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## **A Curious Passport: The Impact of World Language Immersion Education on Adult Alumni**

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A Curious Passport: The Impact of World Language

Immersion Education on Adult Alumni

Hannah Parks

Honors Undergraduate Thesis

The University of Tennessee

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents a research study conducted during the spring of 2013 that examined the self-reporting impact of a K-12 French Immersion (FI) program in the lives of 3 of its adult alumni. The study was guided by a set of qualitative interview questions in order to identify what the subjects feel have been the multicultural experiences and relationships they have had as a result of their immersion education. Subjects were asked to reflect on how well they think their immersion education prepared them to be global citizens in a culturally-interconnected world, and what they see that role to mean in their own lives. Results of this qualitative study reveal themes such as increased opportunities to travel to francophone countries, friendships with native French speakers, and a general open-mindedness and curiosity regarding other cultures.

A Curious Passport: The Impact of World Language Immersion Education  
on Adult Alumni

**Introduction**

At the end of fifth grade, I stood on a stage, grinning as I graduated from Maxwell Elementary Spanish Immersion School in Lexington, Kentucky. We had just performed a choral rendition of *De colores* for the audience, and our principal, a man originally from Colombia, was addressing the crowd in lightly-accented English. Sitting there, I could not have imagined the impact those first 5 years of formal education in an immersion program would have on my own life. It would not be until I studied abroad in Córdoba, Argentina in my third year of college as a Spanish major. Only then, having philosophical conversations with my Argentine friends, while waiting at a bus stop late one night, would I realize how much my experience in a Spanish immersion school had impacted my life, the decisions I had made, and the paths I had chosen.

My interest in immersion education certainly was piqued in my teenage years, when I began to wrestle with my somewhat disoriented cultural identity. Both of my parents are White, monolingual, middle-class, American Southerners, yet I could read and understand Spanish young adult novels and had grown up for many years in an Arab culture since our move to the Arabian Peninsula. I knew that my years in a Spanish immersion program had had a great role in first planting in me an intense curiosity about other cultures, peoples, and languages, which only grew over time. Not only did I want to learn *about* other cultures, but I also wanted to learn *from* people who claimed that culture as their own, just as my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math teacher from Chile had taught me about the *pueblo* and family in which she grew up.

As I entered college and decided to study Spanish and Secondary Education, I noticed that when I mentioned my experience in an elementary immersion program I would often receive blank stares or confused expressions. I quickly came to learn that these programs are very rare in the United States. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics there were 448 immersion schools in 38 states, with only 41 of those being programs that extended into high school (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011, para. 9). I immediately became all the more interested in immersion education, and was curious to know more about the effects it had in the lives of other alumni.

When I initially began to explore the dearth of literature that exists on the topic of world language immersion education, I noticed that there was an emphasis on the cognitive and linguistic benefits of such programs. Many quantitative scientific studies have been conducted to determine the benefits of second language acquisition at a young age, and study on its role in brain development and in academic performance is extensive (Genesee, 2007, p. 7). However, it seemed that a large portion of what was often stated as a goal and benefit of immersion—multicultural understanding—was neglected when it came to research. In fact, in Howard and Sugarman's (2007) research they pose the question, "How can the development of cross-cultural competence in TWI students be measured?" (p. 11) as the second item on the list of the top ten items on the research agenda for two-way immersion (TWI). This pressing topic clearly applies to all types of immersion programs, and there is a great need to attempt to identify the cross-cultural effects in the lives of students.

In many of the program descriptions that I read, administrators and advocates of immersion mention in some form the multicultural benefits of said programs, which

involve the “development of a greater degree of cross-cultural tolerance” (Caccavale, 2011, p. 3) in an “increasingly complex, multilingual global society” (Holliston, 2011, para. 5). In the “PERSPECTIVES: Philosophy and Mission Statement” section of the Foreign Languages Curriculum Review website for Holliston Public Schools (2011), the district in which the immersion program that subjects of this study attended, one of the objectives states that students will develop “cross-cultural competence and sensitivity, enabling them to view the world through multiple lenses and to develop an insider’s perspective on other cultures” (para. 6). Furthermore, as I had the privilege of attending the ACTFL 2012 Annual Convention and World Languages Expo in Philadelphia, PA and was able to attend various presentations on immersion education, I noticed that *intercultural competence* was listed by the presenting experts as one of the goals of immersion, but was not accompanied by research studies (Met, 2012, p. 7).

