learned colours and animals again, but it was at the beginning of the IEC and served more as a review. He mentioned that sometimes his classmates wrote down the answers for him so he could keep up and the group could stay on task.

*Time 3.*When Scott was asked what his favourite IEC activities were so far, he said that he enjoyed the homework activities which consisted of fun crossword puzzles, word searches and fill in the blanks. When he was asked about his least favourite activities, he replied:

Scott: Ben ça m'arrivait l'année passée mais cette année uh tout ce qu'on fait ça me dérange pas de les faire.

In his previous ESL classes, the work that was asked of him he didn't particularly enjoy doing, but in the IEC he enjoyed doing all the work that was assigned to him.

Over the course of the interviews, Scott explained further that last year's English class was really difficult for him because he had a really difficult time understanding and keeping up and the work was not motivating.

Time 4. When Scott was asked about the biggest difference between his English class last year versus this year, he replied:

> Scott: Uh l'année passée je ne savais pas parler en anglais
> Researcher: Puis cette année?
> Scott: Ben cette année quand même ouais je suis capable, ben à peine.
> Researcher: Puis l'année passée, pourquoi tu n'as pas appris?
> Scott: Parce-que c'était trop compliqué puis tout que le prof disait la je comprenais même pas.
> Researcher: Qu'est ce qui était compliqué?
> Scott: Ben c'est que ca doit être à cause qu'elle expliquait pas assez bien pour que je comprenne.

Still, he rarely ever helped his classmates; he said that he is usually the one who requires help:

> Scott: Puis eux autres ils ont beaucoup d'idées. Comme admettons uh je suis en équipe avec [students name] pour le mini book et les idées viennent tout de [students name]…Moi j'en ai jamais des idées. Alors, dans le fond c'est copié. Mais au moins je l'aide à chercher des mots dans le dictionnaire.

However, he acknowledges that he contributes in other ways by looking up words in the dictionary.

Perceptions and attitude.

Time 1. Scott's self-perception on his ability to learn English was very low. He tried to learn English in the past, but was never able to:

Researcher: Ok, est-ce-que tu penses que apprendre l'anglais c'est facile ou difficile pour toi?

Scott: Je ne sais pas. Plus uh…ben j'apprends pas l'anglais, j'apprends pas.

Researcher: T'apprends pas? Parce-que ce n'est pas intéressant pour toi ou c'est difficile?

Scott: J'essaye d'apprendre mais je ne suis pas capable, ça ne marche pas.

His overall confidence in his ability to speak and understand English was really low. He was very reserved during the interview by delivering one-worded answers or saying "I don't know".

Time 3. Scott reported feeling inferior to the rest of his classmates in terms of speaking and understanding English:

Scott: Uh moins bien parce-que je demande quasiment tout le temps qu'est-ce-que ça veut dire.

Scott was still fairly reserved during this interview and he also said he didn't feel well during the final visit.

Time 4. Scott reported that English had become easier for him to learn. His approach towards the tasks was less negative and he was proud of himself at times. Despite all this, his attitude toward the language did not change over time. For Scott, being able to speak or understand English in the context where he lived was not very important for him.

When compared to his classmates, he always claimed to be not as good in listening and speaking in English, however, during the final interview, he reported feeling that he was more or less equal but just a little bit below them.

Scott reported being a little nervous to switch back to French for the second half of the year because of math and also because he doesn't know what to expect. However, when asked if he usually feels this way at the beginning of the school year, he reported

that he is generally nervous when it comes to parts of the French curriculum such as math.

Classroom observations. During observations over time, Scott never attempted to speak English during group activities unless he was directly reading an example from a worksheet or following a model to complete a task. Scott would always use French to make comments or ask questions within his group. For the most part, Scott stayed on task throughout group or paired work by listening and contributing in ways that he could such as looking up words in the dictionary. His participation stemmed more from learner and class activities such as the "Family Feud" game and "Talking about the weekend". The teacher guided these activities so Scott received more encouragement and scaffolding to use appropriate language, He also was very interested in the workbook activities, which were more individual such as the crossword puzzles and fill-in-the blanks. From the very beginning he always stayed on task with these activities and showed a sense of pride when he was able to complete them.

Teacher Interview/on-going conversations. At the beginning of the IEC, Scott rarely participated in class. However, by time 2, the teacher said that he began participating more. Additionally, he was demonstrating more openness towards developing a relationship with the teacher. The teacher emphasized that this was a milestone for Scott because of his difficulties with forming relationships with individuals.

L2 progress.

Listening comprehension: Overall*,* Scott improved on listening comprehension over the course of the IEC. He showed slight improvement on the AVR between time 1 and 3 and then plateaued between time 3 and 4. At time 4, he scored the same on the

original AVR and the adapted AVR. Scott also showed substantial improvement on the dictation. He did not miss as many words at time 4 and he also correctly spelled some new words (see Figure 1).

Yes/no vocabulary task: Scott showed an increase in vocabulary recognition between time 1 and 2, but then dropped at time 3. It is important to mention that during time 3 Scott was not feeling very well and needed to take a break during the tasks. Time 4 showed a slight increase but still below time 1 and 2 (see Figure 2).

Written narrative: Scott performed quite well in the writing tasks. Although he wrote very short texts, both his productivity and his lexical diversity increased over time (see Table 5).

Oral task: Scott showed improvement on the oral task. His total number of English words and types (TNEW and TNET) gradually increased over time and was highest at time 4. For the written portion of the task, Scott showed some variability in performance. There was a noticeable increase in production and lexical diversity between time 1 and 2. At time 2, his narrative included more TNEW than TNFW and also the highest number of TNET between all four times. However there was a decrease in performance at time 3 and 4 (see Table 6 and 7).

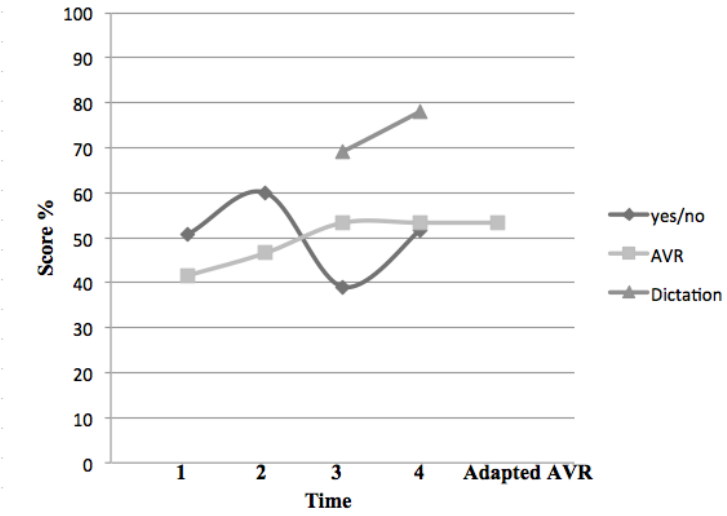

Figure 1. Scott's vocabulary and listening comprehension progress over time. *Note.* The Adapted AVR was administered only at time 4.

Class comparison and final grades. Scott performed -0.33 SD below his class on the AVR. He performed -0.86 SD on the yes/no vocabulary test. For the written narrative, for the TNEW, Scott performed -1.74 SD below the class, and for the TNET, he performed 0.15 SD above the mean. Scott finished the IEC with an overall average of 62%, which placed him -2.42 standard deviations below the class mean. See Table 8 for all standard deviations.

Summary. Overall, Scott showed improvement on all L2 skills. Although overall Scott performed below the class average on the study's language measures, his performance was close to the class average, highlighting that perhaps his listening skills are more at par with his peers than other skills such as writing. His teacher reported that he made progress over the course of the five months in terms of participating more in class. Scott reported enjoying the overall experience of the IEC, and there was nothing that he didn't particularly like. He felt that he learned much more English this year compared to his regular ESL classes in previous years.

Mark. Mark is older than most of his classmates because he was held back in grade 2. His teacher describes him as an energetic, enthusiastic child who sometimes has difficulty focusing in class and who experiences challenges with impulsivity. He can be disruptive and is sometimes sent out of the classroom until he can compose himself. Mark has a clever sense of humour and is very charming. He performed below average in all of his grade 5 classes. The CELF-CDN-4 classified Mark as having a severe/extreme language delay. This is not surprising given that he is diagnosed with dyslexia and dysphasia as well as ADHD. The following reports on Mark's interview data.

Student Interview.

*Language background, frequency of English and attitude towards the L2***.**

Time 1. Mark's English use was mainly limited to the classroom. However, he claimed to listen to some mainstream English music that is well-known by his age group. He reported watching some popular English TV shows such as Scooby Doo and said that he could understand everything he hears. He hasn't travelled and his family doesn't speak any English, although he reported that his mother knows a few words. Mark places an importance on learning English for professional reasons. He said that he would eventually like to join the National Hockey League. He claimed that one must be able to speak in English to do so:

> Mark: Um me and ligue national plus tard de hockey, j'aimerais ça moi aller dans le ligue national…Il faut que j'apprenne anglais pour uh pour faire du hockey. C'est plusi- tout le monde le /---/ la majorité parle en anglais.

At the outset of the study Mark was very open towards learning English and motivated to speak the language.

Time 3. Mark reported watching more English TV for his English homework, which required him to watch programs such as The Simpsons, South Park, American Dad and Family Guy. Although he had to watch more English TV for class, he really enjoyed watching these cartoons and explained that he understands much of what is being said and is sometimes asked to translate for his family. His spoken English was still limited to the classroom as there are not many (or any at all) opportunities for him to speak English in his community. Mark and his friends do not speak English outside of the classroom.

Time 4. When Mark was asked about how much English TV he watches, he said that he did not have access to English TV anymore because it was no longer available to him in his home. He only had access to English TV for a limited amount of time and said that he would need to subscribe to keep watching. Also, he reported not watching many shows online. The importance he placed on learning English remained consistent over time with the same goals in mind such as being able to play in a professional hockey league.

General scholastic competence and perceptions of competencies such as reading, writing and math in the L1. Mark's favourite subjects in school are English and physical education. His least favourite are French and math. He claimed that English is the subject where he excels the most. When Mark was asked why English is his favourite subject, he answered:

> Mark: Parce-que j'ai la facilité, uh je ne sais pas, j'aime ça, j'aime ça, je suis intéressé pis uh j'aimerais ça parler anglais là.

Mark explained that he prefers English much more than French. He said that he has a lot of difficulties in French but could not explain why. He attends special tutoring classes one evening a week to help him with his French work and also general learning

strategies. When he was asked if he could share any strategies he uses that help him with reading or writing, he could not. The only strategies he mentioned were ones to keep him focused in school: observe your environment, control your impulses, think before reacting and breathe deeply.

Mark explained that writing is very difficult for him and it is a task that he does not enjoy doing. He is allowed to use a computer at school for any written work he is asked to do. He explained that the computer facilitates the task for him and he enjoys it more.

IEC versus regular ESL.

Time 1. When Mark was asked about how he felt knowing he was going to begin year in the IEC, he said he was really looking forward to it. He explained that his regular English class in grade 5 was boring and nobody took it seriously. At one point, he also described the grade 5 teacher as "not a real teacher". He was able to explain that there was a difference in term of facility in learning and also a relationship with the teacher:

> Mark: Ah cette année c'est plus facile. Elle montre des affaires et tout ça. L'année passée elle ne s'occupait pas…Elle regardait uh elle ne venait pas à côté de nous et tout ça. Mais [teacher], elle explique, c'est comme une mère, comme une deuxième mère à l'école là. Elle est tout le temps avec nous.

