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# Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Minority Settings

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Final Research Report

prepared by

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for the

**Canadian Teachers' Federation**

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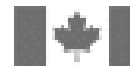


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# F OREWORD

The project known as *The School at the Heart of a Thriving Francophonie* stems from the desire of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) for French-language schools to be the expected environment for the development of Canada's Francophone minorities. It is part of a three-year action research plan focusing on three major themes:

- Early Childhood: Gateway to French-language Schools (report published in 2003);
- Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings (covered in this report);
- The School in Partnership with the Community (in planning stage).

The survival of French-language schools rests in large part on the ability to attract qualified staff and above all to guarantee their retention. The major transformations taking place in teaching, massive retirements and increasingly arduous teaching conditions provide a partial explanation for the shortage of teachers that schools must cope with nowadays in general. So as to provide a better understanding of teaching in French-language schools, *Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings* aims to shed some light on this complex issue. More specifically, the project is designed to complement existing studies by identifying, at the national level, what constitutes the challenge of teaching in this context.

A large-scale initiative, this second phase combines documentary research, a large survey among elementary- and secondary-school teachers in various Canadian Francophone communities and a consultation forum bringing together representatives of CTF and national education partners.

The CTF Advisory Committee on French as a First Language entrusted the research to the Interdisciplinary Research Center on Citizenship and Minorities (CIRCEM). This research center at the University of Ottawa joined forces with Rodrigue Landry, Director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and an expert on surveys pertaining to education in minority settings, for the design of the questionnaire and the analysis of the data. CTF's Advisory Committee on French as a First Language and its Member organizations in all the provinces and territories gave their unstinting support to make sure the project unfolded smoothly. We wish to thank them.

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## **Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings**

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This document contains the main findings of the research. We hope that the results will enable CTF and other partners in education to better grasp the situation of teachers working in French-language schools and to implement strategies with a view to meeting the most pressing needs and thus fulfilling the mission of schools in Francophone minority settings.

Anne Gilbert and Joseph Yvon Thériault  
CIRCEM  
University of Ottawa



# INTRODUCTION

In its efforts to observe trends in the supply and demand of teachers in Canada and to evaluate the implications for education, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) examined the particularly problematic situation of French-language schools in minority settings. The results of the national survey which it conducted among school boards on the issue and which appeared in the supplement to the October 2000-5 issue of the *Economic Services Bulletin* confirm this (CTF, 2001). Francophone school districts outside Quebec have major difficulties recruiting qualified staff. Many cannot fill certain teaching positions. The sciences and specialists' positions are affected the most. More unqualified staff is being hired and there is a significant percentage of teachers who have neither majored nor minored in the subject area in which they teach. And the problem is perceived as a growing one.

*Even though it is increasingly the focus of discussions surrounding the problem of recruiting teachers in Canada's French-language schools, the specificity of teaching in minority settings remains very poorly documented.*



Several factors have been mentioned to explain the shortage of teachers in Canada. Retirements, the falling number of education graduates, increasing school enrolments, the conditions in which teaching takes place, the image of the profession and the stress endured are topics of debate within CTF. With regard to Francophone schools, other explanations of the difficulty in recruiting teachers are offered, stemming from the particular conditions of teaching in minority settings. This leads to increasingly frequent reference to the roles and responsibilities of teachers in minority schools.

## Research objectives

Even though it is increasingly the focus of discussions surrounding the problem of recruiting teachers in Canada's French-language schools, the specificity of teaching in minority settings remains very poorly documented. Who are the people responsible in large part for the mission of French-language schools? What are their identities? How do they view the roles they play in students' lives? What are their motivations for teaching in French-language schools? How do they perceive the main challenges facing them? Finally, what effect does the minority setting have on their actual experience?

## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

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Built on a partnership between the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), the Interdisciplinary Research Center on Citizenship and Minorities (CIRCEM) of the University of Ottawa and the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities (CIRLM), and with the financial support of Canadian Heritage, this project aims to shed some light on the complex issue of teaching in Francophone minority settings. With a view to finding out more about teachers' experience in French-language schools and identifying the challenges specific to teaching in minority settings, **a literature review** was carried out, along with a large **survey**, which gathered the points of view of over 670 Francophone members of the profession. Followed a **national consultation forum** of education partners to gather opinions on possible courses of action. In short, the project is designed to complement existing studies by determining, at the national level, what constitutes the challenge of teaching in minority settings.

### Methodology

#### *Literature review*<sup>1</sup>

To begin with, a literature review on teaching in minority settings was conducted. It first revealed the major issues characterizing the teaching profession as a whole, both nationally and internationally, and then analyzed the special challenges to be met by teachers in French-language schools.

#### *Participatory survey*

Rodrigue Landry, Director of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, prepared the questionnaire consisting of three basic components: the individual's profile, his or her assessment of the circumstances in which teaching takes place in French-language schools and his or her linguistic and cultural experience. A sample of teachers in all the provinces (except Quebec) and the territories took part in the survey.

#### *Consultation forum*

Following the survey, CTF invited its national French-language education partners<sup>2</sup> to become acquainted with the data collected and to express their points of view. Over 25 persons representing various educational settings from right across the country reflected on courses of action to take in order to promote optimum conditions for teaching and learning in French-language schools. The ultimate aim of the forum was to clearly identify the challenges teachers must deal with and to build consensus among the various education partners as to possible solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> **LeTouzé, S.** (2004), *Le personnel enseignant face aux défis de l'enseignement en milieu minoritaire francophone. Revue documentaire.* CIRCEM, University of Ottawa. Commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Available on line at: <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/fr/issues/francaise/RevueDocumentaire.PDF> (in French only).

<sup>2</sup> See **Appendix 1**. All key partners were invited but some did not attend.

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### Research team

The CTF Advisory Committee on French as a First Language initiated the project and bears responsibility for it. The Director of Services to Francophones for the Federation, Liliane Vincent, directs the project for CTF.

The Committee entrusted the study to CIRCEM of the University of Ottawa, a research center attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences. CIRCEM's objective is to promote research on citizenship and minority groups. Canadian Francophonie is one of the Center's chief concerns. Anne Gilbert, Director of Research at CIRCEM, and Joseph Yvon Thériault, who is the Director General, are the leaders of the university project team. Sophie LeTouzé is the coordinator and prepared the literature review.

This team joined forces with the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, headed by Rodrigue Landry, for the design of the survey, data collection and analysis, and preparation of the survey report.<sup>3</sup>

Mention should also be made of the exchanges which regularly took place between the university project team and CTF: with Liliane Vincent first of all, but also with the members of the CTF Advisory Committee on French as a First Language, and with the Francophone Liaison Officers of the provincial and territorial teacher organizations.

### Organization of the report

This report is designed to provide a summary of the research results. It is divided into three parts:

The first part presents the main conclusions drawn from the literature review on teaching in minority settings. The issues characterizing the practice of the profession and the special challenges teachers must deal with in French-language schools are outlined here.

The second part lists the highlights of the survey conducted among teachers, that is, their profile, their motivations for teaching, their job satisfaction and above all the challenges they must deal with in French-language schools in minority settings.

Possible avenues for action based on the survey results and the points of view expressed at the forum are then put forward in the third and final part.

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<sup>3</sup> See **Landry, R.** (2004), *Le personnel enseignant face aux défis de l'enseignement en milieu minoritaire francophone. Rapport de l'enquête auprès des enseignantes et des enseignants*. Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and CIRCEM, University of Ottawa. Available on line in French only at <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/fr/>.

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# PART 1.

## Teaching in minority settings: a literature review

The role of the French-language school in minority settings is a well documented issue. There is abundant literature on its importance as a tool of survival, identity-building and reproduction of social models in Francophone minority communities. What is less well known, however, is the role of the individuals who carry out the particular mission of the French-language school, namely the teachers. The fact is that there is virtually no documentation describing what it means on a daily basis to teach in French-language schools in British Columbia, Saskatchewan or Prince Edward Island, for instance.

A review of the literature<sup>4</sup> with the objective of identifying the major challenges characterizing teaching in minority settings in Canada was therefore conducted. Divided into two parts, this review shed light on the particularities of teaching in minority settings by first painting a picture of the task of teaching, regardless of the setting, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This way, the challenges that teachers in French-language schools must deal with in Canada stand out more clearly.

### 1.1 The task of teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The first part of the review presents a description of the task of teaching nowadays, with the help of sources such as those published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). They clearly show the growing complexity and burden of the role of teachers. Social and technological shifts are having profound effects on the classroom situation.