The link between language and culture is inseparable, and the road to becoming bilingual connects to biculturalism—or what would be best communicated as multiculturalism—in complex ways in the context of an immersion classroom. Expert researcher in immersion, Fortune (2003) reports that, “becoming bilingual opens the door to communication with more people in more places, and many parents want to provide their children with skills to interact competently in an increasingly interdependent world community” (p. 1). Some world language programs argue that, “deep cultural understanding is only attainable through the acquisition of advanced proficiency in a second language” (Holliston, 2011, para. 7). Bilingual skills attained through immersion education are constantly being connected to the competence to be what one might call a *global citizen*. In an article featuring E.E. Waddell Language Academy, the immersion

recipient of the 2012 ACTFL Melba D. Woodruff Award for Exemplary Elementary Foreign Language Education, Ynez Olshousen, the principal of this school, is quoted as saying:

In six languages of instruction, we are ensuring that every one of our students is globally competitive...We are confident that our students will be equipped for their global future with strong academic skills, advanced proficiency in a second language, and the ability to thrive in a diverse and multicultural society. (Cutshall, 2013, p. 17)

Language is the key tool that is necessary to have interaction and relationships with others who speak it. Are alumni of world language immersion using their bilingual skills in the context of an *interdependent world community*? What are their experiences and how do they see as their roles in a *diverse and multicultural society* (p. 17)?

### **Description of the Study**

#### **Research Question**

The research question guiding this qualitative study was: What is the impact of a K-12 world language immersion education on the global perspectives and multicultural experiences of its adult alumni? The object of this qualitative study was to record and analyze the personal reflections of 3 adult alumni of a FI (French Immersion) program, in order to determine the impact their immersion education had on their lives, according to their own understanding.

#### **Rationale**

The primary researcher of this study determined that the answer to the research question stated above would be best met through a qualitative study, rather than the collection of quantitative data. Babbie (2007) explains in his book regarding research

methods in the social sciences, “Field research is especially effective for studying subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviors and for examining social processes...The chief strength of this method lies in the depth of understanding it permits” (p. 307). This study involves the investigation of what Babbie calls “subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviors” (p. 307), because it attempts to determine an impact of immersion education on the perspectives and experiences of its alumni. Thus, the individuals themselves are the best source to share their personal experiences and reflect on them. Through the use of open-ended questions, the researcher was able to achieve great depth of understanding and insight as she analyzed the participants’ responses and attempted to highlight social processes at work, or trends in their personal reflections.

Much of the research that is conducted on the topic of immersion education is often quantitative. This is one way to capture the results of immersion programs, which are often described on program websites for parents who are considering placing their children in immersion. People like to hear hard facts and are swayed by numbers.

However, researcher Pierce (2010) writes,

In an article for the *Canadian Modern Language Review*, Tardif Claudette and Sandra Weber express a need for qualitative research in the field of language education in order to gather information about human behavior that is inaccessible to the more quantitative methods. (p. 8)

Information on the profound and deeply subjective topics such as the multicultural impact of one’s world language education would certainly fall into this category.

Another author explains that:

Qualitative research takes an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter; qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. Qualitative research begins by accepting that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world and is concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding their view of the world rather than that of the researchers. (Jones, 1995, p. 2)

With this in mind, the approach that I chose to take is an organic and natural one, in which the people being interviewed were asked to make meaning of their experiences. As Jones emphasizes, this method places great value in the perspective of the one who is being studied. While it may be difficult to eliminate influencing factors or to isolate variables that affect a person's experiences throughout his or her life, such is the nature of the human experience. Any further attempts to do so would be impossible and presumptuous and would indicate a lack of understanding of the complexity of the countless factors that influence the formation a life.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Description and History of World Language Immersion**

The Center for Applied Linguistics describes world language immersion education as, "elementary, middle, and high schools that teach all or part of their curriculum through a second language" (CAL, 2011, para. 1). The difference between immersion education and traditional world language learning is that the goal of immersion is for the regular school curriculum to be taught through the medium of the target language, whatever that language may be (Caccavale, 2011, p. 1). Because of this, students enter an immersion

program in kindergarten or first grade, and the first years in the classroom in which they experience hearing the target language spoken to them by their teachers are vital to their foundational understanding of the language. Fortune (2003) explains, “Students develop proficiency in the second language by hearing and using it to learn all of their school subjects rather than by studying the language itself” (p. 1). This method of instruction simulates the natural language-acquisition process that infants experience as they are immersed in their native language for a period of time before beginning to speak, without first learning the formal grammatical rules or structures of the language.