Mark had nothing but positive things to say about the IEC. He found it much more enjoyable and he felt like he was learning a lot more compared to last year.

Time 3. When Mark was asked what he enjoys most about his IEC experience so far, he replied:

> Mark: Um I like uh [Teacher name] and um apprendre des nouveaux mots à nous qu'on ne savait pas. Puis on sait plus de phrases puis on va presque être bilingue là. Pas bilingue là mais /---/ on va savoir plein de mots

He was the only participant to mention the potential possibility of working towards bilingualism. Also, he explained that the intensity of the course made a large difference in their ability to learn more:

> Mark: L'année passée…um on apprendrait on a pas appris beaucoup de mots puis ce n'est pas tout le temps
>
> Researcher: Ce n'est pas tout le temps?
>
> Mark: Ce n'est pas tout le temps anglais genre, c'est une fois par semaine des fois… Maintenant c'est toute la semaine.

When asked if English became easier or more difficult for him, he said easier since he already has an easy time picking up the language,

> *Time 4.* During the final interview, Mark stressed again that he really didn't enjoy his previous ESL experience. He claimed he didn't learn much:
>
> > Mark: Tu sais une période par une semaine genre puis là c'est toute le cinq mois. Là on apprend plus en journée, on n'apprend pas grand-chose en une période.
>
> He also reported that the IEC was simply just much more fun than anything else he had experienced**.**
>
> *Perceptions and attitude.*

Time 1. Despite the language difficulties Mark faced everyday with his dyslexia and dysphasia, he was very optimistic about his English learning abilities. He classified himself as speaking and understanding better English than the rest of his classmates. He also said that he helps his peers out sometimes with their vocabulary. Mark gave the impression that despite the errors he makes in his speaking; he is extremely comfortable and confident in his English abilities.

*Time 3.*When Mark was asked about his speaking abilities compared to the rest of his class, he reported differently than he did at time 1. He claimed that he was now as good as his classmates because at the beginning of the year he thought he was performing

a little bit lower than the class. However, there were still a few other students who were lower than the rest of the class. He also reported that his ability to understand is higher than the rest of the class and always has been. He highlighted the fact that sometimes students go see the teacher to ask a question in French, and she answers them in English and so he impulsively translates for the student, something he cannot control and often gets into trouble for!

Time 4. At the end of the IEC, once again Mark reported to have been in the middle of his class when it came to speaking English but now he felt like he was equal to everyone else. However, in terms of understanding English, he considered himself still better than the rest of the class. Mark also reported that although he doesn't enjoy reading at all, he has an easier time reading in English than he does in French:

> Mark: Oui c'est plus facile là parce-que je comprend plus anglais là que le français.

He claimed he has an easier time learning English than French. He was unable to use his words to explain why.

Classroom observations. From time 1, Mark was always a very actively involved student in the IEC. During learner and class activities that are more teacher-led such as the "talk about the weekend" activity, he always raised his hand to participate and tried very hard to use English as much as possible. He made mistakes regularly but was not afraid to make them. The teacher provided him with a lot of scaffolding, which he openly accepted. During group or paired work such as the "Alien game" or the "weather game" worksheets, he mostly used French to communicate with his peers; however, if the activity was more guided, such as the WH-question game where the students had to walk

around the classroom and ask each other questions, Mark would always refer back to the models that were provided in order to speak English.

As noted above, when other students would ask the teacher questions in French, and the teacher would respond in English; Mark would always translate for the student knowing he would get into trouble. But this demonstrated that his receptive skills are quite good!

Teacher interview/on-going conversations. Although Mark caused a lot of disruption in the classroom, Melanie enjoyed Mark's sense of humour or charm. She always described him as one of the more enthusiastic students in her class. Since time 1, Mark was always participating in class and trying to communicate in English with the teacher as much as possible. Over time, Melanie claimed that Mark's written work also became considerably better. He optimized his use of resources and produced work that was much more comprehensive and neat. She explained that this was great progress for Mark since the written work was an area where Mark really struggled in.

L2 progress.

Listening comprehension: Mark showed improvement on both the AVR and the dictation over time. However, at time 4, Mark performed worse on the adapted AVR than he did on the regular. He did it on two different days (the adapted first). When he was asked if he found the adapted AVR easier or more difficult to navigate through, he said that it did not make a difference for him (see Figure 2).

Yes/no vocabulary task: Mark's vocabulary acquisition varied over time, but overall he showed gains in vocabulary acquisition (see Figure 2).

Writing task: Mark did not show much progress on the written task. He increased in productivity between time 1 and 2 (the cat story), but his lexical diversity remained low and did not change over time (see Table 5). At time 4, productivity and lexical diversity were the lowest. It is important to note that at time 4, Mark was experiencing some separation anxiety due to the transition back to French that was about to take place.

Oral narrative: Mark showed more progress on both productivity and lexical diversity on the oral portion of the task than the written (see Table 6 and 7). Both his TNEW and TNET increased gradually over time.

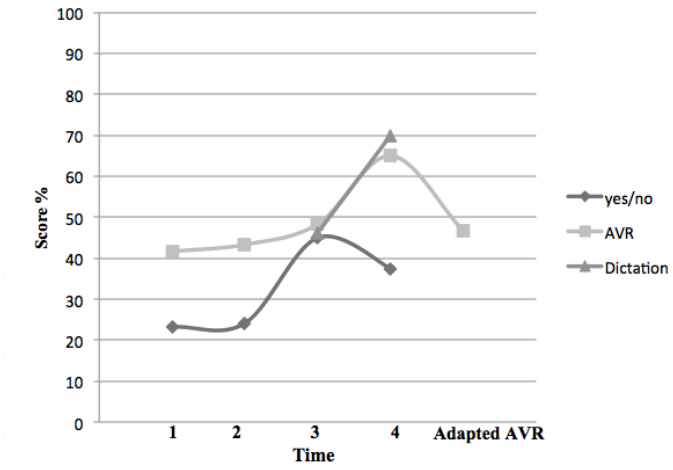

Figure 2. Mark's L2 progress in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension over time. *Note.* The Adapted AVR was administered only at time 4.

Overall, Mark showed most improvement on listening, oral and vocabulary acquisition. Mark's written and oral work was challenging to score due to his difficulties; his handwriting and oral abilities were not always clear.

Class comparison and final grades. Mark performed -0.14 SD below his class on the AVR. He performed -1.91 SD on the yes/no vocabulary test. For the written narrative, for the TNEW, Mark performed -2.64 SD below the class, and for the TNET he

performed 0.53 SD above the class. Mark finished the IEC with an overall average of 67%, which placed him -1.78 standard deviations below the class mean. See Table 8 for all standard deviations.

Summary. Despite the language difficulties Mark is faced with every day, he is an active participant in his IEC. Throughout each visit, he was observed always participating in class and trying to speak in English as much as he could. Mark constantly reported that English was his strongest subject. Throughout the study, he always felt that he was more or less equal to his peers in terms of speaking in English. However, he considered himself better in terms of understanding English. This was observed as well. His receptive abilities are far better than his expressive. During the interviews, Mark was the only participant who attempted to answer his questions in English. Even if his English was limited, combined with his already existing difficulties to express himself, he continuously strived to get involved. He was not afraid to make mistakes and always accepted help from the teacher.

Gerry. Gerry is of typical age for grade 6. His teacher describes him as a calm, happy, smart individual. Gerry is diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome. This disability affects the nervous system, which causes individuals to have movements and vocalizations (also known as ticks) they cannot control. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this syndrome is often associated with an additional condition (mental, behavioral or emotional) (Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention, 2011). Gerry's' ticks are frequent eye blinking, headshakes and spitting. Despite this, he is socially adept and has no trouble making and maintaining friendships at school. His peers appear to accept him for who he is.

Gerry also performed above average in all of his grade 5 classes. Although Gerry does not experience any cognitive or intellectual delays and performs quite well in school, his parents and teachers said that he experiences anxiety. The teacher reported that his parents were quite concerned about Gerry being enrolled in the IEC and worried his anxiety might take over. They agreed to let him try it and see how he did. Despite his academic achievement, the parents' perception was that their child's anxiety would have a negative effect on his IEC performance and experience.

At Time 1, Gerry did experience ticks. However these diminished over the course of the sessions, which suggests that he grew more comfortable. His parents also told the teacher that Gerry's participation in this study was not affecting his anxiety.

According to the CELF-CDN-4, Gerry experiences a weak/moderate language delay. The following reports on Gerry's interview data.

Student Interview.

Language background, frequency of English and attitude towards the L2.

Time 1. Similarly to Scott and Mark, Gerry uses English mostly in the classroom. However, unlike Scott and Mark, Gerry often travels to countries where English is regularly used. Also, he claimed that his parents speak a little bit of English and sometimes encourage him to practice English with them at home. He doesn't watch any TV or movies in English aside from the homework he is assigned in class. As for music, he claimed that he listens to some English music that children his age listen to but could not name any specific artists. Gerry places an importance on being able to speak English. His main and only reason for learning English throughout this study was because it will

help him with his travels, open doors to new places and facilitate communication with different people.

*Time 3.*Gerry's answers remained consistent with time 1. Once again he reported that it was important for him to learn English because it will open doors for him in the future and will facilitate travelling. Also, he sometimes speaks English at home with his family:

> Gerry: Ben je ne sais pas trop. Des fois ils me posent des questions en anglais pour me pratiquer et je répond en anglais

He does not speak any English with his peers outside of the IEC but he did report watching some TV shows in English, mostly about history, for his TV reports, but did not watch any on his own time.

Time 4. During Gerry's final interview, his answers remained more or less the same as in his other interviews. He feels that English is important to learn for reasons previously mentioned, however there are few opportunities for him to further practice his English outside of the classroom.

General scholastic competence and perceptions of competencies such as reading, writing and math in the L1. His favourite subjects at school are music, physical education and English. His least favourite subjects are math and French. Gerry said his strongest subject is history; he has a passion for it and enjoys reading books about historical events. He said that he generally does well in school, and even when he doesn't study for a test, he usually gets a good grade.

IEC versus regular ESL.

Time 1. Gerry explained that he was quite nervous at the beginning of the IEC. However, the fact that the teacher was an old friend of his mother made him feel more at ease knowing that he had a personal connection to her. He claimed that he would give the course a couple of days and he realized that it was something he really enjoyed. When Gerry was asked about his English class in grade 5, he explained that it was not enjoyable and it was very difficult to actually learn the target language:

> Gerry: …on se disait "oh non pas l'anglais" parce-que on trouvait ça comme pas le fun. Mais là on fait comme vraiment une matière ben un sujet à la fois puis on apprend vraiment beaucoup plus…c'était comme moins le fun puisque là on apprenait qu'une seule affaire puis on ne connaissait pas beaucoup de mots…les années avant c'était beaucoup plus difficile parce-que on n'arrivait pas à mémoriser les mots et tous ces affaires-là, comme on ne faisait pas vraiment apprendre… Puis surtout là c'est à tous les périodes qu'ont en fait alors on s'habitue plus.