*The role of the French-language school in minority settings is a well documented issue. There is abundant literature on its importance as a tool of survival, identity-building and reproduction of social models in Francophone minority communities.*



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<sup>4</sup> LeTouzé, S. (2004), *Le personnel enseignant face aux défis de l'enseignement en milieu minoritaire francophone. Revue documentaire*. CIRCEM, University of Ottawa, commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Available on line in French only at <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/fr/>.

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## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

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The major themes arising from this survey are:

- ❶ the deterioration of working conditions;
- ❷ the increase in workload and expectations of teachers;
- ❸ the addition of extra duties (extracurricular activities, supervision, supply teaching, administration);
- ❹ the increased number of special education students in classrooms;
- ❺ the increasing violence in schools;
- ❻ the multitude of cultural horizons within the student population;
- ❼ the decrease in support from parents;
- ❽ adaptation to new technologies;
- ❾ the lack of in-service professional development; and
- ❿ the precarious employment status for young members of the profession.

The same themes are found in the literature dealing with minority-language teaching, such as documents prepared by education experts (Landry<sup>5</sup>, Gérin-Lajoie<sup>6</sup> and Labrie<sup>7</sup>, for example), and numerous field studies, but other writings deal with the distinctive issues that characterize minority settings.

### 1.2 French-language schools in minority settings : definition and mission



*"It's disheartening to think that golfers [...] enjoy better conditions than Francophone teachers. In golf, depending on their performance, players are given a handicap that enables them to compete on an equal footing with other golfers. Teachers in Francophone minority settings, however, are held back throughout their careers, and the unfairness of it all doesn't seem to bother a soul."*<sup>8</sup> [translation]



*"The first objective of any school system is to provide the basic educational experiences necessary to ensure the social, emotional and intellectual development of the student. Minority-language schools have an additional objective, the maintenance and in some cases the strengthening of French-language skills as well as the heritage and culture of this community."*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Landry, R. and Rousselle, S. (2003), *Éducation et droits collectifs. Au-delà de l'article 23 de la Charte*. Les Éditions de la francophonie, Moncton. And, Landry, R. and Allard, R. - « L'éducation dans la francophonie minoritaire », in *Francophonies minoritaires au Canada. L'état des lieux*, under the direction of Joseph Yvon Thériault, Éditions d'Acadie, Moncton, 1999, p. 403-433.

<sup>6</sup> Gérin-Lajoie, D. (2001) « Les défis de l'enseignement en milieu francophone minoritaire: le cas de l'Ontario » - *Revue de l'ACELF*, vol. 29, n° 1.

<sup>7</sup> Labrie, N. and Lamoureux, S. A. (under the dir.) (2003), *L'Éducation de langue française en Ontario: enjeux et processus sociaux*. Prise de parole, Sudbury.

<sup>8</sup> Godin, G. (2000) - Les défis que pose la langue française en enseignement en milieu minoritaire pour une directrice d'école secondaire, Actes du colloque pancanadien sur la recherche en éducation en milieu francophone minoritaire: Bilan et perspectives, CRDE, Université de Moncton. p. 239.

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Heritage (2000) – *French Language Education in Canada – A Community Focus*, Official Languages Support Programs Branch, 2000, p. 1.

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Some define the French-language school in minority settings as “the mainspring of survival and a compensation balance for the minority setting”<sup>10</sup> in Francophone communities living in English-dominant settings. This institution is a “reproduction agent,”<sup>11</sup> indeed a “production agent”<sup>12</sup> of the French language and cultural identity. According to Landry and Allard, the French-language education system [translation] “is essential to the ethno-linguistic vitality of Francophone minorities in Canada.”<sup>13</sup>

In minority settings, the objectives of French-language education clearly exceed those of schools in majority settings.<sup>14</sup> Its mission includes not only the knowledge, the know-how and the know-how-to-be, but also the Francophone school must encourage the know-how-to-act, the know-how-to-live-together and the know-how-to-become needed to prepare people for building the community.<sup>15</sup>

For example, the Official Minority Language Office, created by the Saskatchewan Department of Education, states that Franco-Saskatchewanian programs offered in the province’s French-language schools are unique in their emphasis on the building and development of identity among young people, the appreciation of the Franco-Saskatchewanian culture and the promotion of the French language as a system of values and means of communication.<sup>16</sup>

The French-language school therefore has more, and more complex, responsibilities than the English-language school, and requires that its teachers have a more extensive and complex set of professional skills.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> **Bernard, R.** (1992) – « Le bilinguisme et l’école minoritaire », *Éducation et Francophonie*, vol. 10, November 1992, p. 45-46.

<sup>11</sup> **Godbout, A.** (1977) – *L’origine des écoles françaises en Ontario*, University of Ottawa, Ottawa. p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> **Gérin-Lajoie, D.** (2000) – *Les partenariats entre l’école et la communauté en milieu francophone minoritaire*, Actes du colloque pancanadien sur la recherche en éducation en milieu francophone minoritaire: Bilan et perspectives, CRDE, Université de Moncton. p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> **Landry, R. and Allard, R.** (1999) - « L’éducation dans la francophonie minoritaire », in *Francophonies minoritaires au Canada. L’état des lieux*, under the direction of Joseph Yvon Thériault, Éditions d’Acadie, Moncton. p. 404.

<sup>14</sup> **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)** (2002) – *Francisation: Taking Stock*. Document prepared for the Pan-Canadian French as a First Language Project. p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> **Landry, R. and Allard, R.** (1999) - « L’éducation dans la francophonie minoritaire », in *Francophonies minoritaires au Canada. L’état des lieux*, under the direction of Joseph Yvon Thériault, Éditions d’Acadie, Moncton. p. 416.

<sup>16</sup> **Official Minority Language Office** – *Renseignements généraux sur le programme fransaskois*, [www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/bmlol/](http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/bmlol/), consulted on October 14, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> **Bordeleau, L.-G.** (1993) – *Besoins en formation du personnel enseignant des écoles de langue maternelle française*, ACELF. p. 17.

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### 1.3 Expectations placed on teachers in minority settings

“The expectations placed on teachers working in minority schools are many. These teachers must master the language (oral and written); ... must act as agents of cultural transmission by sensitizing young people to the French culture; ... must also know and master a pedagogy for the minority; and be able to provide leadership in the defence and promotion, at both the regional and national levels, of the Francophonie]”<sup>18</sup>.  
[translation]

“Teachers who decide to work in minority settings had to make a conscious choice to do so and they must accept the consequences of that choice daily. They are models, leaders, and their role as Francophone ambassadors must not be limited to the classroom.”<sup>19</sup> [translation]

“The Francophone Education Authority of British Columbia undertakes to offer educational programs and services promoting the full development and cultural identity of the province’s Francophone students. It also undertakes to take an active part in the development of the Francophone community in British Columbia.”<sup>20</sup> [translation]

There are special expectations of teachers in minority settings. These expectations stem in large part from three factors. First, within the school, the teaching of French and the transmission of French culture occupy a place of importance. Second, the number of children from exogamous households, that is, with one Francophone parent and one Anglophone parent, is high and on the increase. The 2003 census shows that 63% of children under the age of 18 having at least one Francophone parent are from exogamous families. Among children aged 5 to 17 from such households, only 13.1% use French more often at home.<sup>21</sup> Third, the range of French-language cultural services and activities in the communities is often limited. Teachers are therefore expected to compensate for shortcomings in students’ language skills and cultural experience.

Anyone who wishes to teach in a minority setting must have not only all the qualifications required to be a good teacher, but the parents and the Francophone community also expect them to be a model where French language and culture are concerned, to have a good command of both oral and written French and to persist in communicating in French. They are also expected to actively demonstrate their commitment to, and pride

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<sup>18</sup> **Bordeleau, L.-G.** (1995), quoted in **Laplante, B.** (2001) - « Enseigner en milieu minoritaire: histoires d’enseignantes œuvrant dans les écoles fransaskoises », *Revue des sciences de l’éducation*, vol. 27, n° 1. p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> **Michaud, V.** (August 1997) – « Professeur sur mesure, Compte rendu de l’atelier : Enseigner, est-ce une question de personnalité? Est-ce différent en milieu minoritaire? », ACELF, in *La jeune presse*, Québec. p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> **Francophone Education Authority of British Columbia** - *Mission et vision*. <http://www.csf.bc.ca/>, consulted on May 28, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> **Landry, R.** (2003) — *Libérer le potentiel caché de l’exogamie*, Study conducted for the Commission nationale des parents francophones, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, Université de Moncton, p. 3.