**Types of immersion programs.** Such programs are referred to as total or partial immersion programs, and are primarily designed for students whose first language is English (CAL, 2011, para. 1). Another type of immersion program is two-way immersion (TWI), originally created for both native English and native Spanish speakers. The Center for Applied Linguistics (2011) describes total immersion as a program “in which all or almost all subjects taught in the lower grades (K-2) are taught in the foreign language; instruction in English usually increases in the upper grades (3-6) to 20%-50%, depending on the program” (para. 3). Partial immersion is described by the same source as a program “in which up to 50% of subjects are taught in the foreign language; in some programs, the material taught in the foreign language is reinforced in English” (para. 4).

Why might some schools develop world language programs that are founded on this model? The goal of immersion education is for students to “become proficient in the second language and develop increased cultural awareness” (Fortune, 2003, p. 1) while also attaining high academic achievement throughout their schooling. In many programs in the United States, the language of instruction (or the target language) is typically a,

world language spoken by large numbers of people, such as Spanish, French, or Cantonese. In some cases, it is a heritage language being revitalized, as in the Hawaiian and Yup'ik (an Alaska native language) immersion programs that serve indigenous communities. (Fortune, 2003, p. 1)

**Goal of immersion.** Fortune (2003) also states that the goal of immersion is “to provide educational experiences, beginning in kindergarten and ideally sustained through Grade 12, that support academic and linguistic development in two languages and that develop students’ appreciation of their own and other cultures” (p. 1). Immersion programs in the United States are rare, and even within the number of programs that exist, the ones that only last through elementary school far outnumber those that continue through Grade 12. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, out of 448 immersion schools in the United States in 2011, only 41 extended into high school (CAL, 2011, para. 9). Thus, the *ideal* situation of the educational experience being “sustained through Grade 12” (Fortune, 2003, p. 1) is an extremely rare case. Also, it is interesting to note that in this concise definition provided by Fortune, she makes a distinct connection between linguistic development in two languages and the development of an appreciation for the respective cultures. This topic will be discussed more in-depth in this paper.

Immersion education is a young novelty in the United States, and quickly growing. Again, Fortune (2003) mentions that these programs were originally modeled “after the pioneering French Immersion programs developed in Canada in the 1960s” (p. 1). Francophone Canada led the way as it embraced bilingualism in times when the United States was seeking an increasingly monolingual nation. However, that American perspective shifted in the mid-1900s. Cazabon, Lamber, and Hall (1993) write:

In the 1950's, the United States Government enacted the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet scoop of space exploration with Sputnik, the first manned satellite. The NDEA stressed the urgent need for American young people not only to catch up with the Soviets in science and technology, but also to develop bilingual/bicultural skills. The belief was that sophistication in languages and cultures would make the nation more effective in international research and commerce and, perhaps most important of all, would help change other peoples' perceptions of Americans; in many quarters of the world, Americans were seen as 'ugly' (Lederer & Burdick, 1958) because of their ignorance and disdain of foreign cultures and languages. In that era, then, bilingual education was intended for mainstream Anglophone Americans. (p. 2)

Shortly thereafter, the first immersion programs were established, and the development of bilingual/bicultural skills became an increasingly greater priority to Americans who found themselves in an increasingly culturally interconnected global society.

### **Making Sense of Cross-Cultural Tolerance**

As one considers the goals of immersion education that have to do with cross-cultural tolerance and a certain global citizenship, the question of what these terms really mean is bound to arise. In order to measure the outcomes of these goals and objectives and to determine whether or not they have been successfully met and to what degree, one must attempt to define these somewhat abstract concepts.

*Cross-cultural tolerance* (Caccavale, 2011, p. 3) implies a certain open-mindedness when it comes to people of other cultural backgrounds. An individual who possesses this trait would be comfortable with people who are culturally different, and he

or she may have a curiosity or interest to learn more about different ways of life. This person would be drawn to cultural diversity and tend to celebrate differences, desiring to see more and more from the perspectives of others, and in doing so, to expand his or her own global perspectives.

*Intercultural competence*, which is mentioned by immersion expert Met (2012) as a benefit of world language immersion education is a concept that touches not only on appreciation for other cultures, but also emphasizes the skills to interact with and amongst people of various cultural backgrounds (p. 7). This implies that there are learned skills, or tools, necessary to obtain in order for one to be competent at crossing cultures and to thrive in a global society.