The fact that they have English every day has made a vast difference on his English learning experience.

Time 3. Gerry continued to enjoy his IEC experience and shared many differences between his previous ESL experience and the IEC. For example, in the IEC the teacher has more time to explain things better:

> Gerry: Ben elle donnait pas mal tout le temps des feuilles qu'elle nous expliquaitpas. Puis là, nous autres on est là comme "qu'est-ce-qui faut faire, qu'est ce qui faut marquer?" Mais là maintenant elle nous explique puis on comprend très bien. Puis surtout là c'est à tous les périodes qu'on en fait alors on s'habitue plus.

Gerry again acknowledged the fact that the intensity of the English he and his classmates were now exposed to was making a difference in their rate of learning English as well as their attitudes in approaching the learning of the language:

> Gerry: Ben premièrement on a une bonne prof, deuxième on a cinq périodes par jour fait que ça nous permettre d'avoir apprendre plus. Et uh après ça avant on se forcait pas beaucoup à parler mais maintenant qu'on a plus de vocabulaire on peut plus parler.

In grade 5, they had barely any time to integrate and apply the things they were learning in class, which made them not care. However, since they have more instructional time in grade 6, they have more time to memorise the things they learned and apply them, which in turn makes the learning more meaningful.

Time 4. During his final interview, Gerry continued to report that the IEC was a lot of fun for him and his peers compared to the regular program:

> Gerry: Mais l'anglais on avait des cours d'anglais avant puis ça n'était pas le fun mais maintenant qu'on est basé vraiment pour cinq mois on aime beaucoup plus ça. On a des jeux uh beaucoup plus de choses à apprendre, des devoirs. Tandis qu'avant elle nous a expliqué rien.

Gerry and his classmates were learning so much more since the exposure to the language increased. And the types of tasks and activities they were doing made learning English enjoyable.

Perceptions and attitude.

Time 1. When Gerry was asked about how he compared to the rest of his class in terms of speaking and listening in English, he claimed that they were all more or less equal:

> Gerry: Um je pense qu'on est pas mal toute égale. Parce-qu'on apprends tous les mêmes choses au même rythmes. Je trouve. Puis on est égale.

When asked if English was easy or difficult for him to learn, Gerry brought up the fact that the previous year it was much more difficult, but this year it is much easier:

Gerry: Ben comme l'année passe c'était plus dur vu que c'était pas intensif on apprenait pas grands chose. Mais là elle nous explique vraiment tout puis c'est vraiment beaucoup plus facile.

Time 3. Gerry explained again that he and his classmates were more or less equal in terms of speaking and listening in English. However, this time he claimed that at the beginning of the year, there might have been a few students with more difficulty, but after a month in the IEC, they were now more or less caught up:

Gerry: Ben il y en a qui avait plus de difficulté mais la on on approche un mois on a pas mal étaient toute au même niveau pendant un la reste de l'année.

Gerry claimed he and his classmates are much more independent since the beginning of the year in terms of being able to do individual work.

Time 4. Gerry still considered himself to be at the same level as the rest of his peers in terms of speaking and understanding English. Gerry also said that he sometimes has more difficulties in his French class than in the IEC. When asked to elaborate, he replied

Gerry: Apprendre l'anglais avec un bon professeur c'est beaucoup plus facile parce-que tu es basé sur une seul matière tandis que le français tu es basée sur plein matière puis tu es un peu déborder, tandis que l'anglais tu concentre sur une seul sujet. T'as des devoirs que c'est la même affaire avec ça c'est beaucoup plus facile.

Gerry explained that in the IEC, the focus is solely on learning the language, whereas in the French portion of year, they are learning multiple subjects at the same time and that can prove to be quite difficult at times for him.

Classroom observations. Throughout classroom observations, Gerry was always a very calm student and did not get distracted easily. During activities such as "talk about your weekend" which was led by the teacher, he never volunteered to participate; however, when he was chosen to speak, he tried his hardest to use as much English as possible. At time 2, when asked questions such as what he did on the weekend he used more complex language and vocabulary than other students. Such as "I played video games with my cousins, I go/I went outside". Other students would say things such as "I relaxed". The teacher mentioned that students say this as a way of hinting to the teacher that they have nothing to say and do not want to contribute to the conversation. By time 2, the teacher said that Gerry was doing very well and appeared to be less nervous in class, displaying fewer . During paired or group work, over the course of the study, Gerry would still use mostly French to communicate with his peers. He would only use English if it were to focus on target forms or vocabulary needed for a specific task such as the WH-questions.

Gerry also reported being an avid reader and was very interested in historical and mythological books. So he always chose books that were in the "hard" pile from the library.

Teacher interview/on-going conversations. Melanie reported that she did see a decrease in nervous ticks by Gerry over the course of the IEC. Melanie also reported that she is very close to Gerry's family and that, she thinks, contributed to his more relaxed state in the classroom.

L2 progress.

Listening comprehension: Gerry consistently improved at each time on both the AVR and the dictation. At time 4, Gerry achieved a perfect score on the AVR. Similarly to Scott, Gerry performed the same on the regular AVR and the adapted AVR (see Figure 3).

Yes/no vocabulary task: Gerry consistently increased his vocabulary acquisition over time (see Figure 3).

Written narrative: Gerry did not produce very long narratives. For each picture, he wrote a slightly longer narrative the second time but overall his TNW did not show too much variability. However, at each time his TNFW used decreased and his TNEW and TNET increased over time. By time 4, he barley used any French (see Table 5).

Oral task: Gerry improved each time on all aspects of productivity and lexical diversity for both the oral portion and written portion of the task (see Table 6 and 7).

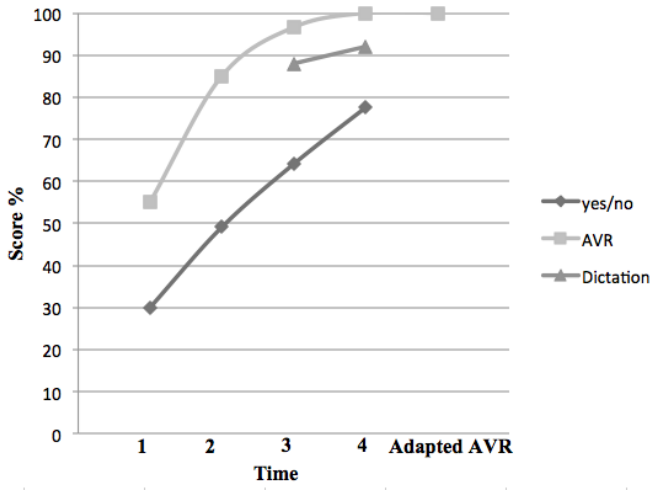

Figure 3. Gerry's' L2 progress in vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension over time. *Note.* The Adapted AVR was administered only at time 4.

Class comparison and final grades. Gerry performed 0.41 SD above his class on the AVR. He performed 0.97 SD above the class on the yes/no vocabulary test. For the

written narrative, for the TNEW, Mark performed 0.12 SD above the class, and for the TNET he performed 0.23 SD above the class. Gerry achieved a final score of 84% in his IEC, which placed him at 0.38 standard deviations above the mean of the class. See Table 8 for all standard deviations.

Summary. Gerry showed consistent and gradual progress on all L2 measures over time. Although he did experience some nervous ticks during the interview/testing sessions at the beginning of each testing time, this did not seem to affect his overall performance. Gerry reported enjoying everything about his IEC. All of the activities were stimulating and fun for him.

Although the IEC was coming to an end, Gerry was looking forward to starting the French portion on the academic year, because he was excited to meet his new teacher and also to begin learning about history, which was his strongest subject. He mentioned that the IEC experience would help him in the future once he gets to secondary school.

Table 5

Written Narratives over time

	Scott				Mark				Gerry				Class
	Cat		Police		Cat		Police		Cat		Police		Police
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 4
Productivity													
1.Total number of words	14	19	31	36	17	36	24	12	22	35	40	39	85
2.Total Number of French words	11	9	20	11	7	13	8	4	8	5	16	2	6
3.Total number of English words	3	10	11	25	10	23	16	6	13	30	24	37	79
Lexical Diversity													
4. Total number of English types	3	8	8	15	6	8	7	5	7	16	11	24	36

Note. Class refers to the average across the rest of the IEC class.

Table 6

Frog Story Oral Task over time

	Scott				Mark				Gerry			
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Productivity												
1.Total number of words	165	129	236	133	82	152	128	157	47	127	155	165
2.Total Number of French words	157	105	212	97	50	116	77	54	29	57	32	13
3.Total number of English words	8	24	24	36	32	36	51	51	70	70	123	152
Lexical Diversity												
4. Total number of English types	2	12	11	15	8	12	11	18	10	29	26	40

Table 7

Frog Story Written Task over time

	Scott				Mark				Gerry			
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
Productivity												
1.Total number of words	108	112	66	64	62	67	59	-	48	82	92	106
2.Total Number of French words	97	52	43	36	33	31	25	-	24	26	23	12
3.Total number of English words	11	60	24	27	29	36	34	-	24	56	69	94
Lexical Diversity												
4. Total number of English types	3	20	13	16	5	7	9	-	11	23	20	32

Note. At time 4, participants were given the option to write out the narrative before orally delivering it. Mark chose not to write it.

Classroom comparison.

Figure 4 and 5 display how the three participants compared to the rest of the class at time 4 on the AVR and the yes/no vocabulary task.

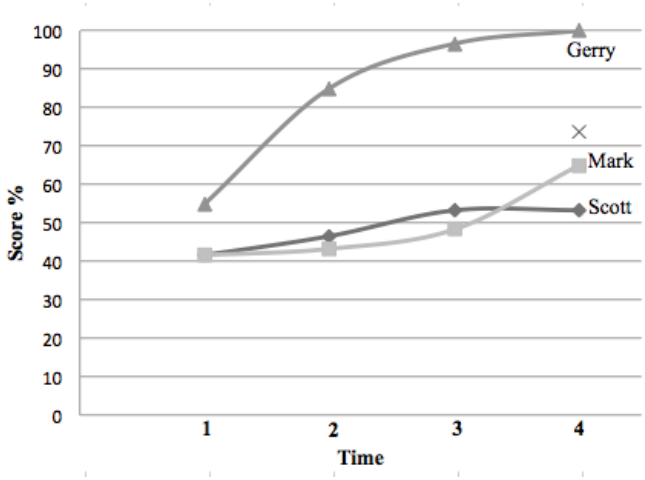

Figure 4. Participants' performance on the AVR compared to the class average at 4. *Note.* The X represents the class average.

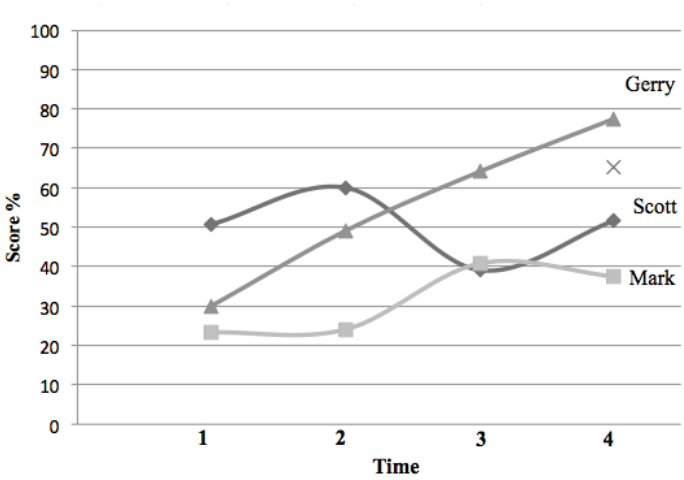

Figure 5. Participants, performance on the yes/no vocabulary test compared to the class average at time 4. *Note.* The X represents the class average.