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in, their language and culture within their community. Teachers must be dynamic Francophone models, whose cultural identity is firmly rooted.<sup>22</sup>

In a report titled *Enseigner en milieu minoritaire : histoires d'enseignantes oeuvrant dans les écoles fransaskoises*, the six teachers interviewed stated that they felt like sociocultural models, not only within the school, but also outside.<sup>23</sup>

In Ontario, teachers emphasize their role in the transmission of Franco-Ontarian heritage and, through it, in the survival of the language and the culture, and the development of the community.<sup>24</sup> The French-language community, as well as parents, expect that teachers will aim to make the language functional and significant for young people, thus increasing the use they make of it.<sup>25</sup>

Teaching, francization and socio-cultural development – such are the many roles played by teachers to meet the expectations of parents, communities and school boards.<sup>26</sup>

Given the expectations imposed on teachers by parents and the community, the executive committee of the Association des enseignantes et enseignants francophones de la Colombie-Britannique (the teachers' union of the Francophone Education Authority of British Columbia) thought it advisable to include a special message in the March 2000 issue of *Info-parents* to warn members of the community and parents who would like the teachers in their school to become more involved at the community level.<sup>27</sup> The Association pointed out that teachers already carry a heavy load with lesson preparations, corrections, meetings and various educational activities, on top of teaching, so that they cannot become any more involved in the community.<sup>28</sup>

*Teachers must be  
dynamic Francophone models,  
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<sup>22</sup> **Bordeleau, L.-G.** (1993) – *Besoins en formation du personnel enseignant des écoles de langue maternelle française*, ACELF.

<sup>23</sup> **Laplane, B.** (2001) - « Enseigner en milieu minoritaire : histoires d'enseignantes œuvrant dans les écoles fransaskoises », *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, vol. 27, n° 1. p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> **Gallant, N., Gilbert, A. and Thériault, J.Y.** (2001) – *La tâche d'enseigner*, Rapport de consultation pour l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), CIRCEM, University of Ottawa. p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* **Bordeleau, L.-G.** (1993), p. 59.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* **Laplane, B.** (2001), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> **Comité exécutif de l'Association des enseignantes et enseignants francophones** (the teachers' union of the Francophone Education Authority of British Columbia) (2000) - « Le rôle de l'enseignante et de l'enseignant dans la communauté francophone en milieu minoritaire », *Info-parents*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, **Comité exécutif de l'Association des enseignantes et enseignants francophones** (2000).

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### 1.4 Special challenges of teaching in minority settings

In light of the mission of French-language schools and its specificity, teaching in minority settings in Canada means dealing with multiple challenges:

- ❶ teaching the French language;
- ❷ conveying French culture;
- ❸ very often teaching multi-level classes;
- ❹ inadequacy of French-language teaching materials suited to the community;
- ❺ an increasingly diverse student body, not only culturally but also linguistically;
- ❻ the isolation of schools and the poor cultural environment;
- ❼ the shortage of specialists;
- ❽ the lack of pre-service training on what it means to teach in minority settings; and
- ❾ the lack of in-service professional development in French.

Working conditions described as difficult, growing expectations on the part of society, transformation of the classroom (violence, learning and behavioral difficulties, diversity of the student population, new technologies, etc.): teaching is undergoing profound changes. Those who teach in minority settings, in addition to coping with these transformations, must serve as models where French language and culture are concerned, perform numerous duties not found in majority settings (researching and translating teaching materials, leadership and promotion of activities in French, etc.), find ways to reduce the differences in language skills in their classes, overcome isolation, make up for the cultural poverty of the environment and the lack of specialists. All this with little or no initial training in the challenge of teaching in minority settings and with very limited access to professional development in French. The repercussions of this situation on the feelings experienced by teachers in the course of their daily experience, on their satisfaction with their work and the support they would like to receive to better perform their duties are virtually absent in the thinking and the research. The literature review underscores the importance of reflecting on these matters; hence the significance of the results of the survey conducted among teachers in minority settings.

# PART 2.

## Highlights of the teacher survey<sup>29</sup>

A major survey in which 672 teachers from across Canada took part offers new insights into the realities of teaching in minority settings. Not only did the survey reveal teachers' assessments of their most pressing needs, but it also provided exclusive information about their job satisfaction, their motivation and their commitment to maintaining the French language and culture. Before presenting the highlights of this survey, let us briefly describe the main components of the questionnaire and the sample of Francophone teachers.

### 2.1 Elements of methodology

#### Main questionnaire components

The questionnaire consists of three separate sections. The first one is designed to give a profile of the teachers by asking questions about the levels and subjects they teach, their training, their place of origin, their age, their gender, their years of experience, their mother tongue and their language of education.

The second section deals with teachers' experiences in the school. It includes numerous questions about their motivations for teaching in French-language schools, their professional relations, their feelings about teaching, the challenges and difficulties they may have, and their satisfaction with their work.

The third and final section of the questionnaire concerns their broader experience within the community. The questions asked allowed the respondents to describe their present use of the French language in light of the opportunities available, to recall certain elements of their childhood language experiences and to define their identity.

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<sup>29</sup> For detailed results of the survey, see Landry, R. (2004), *Le personnel enseignant face aux défis de l'enseignement en milieu minoritaire francophone. Rapport de l'enquête auprès des enseignantes et des enseignants*. Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and CIRCEM, University of Ottawa. Available on line at <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/fr> in French only.

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### Sampling strategy

The sample was based on the figures for teaching personnel published by the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF) in 2002. The Member organizations of CTF each checked the figures and gave the exact numbers for the 2003-2004 school year. We wanted to have survey responses from all the provinces and the three territories. Given the small number of teachers there, we wanted to contact all teachers in Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and the three territories. Elsewhere a proportional random sampling was planned.

The initial objective was to obtain 500 completed questionnaires. To do so and for purposes of confidentiality, we sought the assistance of the Member organizations of CTF to distribute the questionnaires. They received the questionnaires directly, selected names at random from their address lists and sent the questionnaires to teachers' homes.

A total of 672 completed questionnaires were returned, a number all the more significant given the detailed nature of the survey (14 pages) and the time frame; the survey had to be conducted in December 2003, a very busy period in schools.

## 2.2 Respondents' profile

Those who took part in the survey come from all the provinces and territories, except for Nunavut. Half of them work in Ontario, which matches the current distribution of teachers in Francophone minority schools. The Atlantic region is very well represented among the responses, more particularly New Brunswick. Though the percentage of respondents from the West and the North is somewhat lower in relative terms, it is nevertheless adequate for their data to be processed separately.

Women account for three-quarters of the sample, which corresponds to gender distribution in the teaching profession as a whole. All the age groups are represented, thereby ensuring that the results reflect the experience of younger teachers, as well as older ones. A large proportion of the respondents (51.9% in the West and North, 38.7% in Ontario and 35.1% in the Atlantic region) have one to ten years of experience. The evaluations provided to us by the survey therefore represent, to a large extent, those prevailing among newcomers to the profession, whose perceptions will likely have the greatest impact where retention in the profession is concerned.

A very large majority of survey participants were born in Canada. One-quarter are from Quebec, which has an effect on the perceptions of the experience.

Finally, the teachers referred to in this report teach at all levels.

### Great regional disparity concerning experience with the French language

The survey shows that the mother tongue of the very large majority of teachers is French, as is their parents'. They grew up in households where French was the language spoken. Their language experience therefore does not correspond to that of most of their students. Also, they are much more often in exogamous relationships than were their parents.