The tools one must have to do this well combined with a sense of identity and belonging as a valuable piece of a global society leads to the idea of global citizenship. Wise (2008) discusses this concept of global citizenship, and says:

One theme to consider... is to think of the skill sets necessary to make one's way in this world. We need to pay attention to the experience of various peoples, from the global elite of business and tourist class who crisscross the globe, to third culture kids and global nomads, to diasporic and immigrant populations. (p. 149)

He goes on to clarify that these examples of global mobility or immigration do not guarantee an understanding of being a part of a global and multicultural world. In other words, "diasporic in and of itself doesn't necessarily give one appropriate agency or insight into global processes (Ong, 1999), though it potentially provides important perspective and a set of cultural tools and skills (code switching, syncretism, hybridity)"

(p. 149). Apart from the tools necessary to thrive in this global community, one must also understand what it means to be a citizen of said community.

In Brecher, Childs, and Cutler's (1993) work, citizenship is generally defined as expressing "membership and the quality of participation in a political community. Its conditions can be specified by law, but its reality is a matter of politics and the rigors of experience" (p. 39). In order for one to experience membership in a global community, one must be equipped with the tools to communicate with other members of that community—mainly, language and cultural understanding. To various degrees, a student of immersion is being transformed into a more and more competent and sensitive global citizen, through a more rigorous experience of language and cultural learning than is typically in public education in America.

This is an abstract concept, and it is nearly impossible to determine an exact definition of what it means to be a citizen of a global community who is fully equipped for model citizenship. However, one may presume that if a global community consists of individuals from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the skill to be able to speak another language will open doors for communications and bridge gaps between citizens in the global community. Thus, bilingualism and biliteracy may be counted as crucial skills that will lead to an increase in global citizenship in the individual that has them—greater, that is, than if they were *not* bilingual or biliterate in any way. Caldwell (2007) writes:

As globalization continues to dismantle economic boundaries and, in turn, change the demographic composition of the United States, the federal government has resolved to encourage the development of a more cross-culturally educated

person...In effect U.S. citizenship in the 21st century demands global awareness, respect for diversity, and...proficiency in a second language. (p. 464)

For the federal government, for educators, and for everyone it is difficult to deny the need and importance today for Americans to grow in cross-cultural understanding and obtain the skills to be more active and effective global citizens.

### **Bilingualism and Biliteracy**

Bilingualism and biliteracy are cornerstone goals in immersion education (Met, 2013, p. 10). Bilingualism has to do with one's fluency in speaking and understanding the spoken language. This is developed quickly in the early years of immersion, yet can be difficult to measure. Pierce (2010) writes, "Even for individuals who have studied the language for many years, vernacular speech is often difficult without having spent many years in a Francophone environment" (p. 62). Bilingualism can be manifest on a spectrum of abilities, and most individuals who are products of immersion all the way through high school would be considered functionally bilingual.

Biliteracy, a slightly more elusive accomplishment, relates to the comprehension of texts written in the language, and an ability to communicate oneself through writing. Immersion experts often say that becoming bilingual is the easy part, but that reaching biliteracy requires a diligent adherence to a curriculum involving many diverse texts in the target language. This becomes more difficult to develop in students in the upper grades because the programs almost always shift to partial immersion programs, which leads to less instruction time during the day in the target language, as well as the fact that constantly challenging and increasing the students' reading level is hard.

According to Baker (2011), language is inextricably linked to culture. He writes, “Language use cannot be divorced from the context in which it is used, nor from the effects of the interactions of different combinations of people in a conversation” (p. 4). Thus, there is much to be learned about the culture of a language not only through the structures and details of the vocabulary and formal rules of communication, but more importantly through the interaction with a native speaker.

Baker also gives an explanation that runs contrary to the traditional understanding of individuals who are bilingual.