Table 8

Standard deviation scores for the three participants compared to the rest of the class

	Scott	Mark	Gerry
Class Average	-2.42	-1.78	0.38
AVR	-0.33	-0.14	0.41
Yes/no vocabulary	-0.86	-1.91	0.97
Written narrative			
Total number English words	-1.47	-2.64	0.12
Total number English types	0.15	0.53	0.23

Note. The SD for the class was calculated using all 26 students. The SD for the final three tasks at time 4 was calculated using 19 students (aside from the three participants).

Finally, the range of scores was also calculated in order to show the distribution across the whole class. Table 9 shows that there was considerable variation among the students on all of the tasks.

Table 9
Range of Scores

Task	Range of scores for the whole class	Scott	Mark	Gerry
Class	62-91	62-91	67-91	84-91
AVR	38-100	53-100	65-100	100-100
Yes/no vocabulary	37.5-82.5	52-82.5	37.5-82.5	77.5-82.5
Written narrative				
Total number of English words	46-100	69-100	50-100	95-100
Total number of English types	32-83	60-83	83-83	65-83

Teacher. Melanie is francophone and has lived in the region the study took place in all of her life. As a child she received English instruction in the regular ESL program. At that time English was offered starting in grade 4 until 6 in elementary school. In secondary school, Melanie participated in numerous field trips and exchange programs in majority English speaking countries. Her motivation to be able to understand and speak English grew from there. She enrolled in the teaching English as a second language program at the local university. Melanie also speaks a little bit of Spanish. She has taken some university courses to learn the language and still continues to find ways to maintain it.

Melanie has been teaching ESL for sixteen years. She started out as a substitute teacher in 1998 for 2 years. In 2001, she received her first full-time contract to teach regular ESL and did so for 6 years. In 2005, she began teaching intensive and has ever since. When Melanie was attending university, no special training was offered for intensive teaching. Melanie's' training consisted mainly of free intensive training sessions and workshops that were organized by the school boards English PC. She explained that the sessions were informative and helpful. Now, the university does offer courses that focus on intensive teaching.

Melanie prefers teaching intensive for several reasons. First, she prefers to work with older students:

> Melanie: Ya. Because when I, I did regular English, I had grade 1 and grade 2 students, you know they are not autonomous, they cannot sharpen a pencil, they are not sure what colour blue is – dark blue, light blue, take a blue! You know? And uh, tie up my shoelace, so uh, I don't like that part. I prefer more autonomous students, that I can, guide, and let experiment.

A second reason is that she likes to see the results. The following interview excerpt is from the PC, but Melanie agreed:

> PC: I definitely preferred Intensive as well, and uh, as well, you know the fact, as I was mentioning, you can hear the result. You can, you know, at some point after a couple of months, when you realize you're actually having a conversation with your students during recess, because I worked very hard not to interact with them in French at all, so even if they came to me at recess, I would talk to them in English. At the beginning of the year they had many friends, but at some point, you know, some sort of started coming to me, and that's so much fun, when you can actually, you know, interact and you can see and hear the results and that the results- when you do an outing and you realize that even outside of the classroom they will continue interacting in English.

In terms of working with SWE, Melanie received no special training. In university, she recalled taking one class, "Introduction aux troubles d'Apprentissage" (Introduction to learning difficulties), and mainly focused on some identification signs. Melanie could not recall if she had any courses that focused on differentiated learning or adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

Despite her lack in official training with SWE, she has made up for it with her experience and dedication. She is a teacher who really cares about her students and takes the time to get to know them and help them in every way she can so they can meet their learning goals. One lunch hour a week, Melanie spends her lunch hour in class and offers support to students who need additional time to catch up on their homework, or who simply require extra help. Some students do not have homework support at home. Additionally, some parents are unable to help their children with English homework. There are some students that she recommends be there, and some simply take advantage of the extra time.

CROSS-CASES

The cross-case analysis attempted to provide insight into factors that enhance or prove to be challenging in the learning of an L2 for SWE in the IEC. Using student interviews, teacher conversations and interviews, and classroom observations, cases were analyzed for similarities and differences between students' performance and personal experience in the IEC. Table 9 and 10 display the emerging themes and description along with the identifying source. Each theme will be further described in the discussion section.

Table 10

Factors that enhance the learning of an L2 in an IEC setting for SWE

Theme	Identifying Source	Description
Intensity	Students, teachers	Allows students more time to learn; less stress
Student-teacher relationship	Students, teacher, observation	More time in class means more opportunities for teacher-student bonding
Focus on oral interaction	Students, teacher	Students weak in reading and writing may excel in oral interaction
Class involvement	Students, teacher, observation	Students get more included in group activities
English as an "academic" subject	Students	English is taken more seriously
Explicit learning	Students, teacher, observation	Students are provided with more clarifications and scaffolding
Communicative classroom	Students, teacher, observation	Allows for more active learning; less stress

Table 11

Factors that make the learning of an L2 challenging in an IEC setting for SWE

Theme	Identifying Source	Description
French in the classroom	Teacher, observation	IECs with a weaker group result in more French in the classroom
Teachers' lack of training	Teacher	ESL teachers rarely receive training in special education
Parents' perceptions	Teacher, student	Parents anxiety over the success of their child
Responsibilities and pressures of grade 6	Teacher	Students in the final year of elementary school go through many changes

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study investigated the performance and experience of three grade 6 francophone students with exceptionalities enrolled in Quebec's IEC. The discussion is organized into four sections, which address the research questions.

L2 PROGRESS

Overall, the three participants showed progress on all L2 measures with a few exceptions. Mark and Scott showed some variable performance on the AVR and vocabulary test. They both performed very low all four times but they still showed noticeable progress. This is important to document because in Collins and White (2012), the first time the AVR task was administered, researchers were able to group learners into low (raw score between 37-47), mid (raw score between 48-58) and high groups (raw score between 59-69). It was noted that there were a few students who did score considerably below 37 and were not included in the study in order to maintain three approximately equal groups. In this study, at Time 1, before the two lines were eliminated from the scoring because the students had not learned that vocabulary, all three students scored below 37. Furthermore, although both Scott and Mark performed slightly better each time, they still scored under 37. Therefore, even though these students performed lower than the low-group students in Collins & White (2012), they still showed progress.

There are many factors to consider when interpreting these results. At the beginning of this study, it was mentioned that the L2 instruments chosen have never been used specifically with SWE; therefore, it was uncertain as to how the students would approach the tasks. For example, in Collins & White (2012), a different listening task was

used at every testing time because listening is an aspect of proficiency that changes quite dramatically over time for students enrolled in the IEC (p. 52). This study intended to follow the same procedure. However, the three students performed so low on the AVR at time 1 that there was still space for improvement. Therefore, it was decided to keep administering the AVR so the students could demonstrate progress.

Furthermore, an adapted version of the AVR was created to see if there would be a difference in the participant's performance. The original AVR was very demanding on attention and visual-spatial processing skills. It required students to listen to a word, search for the image that depicted the word among a scatter of other images. Then, on a separate piece of paper, scan the page to locate the appropriate box to write the letter in. This task requires a lot of attention and visual-spatial planning. As previously mentioned in the literature review, students with ADHD exhibit difficulties with sustaining attention and visual-spatial working memory. This means the ability to temporarily store and manipulate visual information is limited. Also, symptoms associated with dyslexia include phonological processing, speed of processing, vision and scanning eye movement (Stein & Walsh, 1997; Smythe & Evarett, 2000). Therefore, by altering the presentation of the task and making it less visually demanding, this might make a difference in performance. This did not prove to be the case. Aside from Mark's varied AVR performances, there was no difference in final score for Scott and Gerry. However, it should be noted that the adapted version was administered after they had already had considerable familiarity with the task; whether the adapted version would have changed the scores during the initial administration of the task remains an empirical question.

Ranta (1999) also warns that the yes/no vocabulary test may not be appropriate for all learners. She warns that researchers must be cautious when administering this test because the way in which low proficiency learners approach this task is unknown. She further explains that when a student is confronted with a list of words out of context, they must focus on each and every word one at a time and attempt to make a connection to their "contextualized knowledge of the L2". Also, since many of the words are non-real, the student must use some sort of inference strategy. She concludes that this particular task requires flexibility in attention allocation (p.162), which we know that students with ADHD and other disabilities have difficulties with.

When one begins to consider the suitability of the tasks for the students, validity comes into play. As previously mentioned, all of the L2 instruments were borrowed and some were slightly adapted from previous studies in intensive learning. The instruments have never specifically been used with SWE. Essentially these tasks are administered so learners can demonstrate their state of L2 knowledge. However, a student with a disability may not be able to demonstrate their knowledge the same way as a typically developing student. It seems quite invalid to have a student who is dyslexic perform the same L2 writing task as another student who has absolutely no difficulties in writing. The task may end up demonstrating more what the student doesn't know than what they do know. Therefore, when using instruments to test learners' L2 knowledge, researchers need to be mindful in creating instruments so all learners have an equal chance to demonstrate what they know and make up for areas in which they struggle.

Abrams (2008) explains the need for authenticity and validity in L2 tests. Although she is talking about traditional tests used in the classroom, the same principles can be

applied to L2 instruments used in research. For an L2 test to be considered authentic, it must represent real-life L2 language use. Abrams explains that for typically developing language learners, real-life language use means communicating both receptively and productivity in their L1 using both written and spoken modalities, and so these students should also learn to use the L2 in this way. However, SWE might only use different forms of communication or need modifications in their L1. Given this, Abrams suggests that SWE should be tested in the L2 based on their L1 communicative needs.

Mark is allowed and is encouraged to use a computer when writing assignments. At time 1 of the study, he was given the choice of performing the written task on the computer or not (in order to get maximum performance); however, he declined. Therefore, it is possible that given the strenuous task of a writing activity, perhaps Mark would have performed better if he had typed it on the computer.

Abrams (2008) also stresses the importance of validity in testing L2 knowledge of SWE. Valid tests are supposed to measure the construct they intend to measure (Norris, Brown, Hudson & Yoshioka, 1998). Students, who experience learning difficulties that are beyond their control should not be penalized for their disability (Abrams, 1998, p. 424). In Helland and Kaasas' 2004 study, the authors constructed a specific test battery to assess L2 skills in Norwegian learners with dyslexia. The battery was based on seven criteria. First, the test had to target differences between L1 and L2 typology, morphology, phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and orthography. Second, it had to integrate knowledge of typical symptoms of dyslexia found in the L1. Third, the test "…had to target, from a theoretical and clinical viewpoint, the typical symptoms of dyslexia that can be found in the transition from L1 to L2" (p.45). Fourth, it should be based on the

fundamental components of a language test. Fifth, it should also be based on the fundamental components of a dyslexia test. Sixth, the test should be adjusted to match school curriculum. To do this, the test was divided to include both a verbal and a written component. Seventh, students with dyslexia are often faced with deficits in working memory, keeping this in mind; all instructions and tasks should be short and use vocabulary that is familiar to the student. In addition, the authors stressed the need for the test to have face value. They claimed that many students with dyslexia might describe L2 learning as a daunting task. Therefore, in order for the assessment to be valid, it must be encouraging and motivating for the student (p.45).