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**Table 1.**  
Language of couples formed by teachers

| Region       |   | Endogamous  | Exogamous   | Total        |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| West / North | N | 40          | 20          | 60           |
|              | % | <b>66.7</b> | <b>33.3</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Ontario      | N | 189         | 80          | 269          |
|              | % | <b>70.3</b> | <b>29.7</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Atlantic     | N | 198         | 30          | 228          |
|              | % | <b>86.8</b> | <b>13.2</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Total        | N | 427         | 130         | 557          |
|              | % | <b>76.7</b> | <b>23.3</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

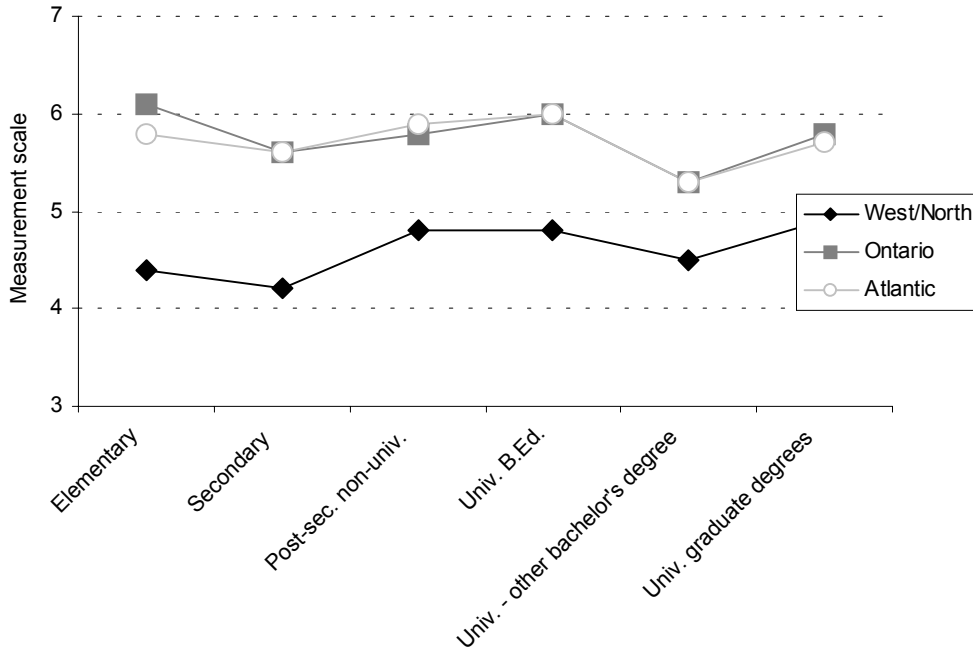
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The experience of French during the childhood and adulthood of the teachers who took part in the survey varies greatly depending on the dimensions of their community life. Though the use of French remains important within the family network, even in nearby services, it diminishes greatly when it comes to institutional contacts, signage and media. The experience is far from comparable, depending on whether we are looking at teachers from the West and the North or from Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, the latter having more opportunities to live in French. The same goes for the language in which teachers were educated.

Teachers in the West and North had the least education in French. In those areas, only slightly more than half their courses, on average, were taken in French at the elementary, secondary and university levels.

**Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings**

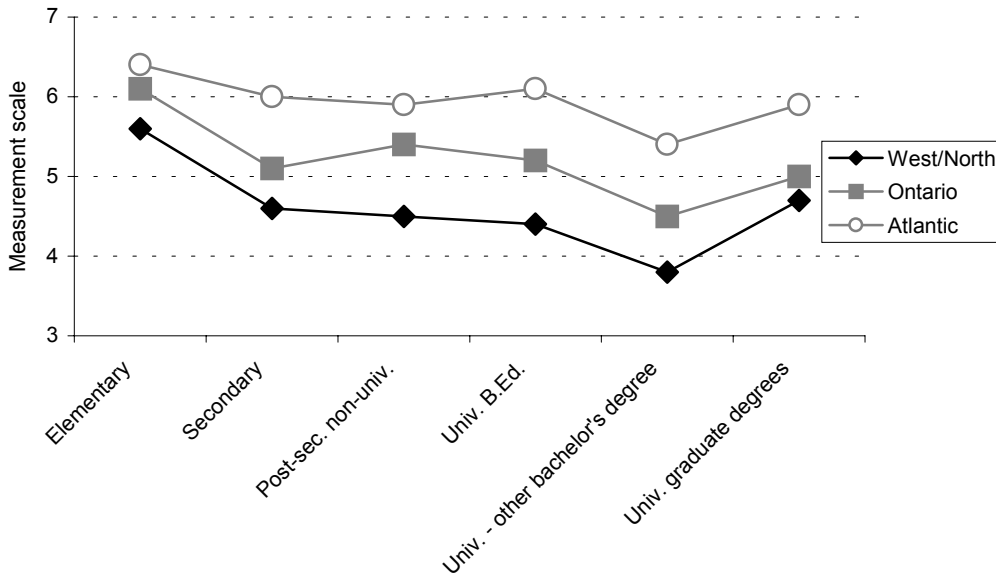
**Figure 1.**  
Language in which respondents were educated



**Measurement scale.** 1=All in English 2=All in English except for French 3=Most in English 4=Half and half 5=Most in French 6=All in French except for English 7=All in French

As for exposure outside classes for the same levels of study as in the previous figure, the profile is similar to the one for the language of instruction in the Atlantic, where the scores are higher. In Ontario, even though schooling occurs as much in French as in the Atlantic, there is much less exposure to the French language and culture. Teachers in the West and North indicate rather low levels of exposure to a Francophone environment throughout their studies.

**Figure 2.**  
Language exposure outside classes



**Measurement scale.** 1=Completely English 2=Mainly English 3=Slightly more English than French 4=As much English as French 5=Slightly more French than English 6=Mainly French 7=Completely French

In all regions, however, teachers were in contact with models valuing the language, asserting their Francophone identity and claiming French-language rights, and this may compensate for the inequalities in other aspects. Furthermore, regardless of the region, teachers feel they have the language skills required to perform their duties.

Teachers in Francophone minority settings are expected to build their students' awareness of their minority situation and of their language rights. It is essential therefore that they themselves have this awareness. On average, teachers reported having regularly seen people who valued French, asserted themselves as Francophones and played a role in claiming rights.

**Table 2.**  
Valuing of French in their social environment

|                    |          | Regions      |            |            | Total      |
|--------------------|----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                    |          | West / North | Ontario    | Atlantic   |            |
| Valuing            | <b>A</b> | <b>5.9</b>   | <b>5.8</b> | <b>5.5</b> | <b>5.7</b> |
|                    | N        | 35           | 242        | 247        | 524        |
| Assertion          | <b>A</b> | <b>4.9</b>   | <b>5.3</b> | <b>5.3</b> | <b>5.2</b> |
|                    | N        | 35           | 242        | 247        | 524        |
| Claiming of rights | <b>A</b> | <b>4.4</b>   | <b>4.7</b> | <b>4.6</b> | <b>4.7</b> |
|                    | N        | 35           | 242        | 247        | 524        |

**Measurement scale.** 1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Occasionally 5=Often 6=Regularly 7=Very often

### 2.3 Teaching in French-language schools

#### Perception of minority community resources and effects on the desire to be part of the community

It was interesting to note that evaluations of the vitality of minority communities drop sharply from East to West. Here teachers see the level of access to resources and services in French as being fairly low.

**Table 3.**  
Francophone and Anglophone resources in your region

|                                   |   | Regions      |         |          | Total |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|---------|----------|-------|
|                                   |   | West / North | Ontario | Atlantic |       |
| Resources and services in French  | A | 2.9          | 3.7     | 4.6      | 4.0   |
| Resources and services in English | A | 6.8          | 6.6     | 6.0      | 6.4   |

**Measurement scale.** 1=Very low 2=Low 3=Moderately low 4=Moderate 5=Moderately high 6=High 7=Very high

## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

The perceived inequalities are all the greater here in that access to resources in English is seen as being greater than in the East. The desire to be part of the community reflects this. It is definitely fairly strong everywhere; the teachers in each of these three major regions express the wish to have “very often” if not “always” access to community resources in French, and “often” if not “very often” access to cultural resources in French. But there is a weaker desire to be part of the community among the respondents in the West and the North, compared to those in Ontario, and especially those in the Atlantic provinces.

There are also some differences with regard to identity. Throughout the regions, all respondents identify themselves as Francophone. Respondents identify themselves increasingly as bilingual and bicultural as we move from the Atlantic to the West.

**Table 4.**  
Respondents' identity

|                    |   | Regions     |         |          |            |
|--------------------|---|-------------|---------|----------|------------|
|                    |   | West / Noth | Ontario | Atlantic | Total      |
| 1. Francophone     | A | 6.7         | 6.6     | 6.7      | 6.7        |
| 2. Anglophone      | A | 2.0         | 1.9     | 1.7      | 1.8        |
| 3. Bilingual       | A | 4.8         | 4.8     | 4.5      | 4.7        |
| 4. Bicultural      | A | 3.4         | 3.1     | 3.2      | 3.1        |
| 5. French-Canadian | A | 6.2         | 6.4     | 6.3      | 6.4        |
| 6. Acadian         | A | 1.4         | 1.3     | 5.4      | <b>3.1</b> |
| 7. Québécois       | A | 3.9         | 2.8     | 2.2      | 2.6        |
| 8. Franco....*     | A | 4.9         | 5.5     | 2.8      | 4.3        |

**Measurement scale.** Example 1=Non-Francophone-----7=Francophone

\* Franco-Yukoner, Franco-Albertan, Franco-Saskatchewanian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.