Bilinguals become more or less bicultural or multicultural. It is possible for someone to have a high proficiency in two languages but be relatively monocultural. ... Bicultural competence tends to relate to knowledge of language cultures; feelings and attitudes towards those two cultures; behaving in culturally appropriate ways; awareness and empathy; and having the confidence to express biculturalism. (p. 4)

Part of this research study’s focus was to determine how bicultural alumni become or associate with their identity. Because Pierce (2010) concluded in her study, “An individual’s level of bilingualism thus seems to depend largely on the depth of their vocabulary and their personal experiences” (p. 62), this study may also likely reveal varying levels of ability and fluency in subjects. It is typically assumed that those who are bilingual speak both languages equally fluently, and the same amount. However, Grosjean (2008) explains:

According to the holistic view, then, the bilingual is a fully competent speaker-hearer; he or she has developed competencies...to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment. The bilingual uses the two languages—

separately or together—for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Because the needs and uses of the two languages are usually quite different, the bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in the two languages. (p. 14)

This study will operate under the assumption that most, if not all, graduates of world language immersion programs, no matter how long ago they graduated, continue to retain some degree of bilingual and biliterate skills that distinguish them from many completely monolingual Americans.

### **Multicultural Benefits**

Although it can be difficult to find research-based evidence that reinforces the multicultural benefits of world language immersion (which is one of the reasons that I chose to conduct this study on this particular topic), several studies have been conducted that address multicultural perspectives in immersion alumni, and have highlighted the importance of this aspect of immersion. In fact, Pierce (2010) takes it one step further by writing, “We see now in the profession that cross-cultural understanding is much more important than the instrumental use of two different languages for daily affairs” (p. 44). She goes on to explain that the goals of French Immersion have changed over time, and that the emphasis of late on cross-cultural understanding reflects a high value of multiculturalism in America (p. 44).

Programs like the one highlighted in this study aim to promote multicultural awareness by “maximizing the children’s exposure to Francophone cultures in the classroom” (Pierce, 2010, p. 45). In personal interviews with former students and teachers, terms such as *open-mindedness* and *cross-cultural sensitivity* arise frequently,

which causes Pierce to suggest that students are “influenced on a deep, personal level, and that curiosity about other cultures becomes a part of their identities” (p. 45). In other words, multiculturalism becomes a way of life and a comfortable way of learning.

Genesee and Gándara (1999) consider several theories that link bilingual education to intergroup prejudice and discrimination, one being contact theory, which holds that, “contact between members of different groups leads to increased liking and respect for members of the out-group, including presumably reductions in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination” (p. 667). These authors go on to say that the opportunities for this type of contact to occur with desirable effects are infinite and diverse and that “dual-language programs present a particularly interesting case for examining the contact hypothesis because they provide sustained opportunities for direct intergroup contact” (p. 667). Simply having the bilingual skills to communicate with those who speak another language opens up doors to increased contact with such people, and can lead to genuine friendships.

Another theory that Genesee and Gándara (1999) address is multicultural education, which is “a reform movement” and a philosophy of education “that includes multiple cultural perspectives. It clearly endorses and seeks to promote intergroup understanding, reduced prejudice, and effective cross-cultural relations” (p. 670). Multicultural education is a tremendous driving force behind the cross-cultural goals of immersion programs, and essentially seeks to eradicate ethnocentrism.

Several researchers have found this to be effective. Pierce (2010) states that, Many immersion graduates display more positive attitudes toward learning about other languages and ways of life... [and] travel to other countries and represent the

United States diplomatically, and... display compassion and acceptance when interacting with people of different heritages within the United States. (p. 49)

In a Canadian study (“Survey of 1998”, 2002), in response to a question of “have you talked to francophones from Canada in the last four months?” 42.4% of graduates from a FI program answered *Yes*. In response to the question, “Have you talked to francophones from outside Canada in the last four months?,” 37.1% of graduates answered “Yes” (p. 21). This appears to indicate that more than a third of graduates may be able to use their French conversationally to connect with others from a linguistically and culturally different background.

There can be numerous other results of an immersion education with a multicultural focus in the life of an alumnus. Graber (2008) shares data on the graduates of a French Immersion program in Minnesota, students who were graduating from college at the time. She states that many of the students are multilingual, having studied, in addition to French, Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Latin, and Spanish. Some other immersion students pursued majors and career goals in Spanish, Japanese, French/psychology, French/child psychology, economics, teaching careers in languages, ESL (English as a Second Language) education in francophone countries, and Japanese translation. Furthermore, many students at the time had already studied and lived outside the U.S. (para. 4). Several parents of these graduates said immersion was a good choice for their family because it “enabled my child to embrace a larger world view of life” (para. 7). The former students themselves highlighted the multicultural impact that their immersion experience had had on their lives saying it helped them to, “Make ... friends from various cultures, have a sense of familiarity and ease with French, study other

languages, approach language study in a different way, cultivate a passion for languages, travel/live in French speaking countries,” and “view the world, other cultures, and other languages in a greater depth” (para. 10). Upon self-reflection students were able to compile a dearth of evidence to show how the multicultural goals of immersion had been met in their lives. These results can inform the present study as well.