In addition to SWE being tested fairly, they are often taught strategies and how to make use of resources to make up in areas that they find challenging. The IEC classroom teaches students how to be autonomous learners. Teachers are always encouraging the use of dictionaries and any other resources or strategies, which will help the learning of the L2. Understandably, most research in SLA aims to find out what learners know, without the use of any resources. SWE are constantly encouraged by their educators to make use of any resource or learning strategy they know in order to achieve their goals. When a student with a learning challenge is asked to complete an L2 task without any learning support, it may create a form of anxiety, which may affect their performance. All three participants in this study were worried when they were told they were not allowed to use any resources. Immediately, they each felt as if they were already going to fail the task. The use of no resources allowed for each student to demonstrate what they were capable to produce on their own. However, they were not able to demonstrate what they were capable of with the use of resources, which is what they have been taught to do.

Both Mark and Scott performed better on the oral narrative than the written narrative. These findings are consistent with the literature which claims students with learning difficulties excel more in L2 listening and oral production tasks than on writing tasks (Genesee, 1976b). However, the nature of the written narrative did not seem to generate much language. All three participants wrote significantly more for the written portion of the oral task than the actual written narrative. The written narrative required the students to use their imagination to invent a creative story, whereas the oral task had a set of pictures that already represented a narative that the students simply had to describe. This made the task perhaps less cognitively demanding since they simply had to describe pictures. However, as Table 5 shows, at time 4, the class's overall productivity and lexical diversity was very high for the written narrative compared to the three participants. The difference in performance could be related to the fact that it was the first time the students of the class were introduced to this task, and they were very excited to participate in the study. Furthermore, the range of scores presented in Table 8 showed that both Mark and Scott very close to the highest score for total number of English types. However, they performed more on the lower end of the scores for the total number of English words. Therefore even though results showed that both students used a high variety of English types, their total amount of English words used remained low.

Mark and Scott's variability in performance raises an important issue to address when working with SWE. One of the biggest factors to consider when working with an atypical population, especially over a long period of time, is that there can be great variability and inconsistency in performance, especially for children with ADHD (Uebel, Albrecht, Asherson, Börger, Butler, Chen, & ... Banaschewski, 2010). Research shows that children

with ADHD demonstrate greater variability in patterns relating to laboratory tasks such as reaction time and continuous performance tests (Barkley, 1997, p.82).

Researchers need always to be mindful of extraneous variables that may affect participant's performance such as fatigue, stress, emotions etc. However, these variables may play more of a role and occur more frequently in SWE, especially for those who are on medication. Therefore, the type of day that SWE are experiencing will most definitely affect their performance. This was most obvious in Mark's performance, for it fluctuated throughout on several L2 tasks.

It is also worth mentioning that the class as a whole performed much lower than what was reported in previous IEC studies. This suggests that the group in this study was perhaps much weaker/different than groups that had been previously studied. Finally, all three participants displayed different performance profiles; Gerry was in fact quite academically strong. This further suggests the importance of treating SWE as individuals and not as a homogenous group.

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDE

All three students varied in terms of their self-perceptions of their ability to learn English and their attitudes towards the language. Scott was the only one with a noticeable change in his view regarding his ability to learn English. He started out with very negative expectations about learning English. At the end of the IEC he acknowledged that he did learn a lot and it became much easier for him. Although his overall attitude toward the importance or usefulness of learning the language did not change over time (for Scott, being able to speak or understand English is not very important), it is

noteworthy that his perceptions of his ability to learn the language definitely became more positive.

Mark on the other hand, has always had positive expectations about his ability to learn English. Mark is aware of his disabilities and talks about them openly. However, he never mentioned that his language disabilities got in the way of his learning English. Despite his severe language issues with dyslexia and dysphasia, his perception of his ability to learn English remains high. This is an important finding because it demonstrates that low L2 performance does not imply a lack of interest or motivation to learn a second language, nor does it affect the attitude towards the target language. Mark struggles with language difficulties everyday, but he is probably the first one to raise his hand with an answer.

Finally, Gerry maintained positive attitudes towards his abilities to learn English throughout the study. Despite the lack of motivation to seek opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom, Gerry felt that it was important to be able to speak English for a number of travel and career related reasons.

Overall, all three participants' attitudes towards English remained consistent over time. Both Gerry and Mark had positive attitudes towards English and felt that the language was important to learn for travel or professional reasons. Scott maintained a fairly neutral attitude over time. All three reported not seeking outside opportunities to speak more English, but this is perhaps not surprising, given the lack of real opportunities to use English in the region in which they live.

As previously mentioned, the region in which the study took place is primarily francophone. There are no opportunities for English exposure unless one makes a

conscious effort to find them. Mark reported having no access to English TV at home. The TV shows he described watching in his interview were from an English channel that was free for only 2 weeks. Mark and Scott did say that they watched some English TV online. Melanie said that in the past, most people in the area would say that learning English is not important because they plan on never leaving the region. However, over the last 10 years, there is a lot more openness to the importance of learning English. Parents report that they want their children to become functional in English for future job opportunities. Despite the more positive attitudes towards the importance of learning English throughout the region, there is still a lack of opportunities for these students to practice outside of the classroom.

ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNING L2 IN IEC SETTING

The factors that were found to enhance L2 learning for SWE in IEC settings will be discussed in this section.

Intensity. All three students mentioned that the intensity of the course and the amount of L2 exposure had a lot to do with the increase in their L2 learning. They all reported difficulties retaining information during the one period of ESL instruction a week they received in previous years. They all felt that they now had an opportunity to remember the things they learned in class and actually apply them.

Although this study did not directly assess language learning aptitude, it could be speculated that it may play a role when instructional conditions are very limited. Sekhan (1986) suggests that high-aptitude students are better able to extract "maximum learning in time pressured situations" versus low-aptitude students who may have more difficulty absorbing the information. Scott mentioned that in his grade 5 ESL class, he couldn't

understand anything the teacher was saying, but everyone else seem to have understood. However, this year, he reported actually learning parts of the language and understanding much more than he ever has. The PC also mentioned this point in her interview:

> PC: And you know the stronger students, the ones who, they uh, I was reading about that not that long – the stronger students they will get the maximum of what regular English can offer but the average student and the students for whom it's more difficult, they get just, pieces-

The intensive model provides more instructional hours, which removes the time pressure allowing students with various abilities sufficient time to learn the L2. Collins, Halter, Spada and Lightbown (1999, p.672-673) speculated that this was the case for the successful L2 learning in the intensive group with varying academic backgrounds.

Student-teacher relationship. The intensive classroom allows for students to build a relationship with their teacher. Each student had a unique and special bond with the teacher. Mark referred to his teacher as the students' "second mom". He described her as an "actual teacher" and not just a random teacher they would see once in a while. He also developed some separation anxiety towards the end of the course. He was very attached to the teacher and was constantly giving her hugs. The public displays of affection were noteworthy since Mark has a very strong sense of male pride. Gerry already felt close to the teacher since she is a long-time friend of his mom, so that eased his anxiety going into the IEC. Scott has a history of difficulties making and maintaining relationships. However, the teacher shared an important moment; at one point, Scott was doing so well and receiving so much praise from the teacher that he felt proud, and gave the teacher a

big hug. This was a very big moment for him because it is unlike him to get attached in that way.

Research shows that student-teacher relationships have a great effect on the students' social and emotional development, as well as their motivation and engagement in school (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Furthermore, Glass (2011) claims that the student-teacher relationship can: "…act as a protective factor to mitigate risk for students who are struggling in school". (p.1). Murray and Greenberg (2001) found that students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, mild mental retardation and other health impairments experienced dissatisfaction with their teacher relationships and poor school bonding compared to students with no disabilities. Imagine a scenario where a student with any form of exceptionality might already face a challenge in establishing a positive relationship with their teacher, and now they must do so in a language in which they are unable to express any basic communicative needs. Additionally, the teacher whom the student is supposed to bond with is an individual whom they see for one hour once or twice a week, and who might even not know their name:

> Melanie: Ya, ya you're never there and you see them like, 50 minutes a week, there's not that much, you don't have time to know them, uh, often like in [School name] I did both, in [School name]– regular and intensive English, so I had 410 students. So ok, I have a good memory so by October, the end of October, I knew all the first names of my students, but I had to work with pictures ok, that one participated, oh who's that? Look at the picture – ah, ok that kid. Yes. He does participate. We don't know them. The parents would come at the report card – Ah I want to know about how my kid's doing. Your kid, ok, what's the name? In which class? Give me a second. Look at the picture.

The intensive classroom allows for more student teacher bonding which will in turn have an effect on the motivation and attitude the student has towards learning the L2. SWE in particular need that extra support from the teacher because they are at greater risk for negative school outcomes. The teacher as well as the PC agreed that the intensive classroom allows for positive student teacher bonding, particularly with SWE:

> PC: You know when we talk "relation maître-élève", uh, I mean– every researcher will say that that's one of the most important part with a student with special needs, to establish a good relationship with- and as a regular English teacher, it's almost impossible to- you can do that sometimes if you have the opportunity to be in the same school over a few years, you know, with some students, but it's very, very difficult you know because you have so little time. As an Intensive teacher, you have that opportunity to establish a good relationship with the students, with the parents as well.

Furthermore, in some cases, the intensive ESL teacher stays in the same school for remainder of the school year. This can leave students with a more "at-ease" feeling knowing that they are not saying goodbye forever. This was not the case for Melanie. She ended up transferring to another school for her second group. This was difficult for Mark since he became very close to her.

Focus on oral interaction. The IEC is based on communicative language teaching. This approach focuses more on the communicative aspect of language, that is, mainly oral interaction as opposed to more academic skills such as reading and writing. As was mentioned in the literature review, and as the results of this case study showed, SWE tend to perform better on listening and oral tasks:

> PC: And sometimes there's the kids, sometimes they may have problems with reading or writing, and that since a lot of what we're doing focuses on the oral interaction, well they may be surprising the hell of everybody, because you know they can

> interact very well. You know you see that there's some problems in reading and writing, but the interaction, they sometimes over-perform – perform more than stronger, very strong students.

This can be seen in Mark's case. Although he does experience difficulty in his expressive language, he still performed the highest in the "oral interaction" competency of the IEC than on the other competencies such as understanding and writing.

Additionally, the emphasis is on "natural" oral interaction. In the IEC, when students are asked to prepare an oral presentation of some sort, they are not evaluated on their performance. Instead, students are evaluated on their oral interaction after the presentation. An example of this would be students asking the presenters questions about their performance. This is an example of authentic conversation and this is what the students are evaluated on. The evaluation on naturally occurring oral interaction takes the pressure off some students since they are not judged on whether or not they are able to memorise a text.

Class involvement. Both the teacher and PC claimed the IEC to be the class that involves the most teamwork. SWE have particular difficulties in participating fully in peer work and face the risk of being excluded (Pijl, Frostad & Flem, 2008, p.387). However, the intensive environment allows for SWE to feel more included in the classroom. It forces students to learn how to adapt to different people and gives them the opportunity to get to know their classmates. The teacher explained that Scott in particular has difficulty making and maintaining friends. However, over the course of the IEC, she noticed that slowly he became more included. The IEC: " …shows that much value is placed on implementing conditions that foster good relationships between students" (p. 388).