### Moderate job satisfaction

The study confirmed a relatively high degree of motivation for teaching. Teachers apparently take great pleasure in their occupation. The scores are the same regardless of the region considered. They are highly committed to developing not only their students' French-language skills but also their feeling of belonging to the Francophone community. It seems that their job satisfaction is not complete, though; the scores calculated from a set of statements designed to measure satisfaction remain average.



## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

**Table 5.**  
Personal commitment

|  |          | Regions      |            |            |            |
|--|----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |          | West / North | Ontario    | Atlantic   | Total      |
| 1. Development of human potential                      | A        | 6.1          | 6.0        | 6.0        | 6.0        |
| 2. Development of Francophone community                | A        | 5.7          | 5.7        | 5.7        | 5.7        |
| 3. Development of science and knowledge among students | A        | 5.6          | 5.5        | 5.6        | 5.6        |
| 4. Development of proficiency in French                | A        | 6.0          | 5.9        | 6.0        | 5.9        |
| <b>Number</b>  | <b>N</b> | <b>75</b>    | <b>313</b> | <b>275</b> | <b>663</b> |

**Measurement scale.** 1=No commitment at all 2=Very slight commitment 3=Some commitment 4=Moderate commitment 5=Moderately strong commitment 6=Strong commitment 7=Very strong commitment

An open question on the most satisfying aspects of the teachers' work identified a number of elements, including: students' progress and success, the relationship developed with their students and their colleagues, and the atmosphere of the school. Among the comments pertaining more directly to Francophone schools, the fact of teaching in French was selected as a major factor by one teacher out of six.

**Table 6.**  
Satisfying aspects of teaching<sup>30</sup>

|  | N   |
|--|-----|
| 1. Observing students' progress and success                    | 292 |
| 2. Relationships with students                                 | 195 |
| 3. Relationships with colleagues                               | 110 |
| 4. Teaching in French  | 96  |
| 5. Developing a sense of belonging                             | 89  |
| 6. Good school atmosphere                                      | 75  |
| 7. Teaching  | 68  |
| 8. My influence on the students                                | 67  |
| 9. Developing their interest in learning                       | 66  |
| 10. Pride in work well done and recognition by those around me | 64  |
| 11. Working conditions   | 54  |
| 12. My own learning  | 43  |
| 13. Welfare of my students, their overall development          | 38  |
| 14. Professional freedom                                       | 37  |
| 15. Relationships with parents                                 | 31  |
| 16. Interesting challenges and projects to carry out           | 29  |
| 17. Helping children with special needs                        | 21  |
| 18. Relationships with administrators                          | 20  |

<sup>30</sup> The number of times that each of the satisfying aspects listed was mentioned by the teachers as a priority for teaching in French-language schools. Each teacher could indicate three aspects. Only the aspects that were mentioned 20 times or more were retained for this table.

### Maintaining French with limited resources : the main challenge of Francophone schools

Of the 672 respondents, 93.7% answered “yes” to the question asking whether, in their opinion, there are challenges specific to teaching in French-language schools.

Invited then to express themselves freely about these challenges, that is, the aspects inherent in teaching in that environment, over half of the respondents stressed the lack of resources – financial and material, pedagogical, human and technological. They also stressed the challenges posed in the daily struggle against assimilation. The lack of continuity in the use of French between the school, the home and the community was pointed out by one person in three. Numerous other comments confirmed a deep sense that maintaining French is the primary goal of teaching in French. Success at school by young Francophones also appeared as a major concern among teachers.

**Table 7.**  
Main challenges specific to teaching in French-language schools

|   | N <sup>31</sup> |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Lack of financial, material, pedagogical, human and technological resources  | 404             |
| 2. Struggle against assimilation, protecting and promoting French language and culture, developing a sense of belonging               | 309             |
| 3. Continuity of French from the school to the home and the community – parents’ support  | 202             |
| 4. Importance of speaking, reading and writing in French  | 201             |
| 5. Power of attraction of English, assimilation   | 140             |
| 6. Conveying human values   | 102             |
| 7. Teaching exogamous children  | 72              |
| 8. Teaching in a Francophone minority setting   | 67              |
| 9. Students lack French-language skills and education   | 59              |
| 10. Encouraging students to listen to music, or watch movies and television with Canadian, Francophone content                        | 59              |
| 11. Maintaining high standards of French  | 52              |
| 12. Multi-level or combined classes   | 52              |
| 13. Learning French grammar, vocabulary and reading   | 50              |
| 14. Educational outings and cultural activities in French   | 40              |
| 15. Lack of preparation time  | 38              |
| 16. Curriculum  | 35              |
| 17. Lack of pedagogical training, professional development  | 33              |
| 18. Availability of related school resources  | 32              |
| 19. Equity in salaries and resources  | 32              |
| 20. Diversity of duties   | 29              |
| 21. Motivating students   | 29              |
| 22. Fostering self-esteem and respect for others among students, valuing their self-esteem, enabling them to achieve their objectives | 25              |
| 23. Becoming bilingual  | 23              |
| 24. Teaching materials not related to our specific identity   | 21              |
| 25. Relationships with other school authorities   | 20              |

<sup>31</sup> The number of times each of the challenges listed was mentioned by teachers as a top challenge specific to teaching in French-language schools. Respondents could indicate up to five. Only those aspects mentioned 20 times or more were retained for the purposes of this table.

## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

If the challenges specific to Francophone schools are grouped together by region, we can observe that they are perceived as greater in the West, the North and Ontario than in the Atlantic Provinces.

|  | Regions      |              |             |              |            |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
|  | West / North |              | Ontario     |              | Atlantic   |              |
|  | N            | %            | N           | %            | N          | %            |
| 1. Living in French in an English-dominant setting   | 148          | <b>56.0</b>  | 634         | <b>57.0</b>  | 444        | <b>52.0</b>  |
| 2. Lack of resources                                 | 95           | <b>36.0</b>  | 339         | <b>30.0</b>  | 256        | <b>30.0</b>  |
| 3. Students' success at school and motivation        | 17           | <b>6.0</b>   | 96          | <b>9.0</b>   | 128        | <b>15.0</b>  |
| 4. Professional relationships and working conditions | 4            | <b>2.0</b>   | 23          | <b>2.0</b>   | 17         | <b>2.0</b>   |
| 5. Equity between Francophones and Anglophones       |              |              | 23          | <b>2.0</b>   | 9          | <b>1.0</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>264</b>   | <b>100.0</b> | <b>1115</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>854</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

After the open question about challenges, the questionnaire presented a list of 31 difficulties sometimes mentioned by people working in education in Francophone minority settings. These difficulties may be, in varying degrees, perceived by teachers as hindrances in fulfilling the special mission of the French-language school.

Teachers were invited to indicate the degree to which each difficulty described their situation. The heavy teaching load and its very considerable diversity are the cause of the greatest concerns. The lack of access to training, though not perceived as an equally pressing challenge, was nevertheless pointed out as a characteristic of the daily experience of teaching in Francophone settings.

## Teachers and the Challenge of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings

**Table 9.**  
Difficulties regarded as major

|  | %    |
|--|------|
| 1. Teaching load too heavy (too much lesson preparation)                                 | 74.0 |
| 2. Lack of teaching materials suited to the Francophone minority context                 | 67.2 |
| 3. Too many different subjects to teach  | 65.2 |
| 4. French spoken little at home by students  | 65.2 |
| 5. Lack of psychology staff  | 64.4 |
| 6. Very English-dominant social setting  | 63.5 |
| 7. Lack of educational software  | 59.3 |
| 8. French spoken little by students among themselves at school                           | 57.8 |
| 9. Lack of educational resources   | 57.6 |
| 10. Lack of specialist teachers in some subjects (e.g. mathematics and natural sciences) | 56.7 |
| 11. Lack of library resources  | 55.6 |
| 12. Lack of involvement by parents   | 54.8 |
| 13. Lack of community resources in French  | 54.3 |
| 14. Lack of special education staff  | 53.8 |
| 15. Combined classes   | 53.7 |
| 16. Lack of space for cultural activities (e.g. theatre or auditorium)                   | 53.0 |
| 17. Lack of health services staff  | 51.7 |
| 18. Lack of computer equipment   | 49.8 |
| 19. Poor match between training received and subjects taught                             | 49.3 |
| 20. Lack of space for the cafeteria  | 45.8 |
| 21. Need to translate teaching materials   | 45.6 |
| 22. Lack of staff in academic and career guidance  | 43.5 |
| 23. Lack of opportunities for professional development                                   | 40.0 |
| 24. Lack of space for lesson preparation   | 38.8 |
| 25. Pressures to communicate in English with parents                                     | 36.8 |
| 26. Students' lack of interest   | 29.3 |
| 27. Lack of support for physical education   | 28.9 |
| 28. Too few students to organize extracurricular activities                              | 27.8 |
| 29. Little access to professional training in French                                     | 24.8 |
| 30. Negative image of the school   | 15.8 |

When these difficulties are grouped together in seven categories, it is always the overly heavy and diversified workload that tops the list. The problem is perceived with the same acuteness everywhere. The lack of educational resources, the English-dominant setting and the lack of qualified staff are other difficulties perceived, on average, as quite important. The other three categories are seen as moderate difficulties, on average, but as the previous table shows, for most of these, a significant proportion of teachers regard them as major difficulties.

These highlights from the survey provide us with a better understanding of the realities of teachers working in French-language schools and point to some strategies that might help meet their most pressing needs. The following section contains some suggestions.

**Table 10.**  
Difficulties grouped in seven categories

|  |          | Regions      |            |            | Total      |
|--|----------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
|  |          | West / North | Ontario    | Atlantic   |            |
| 1. Teaching load too heavy and diversified | A        | 4.7          | 4.9        | 4.7        | 4.8        |
| 2. Lack of educational resources           | A        | 4.5          | 4.8        | 4.3        | 4.6        |
| 3. English-dominant setting                | A        | 5.2          | 5.2        | 3.6        | 4.5        |
| 4. Lack of qualified staff                 | A        | 4.3          | 4.4        | 4.5        | 4.4        |
| 5. Lack of physical facilities             | A        | 4.3          | 3.9        | 3.6        | 3.8        |
| 6. Lack of access to training              | A        | 3.8          | 3.7        | 3.4        | 3.6        |
| 7. Negative image of school                | A        | 2.7          | 3.3        | 2.9        | 3.1        |
| <b>Number</b>                              | <b>N</b> | <b>76</b>    | <b>314</b> | <b>275</b> | <b>665</b> |

**Measurement scale.** 1=Does not correspond at all to my situation 2=Does not correspond much  
3=Corresponds a little 4=Corresponds moderately 5=Corresponds quite well  
6=Corresponds well 7=Corresponds very well

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# PART 3.

## Taking action

Teaching in minority settings raises a certain number of issues, most of which are already well documented.<sup>32</sup> What we are less familiar with, however, is teachers' profiles, their motivations for teaching in French-language schools, their perceptions of the challenges they have to deal with daily and what, in their opinion, hinders the fulfilment of the French-language school's mission. Information on these aspects of teachers' experience in the various Francophone communities across the country is non-existent. Among the various studies<sup>33</sup> conducted, none deals with motivations and satisfaction, or any elements related to the conditions of the practice of teaching that might influence them.

*The relationships observed between perception of the vitality of the community, motivation, commitment to the Francophonie and satisfaction provide plenty of food for thought concerning avenues to pursue when it comes to taking action.*

Our survey is unique in that it provides new information on teachers' assessments of their experience as professionals. An analysis of the data gathered also sheds light on the effect of certain factors. This could greatly guide the development of an action plan. The relationships observed between perception of the vitality of the community, motivation, commitment to the Francophonie and satisfaction provide plenty of food for thought concerning avenues to pursue when it comes to taking action. Some concern teachers who need to be equipped with all the tools enabling them to properly grasp the issues involved in minority settings and to deal with them, from pre-service training in minority-centered pedagogy to in-service mentoring. Others clearly concern the broader setting, in which teachers and their students derive the necessary motivation to promote the French language and culture. In addition, the regional diversity revealed by the survey suggests that much more targeted action, depending on the context, than what has happened up to now must be taken when it comes to teaching in French.

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<sup>32</sup> See for Ontario *Le document de travail portant sur les orientations du plan d'affaires 2003-2008* (produced in 2002 by the Ontario Ministry of Education) *pour le renouvellement de l'entente spéciale Canada-Ontario* respecting the implementation of Francophone school management; the brief presented in 2002 by the Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est to the Education Equality Task Force, titled *Perspective du Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est en ce qui a trait au modèle de financement de l'éducation en Ontario*; and the brief *Le financement axé sur les besoins des élèves: une analyse détaillée* prepared at the same time by the twelve Francophone school boards in collaboration with the Association des conseillères et conseillers des écoles publiques de l'Ontario and the Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques.

<sup>33</sup> For example: **Leblanc, C.** (2000), *The Workload and Conditions of Work of New Brunswick Teachers*. 2000 Survey for the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation (NBTF); Gallant, N., Gilbert, A. and Thériault, J.Y. (2001), *La tâche d'enseigner*, Consultation report for the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), CIRCEM, University of Ottawa; and CTF (October 2001), *Canadian Teachers' Workplace Survey June 2001. Summary of Major Findings*, Economic Services Bulletin.

### 3.1 The central issue: ensuring student success in a less than favourable linguistic and cultural environment

The information provided by the survey concerning the challenges perceived by teachers as being the most pressing ones will be very useful in considering what avenues of action to pursue. Our research has shown a keen concern for student success in a linguistic and cultural environment that is less than favourable. With the exception of a few communities, teachers must practise their profession in predominantly Anglophone settings. The attraction of English felt by the students is all the greater since the number of children from exogamous families is increasing. A large proportion of students in Francophone schools live in households where English dominates and thus arrive at school ill-prepared to learn in French, which makes teaching particularly difficult. The limited support that many parents can provide, since they themselves are assimilated to varying degrees, complicates the situation and obviously has repercussions on the task of teachers. Furthermore, the fact that students in Francophone minority schools often obtain poorer results than those in English schools in mathematics, science, reading and writing, as well as communication, contributes to teachers' perception that teaching in Francophone schools is a difficult undertaking.

Therefore, high proportions of teachers in the North and West, and in Ontario, indicated the English-dominant setting as one of the chief difficulties they have to deal with. For them, having to teach French in such an environment represents a daily challenge, for which they feel all the less prepared since they generally come from families in which both parents are French-speaking. In view of the lack of support available to them, it is not surprising that some teachers get discouraged.

### 3.2 Training teachers and providing professional support

#### Basic training to be developed



The little preparation for teaching in minority settings offered by faculties of education in Francophone universities outside Quebec is, in these circumstances, quite disconcerting,

***According to the consensus that emerged from this consultation, courses on pedagogy for the minority should be compulsory in all teacher training programs and this dimension should also be an integral part of professional development programs.***

according to those involved in French-language education who examined the results of the survey at a forum

organized for this purpose. Whether it be training in the sociology of the communities in which they are going to work or in the challenges inherent in students' learning in a context of bilingualism, future teachers are not adequately equipped to cope with minority realities in the classroom. This is obviously something that must be changed, with the support of all partners concerned. According to the consensus that emerged from

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this consultation, courses on pedagogy for the minority should be compulsory in all teacher training programs and this dimension should also be an integral part of professional development programs.

### Importance of professional development

In the opinion of those attending the forum, the few opportunities for in-service professional training offered to teachers is equally surprising. A significant proportion of people who took part in the survey see this as one of the major challenges in French-language schools. A certain number of school boards, alone or in partnership, have tackled the problem and come up with some interesting initiatives. Respondents lament the fact, however, that each is creating its own programs while resources are limited. School boards working in minority settings should definitely find mechanisms that would allow them to share their resources, including shared training that would be based on materials developed in response to common problems. It is also important to deal with the question of access to professional development activities for teachers working in small Francophone communities or obliged to cover long distances over the often vast territory of their board.

*[...] the few opportunities for in-service professional training offered to teachers is equally surprising. A significant proportion of people who took part in the survey see this as one of the major challenges in French-language schools.*



### Increasing exchanges

The establishment of systems of exchange networks among teachers at the local, regional, provincial and even national levels was also identified as a necessity. Isolation proves to be one of the main issues related to teaching in French-language schools. Different strategies deserve particular attention.

Efforts could be made, for instance, to set up a mentoring system that offers support to teachers just starting out in their profession, or those who have to teach a subject without adequate preparation. The many retirees from the profession could be called upon. The creation of forums and other places of exchange at the various education levels, and in various disciplines must also be encouraged. Improvements at the school level are definitely the first priority, a good number of teachers having deplored the lack of support received from their colleagues within their own schools. With the help of technology, other means of promoting exchanges among schools at the regional, provincial and even national levels should be explored.