Students tend to begin the IEC more or less at the same level in terms of their English skills, and they are all there with the common goal of learning English. Therefore, the context provides an opportunity for students to come together, build friendships and work towards that common goal.

English as an "academic subject". The fact that the students had English everyday made them consider it more of an academic subject. If students consider it more of an academic subject, they might take their work more seriously. Students need to complete their homework on time and study for tests. They are aware that if they don't do what they are expected to do, there will be repercussions followed through by the teacher. However, in a regular ESL classroom, this is difficult to do:

> PC: But I did regular English, I had up to 5 schools, which means that I was never spending 1 whole day in the same school. I was switching schools every single lunchtime. And uh, so you know, and classroom management or so is very difficult cause you're not there. So you know, whether they misbehave or something you cannot follow through on any threat you might make because, and they know very well that you won't be there the next day, or the afternoon-

All three participants reported not ever taking their regular ESL classes seriously. They were not motivated and did not particularly care about how they performed in the ESL classroom, as long as they met the minimum requirements. However, the intensive classroom changed the way the students approached learning English.

Explicit learning. The intensity of the program allowed the teacher more time to answer students' questions and provide greater explanations, clarifications and scaffolding for the students. SWE require more explicit learning: "Students with special needs do not develop skills incidentally, but need to learn skills so that they can later apply these skills in new learning situations" (Knight, 1999, p.5). All three participants,

especially Scott, emphasized that in their regular ESL class, they were not provided with much help from the teacher; this added to the difficulties they already faced in learning English in that context. The participants made it sound as if the teacher did not particularly care; however, in the regular ESL classroom, there so many tasks and management issues the teacher needs to deal with, and in such limited amount of time, that they really do not have much time to provide the level of support that some students require:

> Melanie: When we have regular English we see them an hour- we say an hour but with like, you have to move from classes to- classrooms to classrooms, so that takes like, just that takes uh, minimum 10 minutes so that leaves you 50 minutes, getting set, getting the books, the duo tangs, the- all set the instructions, they don't have much, and they have the time to forget about what we did because we don't like, trigger it often enough, you know the knowledge? So um, they learn some vocabulary but…

One of the primary goals of the IEC is for students to become autonomous learners and independent L2 users. This process usually begins with the teacher and student working closely together at the students' appropriate instructional level, otherwise known as the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978). Over time, the teacher slowly transfers enough control and knowledge where the student is eventually able to apply the knowledge on their own. Knight (1999) claims that: "the amount of student-teacher interaction necessary to promote active student involvement within a supportive context will vary with each individual learner" (p. 5). The regular ESL classroom does not allow for this type of learning to develop between teacher and student. In the regular classroom, it is more difficult for teachers to follow up with questions and to spend time explaining and clarifying material. As previously mentioned, stronger students are better able to

absorb the maximum amount of information in the time pressured regular ESL classroom. Weaker students require more teacher support and more time to absorb and integrate knowledge.

Communicative classroom. The communicative classroom was found to be beneficial for SWE because of the more relaxed learning environment. The classroom allows for rich content but provides students with more stress-free learning environment because the focus is on meaningful interactions, motivating activities, themes, group games and not so much on more "academic" tasks such as activities that require heavy reading and writing, memorization of materials and tests. All three participants really enjoyed the communicative approach to learning calling it "fun" and "exciting".

Although the communicative classroom poses many benefits, future studies should also consider more carefully some aspects of the communicative class that may be challenging nonetheless. Children diagnosed with ADHD are characterized as having deficits in executive functioning, which may result in poor visual-spatial and verbal working memory, difficulties sustaining attention, resisting distraction, impaired planning and auditory processing (Gomez & Condon, 1999; Sciberras, Efron, Schilpzand, Anderson, Jongeling, Hazell, & Nicholson, 2013, p.2; Sowerby, Seal & Tripp, 2011). Language and reading impairments are characterized as poor oral skills, semantic deficits, low phonemic coding abilities, and difficulties decoding print and in reading comprehension (Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Additionally, a child could experience comorbidity with any of the deficits mentioned above. It is possible that the communicative context would put these students at a disadvantage since the classroom requires in-depth online processing, cognitive planning, attention to detail and focus on

oral communication; precisely what these students struggle with. Students who face difficulty with verbal working memory could also have difficulty negotiating meaning with others Further more, students who experience semantic deficits, auditory processing difficulties and impaired oral communication may have challenges communicating effectively in the L2 classroom.

Although research demonstrates that these students do experience success in the communicative classroom, it is possible that there are nevertheless aspects that present challenges. Scott, who has ADHD and other learning difficulties, did not participate in oral interactions very much. This could be due to his learning challenges, or perhaps because he was shy. To date, no research has looked in depth at students' actual experiences in the communicative classroom to see what aspects may be facilitating or challenging for these students.

LEARNING CHALLENGES OF L2 IN IEC SETTING

French in the classroom. Although the goal of the IEC is to maintain an English only policy, sometimes the amount of English used can vary depending on the level of the students:

> PC: Well that happens. Like to me I can remember one group you know, that, I wasn't using enough English to my taste, but it was very, very difficult, they were very particular, I had just one like that. It may happen over the years where you have one group where you resort to French maybe a bit more because of special circumstance…

As mentioned in the literature review, groups with no selection criteria can vary greatly in terms of stronger and weaker students. Melanie reported that her group was particularly weak; this lead to her using more French in the classroom. In White and Turner (2005), the IEC group that adopted motivation as the selection criteria was the only group that did *not* implement an English-only rule. This is in contrast to the other two groups that were based on academic abilities and did impose an English-only rule. It could be that some ESL teachers may automatically resort to speaking French to the weaker students in order to ensure their understanding. This is why more research relating to SWE and L2 learning needs to be available to language teachers so they don't underestimate the L2 learning capabilities of these students.

Teacher's lack of training. ESL teachers are not offered very much training in educating SWE or differentiation. As Melanie mentioned in her interview, in university, she received one general class about how to identify signs of students with learning difficulties, but that's all. Although Melanie never received any specific training on how to teach an L2 to SWE, she is a teacher who deeply cares and will take the time to get to know her students' individual learning profiles. The intensive context allows for that. However, providing language teachers with the appropriate knowledge and training in differentiation in the language classroom will aid the teacher in becoming more effective. A teacher who lacks these skills might taint the L2 learning experience of SWE in the IEC.

Parents' perceptions. Parents' perceptions of their child's ability to learn an L2 along with their ability to keep up with their regular academics could make a difference in how their children approach the IEC. Research has shown that parental worry and

anxiety over their child's life success and general physical well being can be transferred from parent to child (Cobham, Dadds & Spence, 1999; Fisak, Holderfield, Douglas-Osborne & Cartwright-Hatton, 2012). The teacher and the PC said that although most parents are in favour of the IEC there are the exceptions:

> PC: …sometimes we can't convince parents that it would be beneficial, especially if the student has a lot of learning disabilities or learning problems.

Gerry is quite a bright student. He performed above average in all of his grade 5 classes (English included), and is a very calm, social child. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher communicated with me that the parents were quite worried about his academic well being if enrolled in the IEC because of his anxiety. Gerry also expressed his worry at the beginning of the IEC; however, he performed well above average in the end.

Similar to Gerry, Mark is very enthusiastic about English; however, it was communicated that at the beginning of the year, his parents wanted him to start IEC in the second part of the year, worried the model might make him fall behind his other course work. Parents' perceptions about their children's' abilities might not always match up with what their child is actually capable of. However, parents' anxiety did not appear to have much of an impact on the participants over time in this study but it had the potential to do so, as described by the PC and reported in the research literature.

Responsibilities and pressure from grade 6. Melanie and the PC declared that grade 6 students are the "black sheep" of elementary school. They go through many changes:

> Melanie: Because of all the teenage hormones and all the issues…they want to be independent but they need us at the same time, and it's you know, it's like parenting, that's the hard part.

The average student goes through all of this, and SWE go through it as well with the added challenges they already face. There is also the added pressure of final exams and of the transition from elementary school to secondary school. Some SWE may be struggling in the final year to maintain the grades they need in order to graduate. For these reasons, both Melanie and the CP recommend that IEC be offered in grade 5 as opposed to grade 6:

> PC: There's a lot of things to deal with in grade 6 that you don't have to deal with in grade 5 so it's easier when the kids, they do the intensive in grade 5, it, and uh, all the organization, and for the kids it doesn't make that big a difference. So we recommend it strongly.

Both Scott and Mark got pulled from the IEC to receive additional educational support in subjects where they struggle. This is obviously important for them in order to keep up with the French portion of the academic year. However, there is the added pressure of successfully completing their final exams. In grade 5, students have fewer pressures to deal with and could enjoy their intensive experience more.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study was designed to provide an in-depth description and analysis of the performance and experience of three SWE in the IEC. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to empirically investigate SWE enrolled in an intensive L2 setting, specifically Quebec's IEC. All three students made progress in all L2 skills. Also, perceptions of their ability to learn English either improved or were maintained over time. Finally, more factors appeared to enhance the learning of an L2 for SWE in an intensive setting than challenge it. This study also highlighted the fact that the IEC not only promotes L2 proficiency, but also a wealth of learning in other cognitive, social and emotional areas.

The study also makes several practical contributions. Policy makers and pedagogical consultants are encouraged to provide more support to language teachers in how to work with SWE. The ability to successfully respond to the diverse needs of SWE can be developed through experience, teacher education and in-service training. Although in this study, Melanie was very aware and accommodating to her SWE, second language classrooms with teachers who are better trained and prepared to work with SWE would provide a more suitable learning context for these students. Language teachers also have the responsibility to seek out knowledge about working with students with diverse needs. As previously mentioned, university programs that train second language teachers do not offer much training in working with SWE. In this vein, Bayan (1996) suggests that an important means of promoting these language teachers' abilities is through teacher-researcher collaborative research (p.86). This study in particular is an

example of such research. The teacher and I worked closely together with the common goal of promoting the suitability of the IEC for SWE.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This research serves as a base for future studies with more elaborated research questions and hypotheses; it also could be followed up with additional studies to further contribute to our understanding of the interaction between the intensity of instructional time and the individual learner. A future study could assess the performance and experience of SWE not only in the IEC, but also in the French portion of the academic year. It would also be important to verify whether he English gains made in the IEC are maintained at the end of the French portion of the academic year and lead to improvements in performance and attitudes during secondary school. In addition, one of the main concerns of professionals and policy makers is that students who already experience learning difficulties will most likely experience failure if forced to learn their academic materials in the French portion of the year in such a condensed amount of time (The Canadian Press, February 8th, 2012). Additionally, a comparison study including SWE and typically achieving students would provide greater insight into the effectiveness of the IEC. By conducting such a study, we would be able to examine whether an L2 gap exists between both groups of students, and if so, whether it narrows over time. It would also be interesting to compare the experience and performance of SWE enrolled in the IEC across the province, since English is considered an L2 in some regions but is more of a foreign language in other regions. Finally, the current study also aims to encourage researchers to expand on SLA research by investigating non- typical

learners; and by doing so, to be mindful when administering or creating L2 assessment tools with this population.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations to this case study need to be acknowledged.