### 3.3 Workload and teaching conditions

#### Taking into account the “Francophone factor”

Teaching in French-language schools definitely has its particularities: teaching in French to young people, many of whom do not have the skills required to benefit from such

teaching; conveying the French language and culture in a context in which the school is generally the chief if not the sole institution playing this role within the community, leading to huge expectations being placed on the school staff; fulfilling these special

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*Consequently, the question of work management calls for some in-depth thinking about the effects of the “Francophone factor” on the task of teaching in minority settings.*

missions without all the teaching materials necessary; not having the support of the specialists needed; and, finally, since a large number of minority schools are small, preparing and offering a wide variety of lessons to numerous groups, often in multi-level classes.

The results of the survey are clear as to the impact of these realities on teachers: they perceive their task as far too heavy. They lack time and support, and they are deeply affected.

Consequently, the question of work management calls for some in-depth thinking about the effects of the “Francophone factor” on the task of teaching in minority settings. Since several subjects are taught to several different groups, since teachers often have to work in multi-level classes and given the huge disparities in the students' linguistic skills, how can the work be organized so that it is fair and equitable, compared to majority schools, so that it no longer overwhelms so many Francophone teachers? How much extra time should be granted for preparation of lessons offered in French schools, in light of the lack of educational resources? What kind of compensation is possible for the fact that many must act, unprepared, as specialists in terms of both pedagogy and support to students? Finally, how can one measure the effects of being responsible for the transmission of French language and culture, in view of the sometimes overpowering predominance of English?

#### Employment status to be improved

The survey reveals other obstacles to teaching. The lack of qualified supply teachers is visibly a heavy burden for a good number of teachers, who constantly feel torn between the desire to entrust their classes to others so that they can engage in development activities, take care of special projects or other matters, and the feeling of being unable to do so, on account of the shortages of qualified staff. A strategy is necessary to ensure quality supply services.

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The undue job precariousness in French-language schools also calls for concerted action. Many young teachers are recruited on a temporary basis, causing them to feel insecure and adding to the stress experienced in their early years of teaching. Because of the many changes in the school-zone map in most of the country's Francophone regions, it is standard for them to be shifted around from one school to another every year, or to work in more than one school. The issue of pay equity with English schools is also a concern for teachers in some school territories. They cannot accept that colleagues in their region, whose basic training is similar to theirs, can be paid significantly higher salaries.

***Furthermore, in view of the strong attraction of the majority education system, French education leaders must not delay in implementing an incentive program to attract and retain teachers in Francophone schools.***



French-language education obviously has everything to gain from vigorous action to improve teachers' employment status. Furthermore, in view of the strong attraction of the majority education system, French education leaders must not delay in implementing an incentive program to attract and retain teachers in Francophone schools. The future of the French-language education system, and thus the Francophone communities themselves, is at stake.

### 3.4 Resources in minority settings

#### Human resources

The lack of resources is deeply felt by teachers. According to the respondents, staff shortages pose particular difficulties, with regard to both the teachers themselves and staff in the areas of special education, guidance, psychology, speech therapy and others. This clearly adds to the perception that the task is burdensome and that there is insufficient support to carry it out.

Some action designed to alleviate this problem should not be put off unduly if we want teachers to maintain the motivation that we observed. Recruitment should be stepped up among possible candidates, in education and other university faculties. A strategy aimed at promoting access to other specialists working in schools is required. Since rural settings face even greater shortages in this regard, like the country's least Francophone regions, this strategy should include elements to encourage partnerships between them and Francophone districts that have more human resources.

### Teaching materials

The lack of French-language teaching materials is a major problem throughout the country and stands in the way of achieving the French-language schools' mission. The materials required in the classrooms must often be translated from English or adapted to the specific characteristics of the settings in which they are used, and this adds to preparation time. The lack of educational software in French was also mentioned, and this does nothing to make up for the known "digital divide" between Francophones and Anglophones.

Certain projects are under way to fill these needs. Not enough people know about them, however, and the means to ensure distribution of the materials produced are inadequate. The idea of a Canadian educational resources portal, by subject and teaching level, must

*The lack of French-language teaching materials is a major problem throughout the country and stands in the way of achieving the French-language schools' mission.*

be explored without further delay, according to the opinions of the participants at the forum. Despite the lack of standardization of programs, this is nevertheless a very

promising avenue to explore. Furthermore, everyone agrees that the funds allocated to the development of French-language teaching materials adapted to schools in minority settings are far from sufficient.

### Facilities


Teachers deplore the inadequacy of school facilities. Many of them actually regard the matter of facilities as one of the biggest difficulties they have to deal with daily. The lack of space for courses, preparation work and extracurricular activities hinders them in their work. When Francophone school boards were established, some were assigned the oldest buildings in Anglophone boards and were given little or no funds to refurbish them. Obviously, an action plan is necessary to ensure greater accessibility to facilities that are adequate in size and suited to the needs.

### Funding

The solution to the various problems that have just been raised is directly linked to securing adequate funding for minority-language education. However, commitments to funding the minority education system remains inadequate across the country. In the West, the Centre and the East, representations have been made to public authorities to demand equitable funding for the French-language school system.

In Ontario, the *Report of the Education Equality Task Force* stresses that “Equity means fairness. All Ontario students deserve equitable access to education and to the financial resources necessary for a high-quality education. Equity is not equality. Equality is not always equitable [...].”<sup>34</sup> Equity issues apply to school boards as well as to individual students. For French-language school boards, however, [translation] “the small number of students, widely dispersed communities, facilities that are substandard in quality, the impossibility of enjoying economies of scale and the absence of French-language human and material resources within the immediate environment of teaching institutions are all elements that contribute to the comparatively high costs of French-language education in Ontario.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, the school board study group recommends that “the Ministry of Education review and amend as necessary all elements of the funding formula in order to make sure that every grant takes into account the additional costs that have to be assumed by French-language boards.”<sup>36</sup>

***Everywhere in Canada, equitable funding for French-language education would first ensure equal opportunities for all students to succeed, the survival of the Francophone school system, and the fulfillment of its special mission of conveying French language and culture.***



In New Brunswick, the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick (AEFNB) states [translation] “that action is urgently needed so that the disparity between the performance of Anglophone students and Francophone students stop widening and the gaps be corrected so that all students receive the same quality of education, regardless of the school they attend.”<sup>37</sup> These disparities between the majority and minority school systems cannot be reduced [translation] “until we have a method of funding that aims to really meet students’ needs and ensures that all students receive an education of the highest quality that prepares them to take an active part in society on completion of their years of study.”<sup>38</sup>

In Manitoba, this urgent need to act is explicit in the *Report on the Review of Programs, Sources of Revenue and Financial Operations of the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine*. Its author asks “that all of the [...] recommendations that relate to changes in public school funding be implemented as soon as possible.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> **Rozanski, M.** (2002) – *Investing in Public Education : Advancing The Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement*, Report of the Education Equality Task Force. p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> **Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques and l’Association des conseillères et conseillers des écoles publiques de l’Ontario** (2002) - *L’éducation en langue française et le modèle de financement de l’éducation en Ontario*, Brief submitted to the Education Equality Task Force.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> **AEFNB** (2004) – Demande de l’AEFNB pour une commission d’étude sur le financement de l’éducation en français <http://www.aefnb.nb.ca>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, <http://www.aefnb.nb.ca>

<sup>39</sup> **Comtois, J.** (2004) – *A Bright Future: Report on the Review of Programs, Sources of Revenue and Financial Operations of the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine*. p. 105.

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Everywhere in Canada, equitable funding for French-language education would first ensure equal opportunities for all students to succeed, the survival of the Francophone school system, and the fulfillment of its special mission of conveying French language and culture. Francophone communities across the country and Canadian society as a whole would benefit as a result.

### 3.5 Linguistic integration and cultural development activities

#### Students' linguistic and cultural integration

The survey results suggest a whole set of actions, comprising various types of support for teachers in the performance of their duties. One that cannot be ignored is linguistic and cultural integration. The increased presence of young people among whom English predominates, and the growing ethno-cultural diversity of the student population actually make it a necessity. It is not hard to imagine the extent to which the task of teachers would be lightened if they could work in classes where all the children had adequate language skills to achieve the expected results. Many difficulties encountered daily by teachers would be resolved, and all their attention could then go to what should be their priority, that is, ensuring their students' academic success and their overall development.

We can also readily imagine the positive effects if, in areas where immigration levels are higher, young people enrolling in French schools from outside Canada could benefit from programs facilitating their integration. More or less formal initiatives aim to ease the adaptation of young people from immigrant families in some of Canada's large cities. But their scope is limited by the fact that they are isolated and operate with insufficient resources.

#### Cultural development activities

By building on young people's pride in their history, their traditions, their music and the landscapes in which they grew up, cultural development activities can also provide a major support for teachers. Have they not told us just how difficult it is for them to be dealing with young people who are only semi-interested in the French language and culture? Here too, action may take place at various levels: at the school level and the school board level, of course, where a cooperative cultural development plan will benefit not only students and teachers but also the community as a whole; and also at the level of the provincial and national French-language education system, through projects such as the one in which the CTF Advisory Committee on French as a First Language has become involved, called *DEBOUT!*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> CTF (2002), *DEBOUT!* National cultural activities handbook and companion CD, *DEBOUT! La musique qui nous anime!* (2004), and the *DEBOUT!* workshops designed and offered by the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO).

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### 3.6 More suitable pedagogy

Besides the pressing needs for cultural development activities, this study has shown the urgent need to look at the very nature of teaching and the type of pedagogy to apply in minority settings. In our opinion, in the increasingly English-dominant environment in which schools operate, such pedagogy has to be both aimed at student's self-actualization and at building school-community linkages.<sup>41</sup> This means a pedagogy that ensures maximum actualization of students' human potential, contributing not only to their academic achievement but also to their success in constructing their identity. This also means a pedagogy that promotes family-school-community partnerships in which the community is involved in the school and the school is involved in the community, with a view to preparing students to be and become active players in the vitality of their Francophone community. This challenge, linked to the twofold mission of the French-language school, remains unresolved and must be included in any action plan designed to enhance the role of the school in the promotion and development of Francophone and Acadian communities.

*Besides the pressing needs for cultural development activities, this study has shown the urgent need to look at the very nature of teaching and the type of pedagogy to apply in minority settings.*



### 3.7 From the school to the community

#### Early Childhood: Gateway to French-language Schools

The possible actions to examine in order to offer teachers an environment more favourable to the practice of their profession, particularly with a view to fulfilling the mission of the French-language school, cannot be separated from the broader thinking about the links between school and community. Indeed, the problem of teaching in minority settings goes beyond the school. Parents and their ability to contribute to the transmission of French to their children, as well as to reinforce the education their children receive in French, are part of the picture.

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<sup>41</sup> Landry, R. (2003), Pour une pédagogie actualisante et communautarisante en milieu minoritaire francophone. In R. Allard (dir.), *Actes du colloque pancanadien sur la recherche en éducation en milieu francophone minoritaire: bilan et prospectives* (p. 135-136). Québec, QC: ACELF; Moncton, NB: Centre de recherche et de développement en éducation (CRDE). Available at: <http://www.acelf.ca/publi/crde/articles/10-landry.html>. Landry et Rousselle (2003), *Éducation et droits collectifs: Au-delà de l'article 23 de la Charte*, Moncton, Les Éditions de la Francophonie.

Although the survey did not deal directly with these issues, it nevertheless showed that teachers see their role as being inextricably tied to the role played by the family. In this context, we could not overstate the importance of developing early childhood services in French as the chief means of fostering the use of French in the family and preparing for

*In this context, we could not overstate the importance of developing early childhood services in French as the chief means of fostering the use of French in the family and preparing for integration in French-language schools.*

integration in French-language schools. As has been demonstrated elsewhere,<sup>42</sup> they play an invaluable role in the transmission of French language and culture to young children, not to mention the impact of socialization in

French from the early years on children's identity and sense of belonging. Furthermore, preschool education in French encourages parents to get in the habit of taking part in their children's education within the French-language education system, a very important factor, as demonstrated by the significant proportion of teachers who deplore the lack of parental involvement.

### The school, partner in the community

French-language early childhood services are not the only means of supporting the work of teachers. Other institutions in the community are obviously expected to play a role in order notably to make up for the lack of resources mentioned above. Of course, we are thinking of the institutions in the community dedicated to arts and culture, health and social services, sports and leisure, ones that might lend some support to teachers in the performance of some of their duties. Municipal resources (sports and culture centres, libraries and Internet access, etc.), which the community underutilizes in most settings, should not be forgotten either.

In exchange, schools offer considerable resources (space for meetings, training sessions, etc., libraries, computer resources), not to mention the teachers themselves who, as the survey revealed, are actively involved in community affairs. Bringing the school closer to the community will enable the latter to take greater advantage of these resources that will thus benefit everyone to a greater extent.

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<sup>42</sup> Gilbert, A. (2003), *Early Childhood: Gateway to French-language Schools. A National Vision*. CIRCEM, University of Ottawa. Study commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

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### 3.8 The image of the French-language school

Finally, we could not discuss teaching in Francophone minority settings without emphasizing the need to promote French-language schools. The teachers who took part in our survey identified the negative image of the French-language school as being one of the challenges they face and whose effects on their motivation are not hard to imagine.

This issue was discussed at length at the forum.

The negative effects of school rankings and the comparisons they allow with majority schools were noted. In addition, often the range of programs and activities offered to Francophone children is not as broad as that found in the neighbouring majority schools.

We should also mention, among other factors, the poor condition of the physical facilities in many cases, the smaller library collections on account of the higher cost of French books and the limited use of advanced technologies because of the lack of French-language software.

These are some of the reasons teachers are very worried that parents will lose faith in French-language schools and opt to enrol their children elsewhere from the outset or at a later stage. This negative image is a heavy psychological burden to bear for teachers, which can only increase the appeal of the Anglophone or immersion school as a workplace.

Different proposals have been put forth to counteract these disadvantages. There is unanimous agreement on the need for strong action aimed at highlighting the added value of French-language education. Among the means suggested, let us mention the showcasing of successful models among students, past and present, and among teachers. Attention must be drawn to all the assets of French-language schools, such as the higher level of its students' bilingualism, the lower student-teacher ratio, its personalized services, the involvement of their staff in the community, etc. It was stressed that a media strategy was required, using both the traditional media and the community media (radio, television). The participants in the forum emphasized that such action must be collective, and that all Francophone education partners in minority settings must be contributors.

*This negative image is a heavy psychological burden to bear for teachers, which can only increase the appeal of the Anglophone or immersion school as a workplace [...]*  
*There is unanimous agreement on the need for strong action aimed at highlighting the added value of French-language education.*





# C ONCLUSION

French-language teaching in minority settings in Canada presents major issues related to the school's mission of conveying French language and culture within an English-dominant society. The lack of resources of all types, in a context of small enrolment numbers and dispersion of schools, occupies a central place in the list of challenges to be met on an ongoing basis. Combined with other challenges, this one takes on even greater importance in that it proves to be a major obstacle to implementing most of the strategies considered. This set of circumstances has profound repercussions on the teaching profession. Our study sheds light on the most pressing needs and confirms that the inadequacy of the support provided is at the root of difficulties encountered in teaching. Some are linked to the management of the school's human resources. Others are part of much more complex problems, involving pedagogical approaches and related activities to produce the desired results. Our research therefore suggests various forms of action, consisting of a range of support initiatives.

*All partners in education have a responsibility, however, namely creating the synergy that can lead to the provision of the kinds of support required to ensure the teaching and learning conditions that truly correspond to the mission of French-language minority schools.*



In all respects, be it issues affecting teachers directly (professional development, creation of exchange networks, work assignment, improving employment status) or issues involving the students and their communities (linguistic and cultural integration programs, links with parents and various community institutions), the matter of adequate funding is omnipresent. The Comtois (Manitoba) and Rozanski (Ontario) studies referred to above, and the case being made in New Brunswick regarding the funding of French-language education, converge in the recognition of the particular needs of French-language schools, stemming from their special mission and circumstances. The recommendations arising from them, based on the principle of equity, also have a shared perspective: providing the students of Francophone schools with an education of equal quality and chances of success equal to those of their Anglophone peers.

This objective matches the primary commitments of the members of the teaching profession who work in these schools: the development of their students' potential and that of the Francophone community. We should also recall that the primary source of satisfaction derived from teaching is seeing the progress and success of one's students. The strong motivation of teachers and their attachment to the Francophonie are key to building a quality education system. We can therefore count on them completely to enable the French-language schools to play their expected central role in the development of Francophone communities in Canada. All partners in education have a responsibility, however, namely creating the synergy that can lead to the provision of the kinds of support required to ensure the teaching and learning conditions that truly correspond to the mission of French-language minority schools.



# **APPENDIX**



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