- Although this study was not meant to be a comparative study, it would have been interesting to compare the L2 progress of the whole class to the three participants at time 1 and at time 4. This would have shown if there was an initial gap in L2 knowledge and if this gap narrowed at the end of the IEC, similarly to how Collins and White (2012) conducted their study by comparing stronger and weaker students at the beginning and at the end of the IEC. It was decided only mid-study to collect data from the whole classroom on certain L2 measures. However, the overall raw score on the AVR, which was administered at time 4, was 49. This would place them at the lower end of the mid-group at the pre-test in Collins and White (2012). Based on this, we can speculate that the whole class would have probably scored fairly low on the AVR at time 1, which would indicate that the class and the three participants started out with the same (limited) amount of L2 knowledge. Recall that researchers deemed the AVR as a reliable measure in discriminating among different levels of L2 knowledge.

- As previously mentioned in the discussion, the validity of the tasks given to the participants presents a strong limitation. It is not clear that the tasks provided a true representation of the extent of the participants/ L2 knowledge.

- The use of French limited the participants' amount of spontaneous English used with me in the study. At time 1, the students spoke or understood very little to nothing of English; therefore, I had to resort to using French at times to ensure that the

students understood what was being asked of them. Also, in order to establish a good and comfortable relationship with the students, I allowed them to speak in French if they needed to. By doing so, students felt less pressure to try to communicate in English. Although over time both Mark and Gerry tried to speak a little more spontaneous English with me, the majority of the language that was exchanged over the course of the study was done in French. It was difficult to establish if the students really could not communicate in English or if they simply did not want to. Therefore, I was unable to informally assess the participants' progress in oral production.

- Using the same tasks over and over again created not only practice effects, but possibly contributed to the students' lack of motivation at times to complete the tasks. At the beginning of the study, they were more interested and motivated to complete the tasks. Some of the results showed a large increase in performance between time 1 and 2 and then little or no progress was made. This could be due to the students' actual performance level, or also to a lack of motivation. Future studies might consider the use of more varied tasks that measure similar language aspects. Or even use some type of positive reinforcement such as a reward of some type in order to increase motivation to perform.

- It would have been informative to have the participants complete the written narrative in French in order to see what they are capable of doing in their L1. However, there was not sufficient time to do this. Also, the students had not been exposed to their usual amount of French in school, so their writing sample may not have been fully representative of their French writing capabilities.

- As this research reported on three case studies, the findings are not generalizable. Many professionals would like to confirm or disconfirm any preconceptions they may have had about SWE and the IEC. However, there are many elements to consider. First, the three participants in this study represent only a small portion of the range of learner profiles that are found within the IEC. Furthermore, the context in which the study took place needs to be considered. If the same study had been conducted in Montreal, where English is considered more of a second language as opposed to a foreign language, perhaps the outcomes of the participants would have been different. In Montreal for example, students would be exposed to English much more on a regular basis and have more opportunities for exposure outside of the classroom. Also, students may hold a different attitude toward English and place greater importance on learning the language.
- An advantage of the case study approach is that it allowed for a detailed and fine-grained portrait of three SWEs. However, a disadvantage is that it can be quite difficult to decide what data are meaningful in relation to the study and what are not. Heigham and Crocker (2009) state that in a case study, the researcher always runs the risk of tainting the data with his or her own preconceived notions (p. 76).

It is hoped that this study will opens up further research directions within the field of applied linguistics, notably those that investigate SWE and L2 learning.

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APPENDIX A

Yes/No Vocabulary Test

Sample

Read through the lists of words carefully.
For each word:

- if you know what it means, place a check mark (✓) beside the word.
- if you don't know what it means, or if you are not sure, leave the box blank.

Do not guess. Put a check mark beside the word **only** if you are sure you know the word in English. **Some of these words are not real English words.**

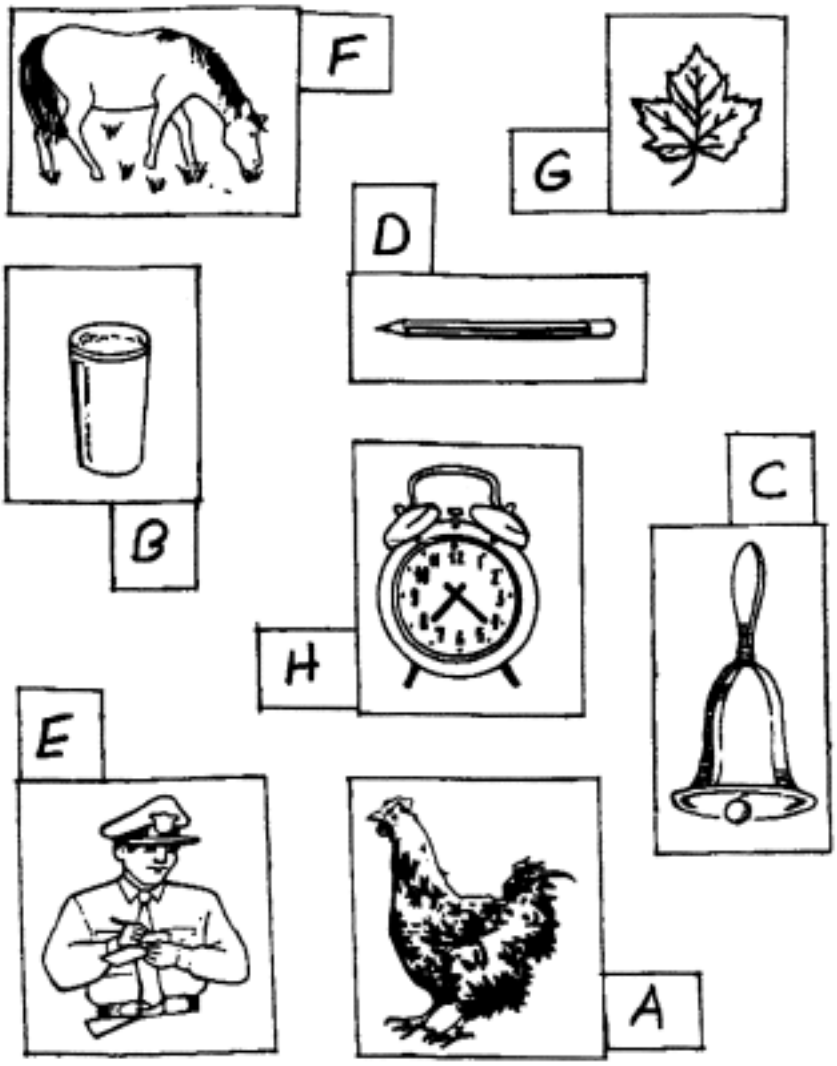
Here are some examples in French.
1. (✓) chat 2. (✓) école 3. ( ) couquir
You know what **chat** means. You know what **école** means. You do not know what **couquir** means. **Couquir** looks like a French word, but it is not a real French word.

1. ( ) wallage	21. ( ) condick	41. ( ) rather
2. ( ) foot	22. ( ) look after	42. ( ) trust
3. ( ) hallett	23. ( ) hear	3. ( ) pocock
4. ( ) west	24. ( ) pencil	44. ( ) churchlow
5. ( ) hospite	25. ( ) roof	45. ( ) group

[etc.]

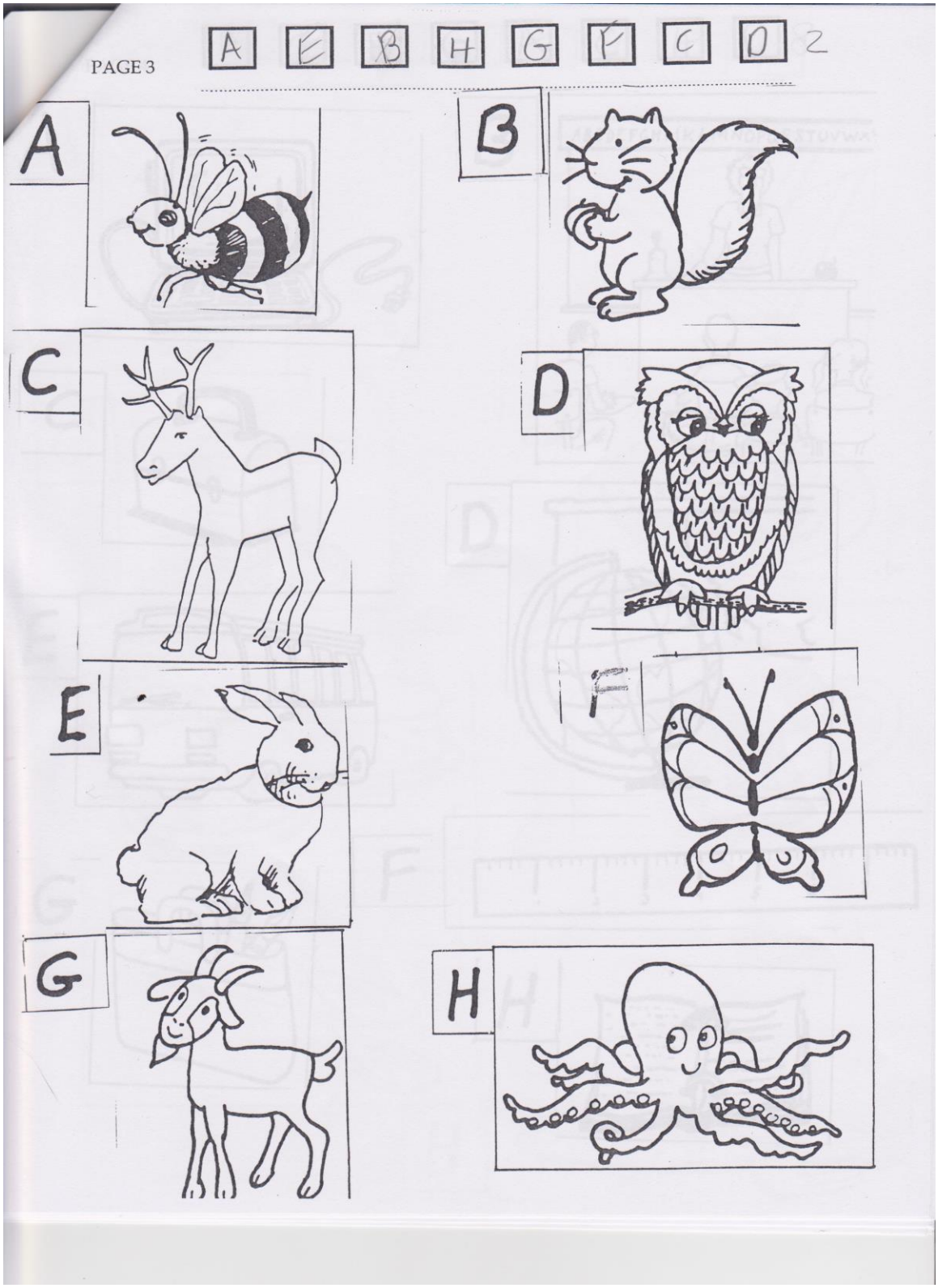
APPENDIX B

Aural Vocabulary Recognition Test



Audio text:
1. bell
2. policeman
[etc.]

APPENDIX C



APPENDIX D

Dictation script

1. The first week in Florida
2. was wonderful.
3. The sun shone every day
4. and the sea
5. was as blue
6. as in any travel poster.
7. The girls spent the days
8. on the little beach
9. below the house.
10. There was no road
11. from the house to the beach,
12. just a winding, narrow path.

n.b. corresponds to # of lines (12) on original task; at time 2 (300 hrs), students did not receive #ed lines

5/8/03

APPENDIX E

Written narrative

Expression Écrite

Nom: _____ Prénom: _____
École: _____

Ce qu'il faut faire: Regarde l'image.
Imagine ce qui vient de se passer.
Imagine ce qui se passe en ce moment.
Imagine ce qui va arriver ensuite.

Maintenant, écris EN ANGLAIS une petite histoire où tu racontes ce que tu viens d'imaginer.

_____

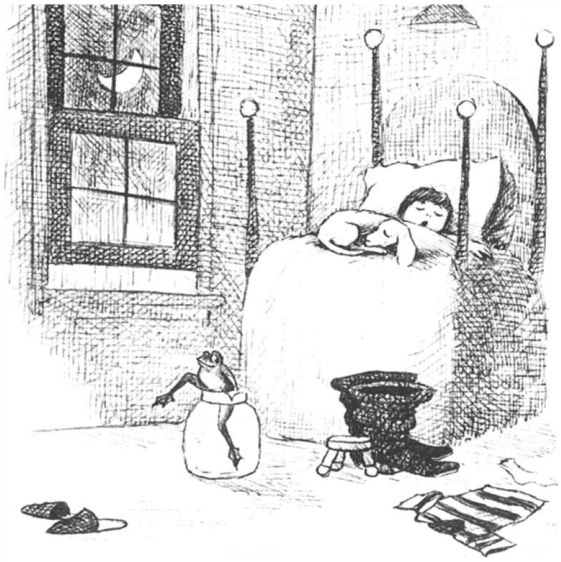
_____

_____

[etc.]

APPENDIX F

Example images from “Frog, where are you?”



APPENDIX G

Student Interview Questionnaire

1st Interview-Time 1
1) Language Background/Frequency of English use/Attitude towards language a) How important do you feel it is to know how to speak English? b) Do you like speaking English? c) Do you ever speak English with members of your family? If yes, with whom and how often? d) Do you speak any other languages? e) Have you ever been on vacation where you needed to speak English? f) Can you tell me about any movies, TV or music you listen to in English? g) What are your favourite subjects in school? Why? 2) Scholastic Competence (Reading, Writing, Math,) a) In which subject at school do you feel you are the best? b) In which subject at school do you feel need more help? c) Out of reading, writing and math, which one (s) of these do you feel you are better at? Why? Which one (s) do you feel not so good at? d) Can you tell me whether it is easy or difficult for you to write in your first language? Why? e) Can you tell me whether it is easy or difficult for you to read in your first language? Why? 3) Intensive English Course a) How did you feel at the beginning of the year knowing that you were going to spend five months learning English? Were you nervous? excited? curious? etc. b) Can you tell me about what you liked and didn't like about your English classes last year (grade 5)? c) You have now had a month of intensive ESL. How do you think the intensive class is different from your English class last year? Do you think this is a good change for you? A difficult change for you? d) Which activities do you enjoy the most in your English class? Why? e) Which activities do you enjoy the least? Why? 4) Self-Perceptions on learning English a) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can speak English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why? b) Do you ever help your classmates with English? Do they ever help you? Do you ever need extra help from the teacher? c) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can understand English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why? d) Can you tell me whether it is easy or difficult to read in English? Why? e) Can you tell me whether it is easy or difficult for you to write in English? Why? f) What do you hope to learn in English this year? What would you like to be able to do in

English by January?

g) How do you think you will do in your intensive English class?
h) Do you think English is easy or difficult for you?

2nd Interview-Time 3

5) Language Background/Frequency of English use/Attitude towards language
   a) Do you like speaking English?
   b) Do you now speak more English with members of your family? If yes, with whom and how often?
   c) Can you tell me about any movies, TV or music you listen to in English?
   d) Do you speak more English outside of the classroom more often now? If yes, with whom and where? If no would you like more opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom?

6) Scholastic Competence (Reading, Writing, Math, Spelling)

7) Intensive English Course
   a) Can you tell me about what you like/dislike about your grade six intensive English class so far?
   b) Can you tell me about the difference between your experience learning English this year compared to learning English in grade 5?
   c) Which activities do you enjoy the most in your English class? Why?
   d) Which activities do you enjoy the least? Why?

8) Self-Perceptions on learning English
   a) Can you tell me if English has become easier or more difficult for you to learn? Why do you think?
   b) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can speak English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why?
   c) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can understand English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why?
   d) Do you ever help your classmates with English? Do they ever help you? Do you ever need extra help from the teacher?
   e) Can you tell me whether it is easier or more difficult to read in English? Why?
   f) Can you tell me whether it is easier or more difficult for you to write in English? Why?
   g) Can you tell me about something you did in your English class that made you really proud of yourself?
   h) How do you think you are doing in your intensive English class so far?

3rd Interview-Time 4

9) Language Background/Frequency of English use/Attitude towards language
   a) Do you like speaking English?
   b) How important do you feel it is to know how to speak English?
   c) Do you now speak more English with members of your family? If yes, with whom and how often?

d) Can you tell me about any movies, TV or music that you now watch/listen to that you maybe didn't before the intensive English class?
e) Do you speak more English outside of the classroom more often now? If yes, with whom and where? If no would you like more opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom?

10) Scholastic Competence (Reading, Writing, Math, Spelling)

11) Intensive English Course
a) Can you tell me about what you like/dislike about your grade six intensive English class so far?
b) Can you tell me about the difference between your experience learning English this year compared to learning English in grade 5?
c) Which activities did you enjoy the most? Why?
d) Which activities did you enjoy the least? Why?
e) Can you tell me about anything you learned in your English class that can also help you in other subjects at school?
f) How do you feel about going back to your regular French program?

12) Self-Perceptions on learning English
a) Can you tell me if English has become easier or more difficult for you to learn? Why do you think?
b) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can speak English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why?
c) Compared to the rest of your classmates, do you think you can understand English better, as good, or not as good as them? Why?
d) Do you ever help your classmates with English? Do they ever help you? Do you ever need extra help from the teacher?
e) Can you tell me about if it is easier or more difficult to read in English? Why?
f) Can you tell me about if it is easier or more difficult for you to write in English? Why?
g) Can you tell me about something you did in your English class that made you really proud of yourself?
h) How do you think you did in your intensive English class so far?

APPENDIX H

Language Observation

Discourse Initiation: A student makes a self-initiated request for information or unrequested response to either the teacher or other students utterances. Also, any unelicited speech to preceding utterances (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995).

Target Language: Whether or not the students' utterance is in the L1 or the L2.

Gives Information/Requests Information:

C= Correction: Student gives a correction to a previous utterance.

CL=Clarification: Student gives or requests a clarification when the preceding utterance was not clearly understood and a repetition or reformulation is needed

E= Elaboration: Students gives or requests further information/explanation related to the subject matter

CM=Comment: Students gives a positive or negative response to a previous utterance.

Focus on Language: Student's utterance is focused on the linguistic form of the language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)

Focus on Content: Student's utterance is focused on the meaning/content.

Sustained Speech:

Ultra minimal: Students utterance is comprised of one to two word speech fragments such as article plus a noun (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995)

Minimal: Students utterance is comprised of two main clauses

Sustained: Students utterance is comprised of at least three main clauses or more.

Behavioural Observation

Physical Interaction*:* Student is not verbally participating but is physically involved in group activity (scanning a worksheet, looking for words in the dictionary, actively listening)

Off-Task: Student is not involved in-group activity and is not actively listening.

Date:…….. Student Name:…… Total Observation Time:……

Activity Name:…….. Time of Day:……..

	Language Observation										Behavioural Observation		
Time	Discourse Initiation	Target Language		Gives Information		Requests Information		Sustained Speech			Physical Interaction	Off-Task	Additional Notes
		L1	L2	Language	Content	Language	Content	U	M	S			

Activity Description: _____

APPENDIX I

Teacher Interview Questionnaire

1) Demographic Information
    a. What is the size of your school?
        i. Student Population?
        ii. Staff size?
        iii. Community Size?
        iv. Community/School connection
        v. Number of students in class
    b. What grade levels are offered?
    c. Tell me about your education background.
    d. Tell me about your language background.

2) Information regarding Intensive English
    a. How long has the school been offering Intensive English?
    b. Does your school offer any other language programs such as the regular core English program?
    c. Did you receive any special training to teach Intensive English? If yes, tell me about your training.
    d. If no, would you recommend Intensive ESL teachers receive training? What should be the nature of the training?
    e. Tell me about a typical day in your Intensive English classroom.
    f. Are all grades six students in your school involved in the Intensive English course?

3) Comments regarding success of special needs students in Intensive English
    a. Do you know the number of special needs students in your school? And, in your class?
    b. What successes have you observed with your special needs students in your

Intensive English class?

c. How do you adapt your course in order to meet the needs of these students in your classroom?

d. Tell me about the transition of these special needs students to the French program and how they cope with this transition?

e. Tell me about these students' successes in their French portion of their program? How do they cope with meeting their curricula outcomes in the remainder of the year?

f. Why do you think these special needs students are experiencing success?

g. What classroom, or school-wide practices appear to be fostering the success of these students in this context?

h. What in your opinion would foster even more success with special needs students engaged in Intensive English courses? (prompts: classroom practice, more support, professional development)

APPENDIX J

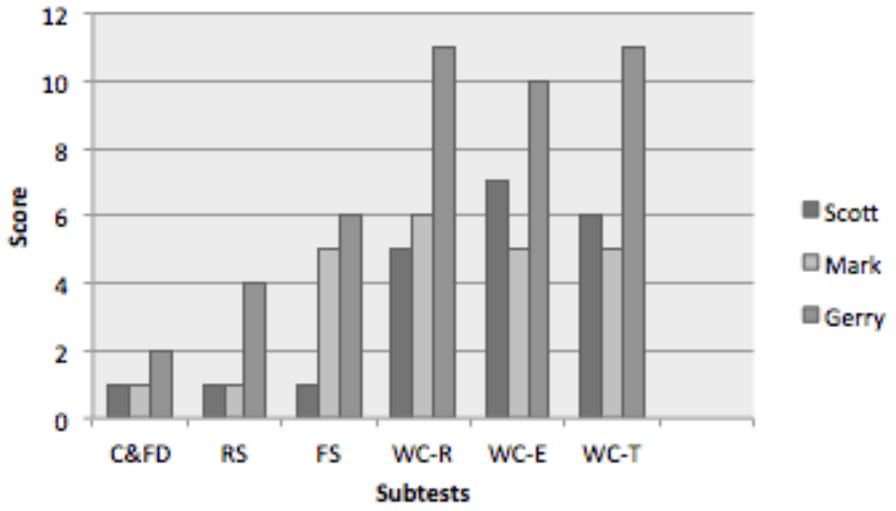


Figure 6. Overall scores from CELF-CDN-4 subtests: Concepts & following directions (C&FD); Recalling sentences (RS); Formulating sentences (FS); Word class receptive (WC-R); Word class expressive (WC-E) and Word class total (WC-T).