## **Method**

### **Hypotheses**

A qualitative research design was used in this study. Based on examination of published research and my personal observations of the immersion education experience in general, I made the following hypotheses for the present study.

1. Individuals will have, for the most part, sought out further study of the language, since they already have a firm foundation of linguistic knowledge and ability. This could manifest itself in the course of study they choose in post-secondary education, whether a major or a minor, or simply taking French classes in some capacity.
2. Having had an immersion education will lead alumni to a sense of open-mindedness when it comes to being willing to learn about and accept other cultures, perspectives, and ways of doing things.
3. Alumni from this program have had global travel experiences and relationships, particularly in francophone countries and with people from French-speaking backgrounds. (I expected that these opportunities will have been initiated in programs in their school, which may lead to further relationships and independent travel.)

4. There may be a bit of a crisis of linguistic identity as an alumnus/alumna seeks to find his/her place in the academic world as a student who has more knowledge and experience than a typical world language student, but who is also coming from a unique and rare education experience involving the French language.
5. While some alumni will use French daily in their professional or personal lives, many will use French occasionally in professional or personal travels or on the rare occasion that they have a chance to have a conversation in French with a native speaker.
6. Some alumni may diverge from the general trend, and will not have continued in studying or using the target language of their immersion program at all. (I expect that as adults these individuals may feel regret for not having continued their study/use of the language when they were young.)
7. Some alumni will not consider themselves to be bilingual or biliterate, because they may feel that their skills in French speaking and reading have deteriorated due to lack of sufficient use over time, and are thus unqualified to be labeled as such.

## **Participants**

Three participants were invited by the researcher to participate in the present study. Jack (pseudonym), 1992 graduate, Helen (pseudonym), 2001 graduate, and Jennifer (pseudonym), 1992 graduate. All graduated from a public school FI program in Holliston, MA. FI Program Coordinator, Therese Caccavale (2011) explained to the researcher that

this program had begun in the fall of 1979, with a kindergarten class of 27. (Two of the students in this entering class were subjects in this present study, while the other subject graduated later.) This immersion group represented 10% of the entire kindergarten class at this school. Since then, the program has grown and now the classes K-12 have double sections of French Immersion, with a total system-wide FI population of approximately 575 students in 2011. Total Immersion (see “Description and History of World Language Immersion” above) is implemented in Kindergarten through Grade 2. “Partial Immersion (50% daily classroom instruction) is offered in Grades 3-5. Daily French Immersion instruction (one 42-minute class per day in the target language, integrated with some content areas) is offered in Grades 6-8” (p. 1). In high school, students follow a specific program of study, including a

...virtual residence in Paris in Grade 9, a tour of French regions and the study of literary works written by authors who lived in those regions in Grade 10, the study of French history and literature including a unit on Existentialism in Grade 11, and the Advanced Placement French Language Course in their senior year. (p. 1)

## **Procedure**

Following Approval from The University of Tennessee’s Office of Research and Engagement Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), qualitative data were collected from the participants using an interview format (Appendix B). Digitally-taped data were later qualitatively analyzed.

## **Interview Protocol (Appendix B)**

Interview questions were designed to use language found in research of world language immersion programs in order to attempt to measure what the programs themselves aim to accomplish. See Appendix B for interview protocol.

### **Data Collection**

**Invitation to participate in the study.** The research participants were 3 consenting adults who attended a K-12 French Immersion public school-based program in Holliston, MA. The researcher contacted each participant via email in advance to seek his or her written permission to be interviewed at a later date. The interviews were conducted via phone, all on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in the personal residence of the investigator. The phone interviews were recorded on a Sony digital voice recorder, and then transcribed by the investigator.

**Interviews.** Appendix B is the Interview Protocol, created by the researcher, which was used in the present study.

**Data analysis.** In order to analyze the data from the taped interviews (Appendix C), the investigator conducted a cross-analysis of reoccurring themes in all three interviews, using coding (Guetzkow, 1950, p. 47). This was accomplished by considering each question one at a time, inspecting all the 3 answers, and highlighting similar or reoccurring words and ideas. Positive tones were highlighted in green and negative-toned comments were highlighted in red when applicable. The researcher then paraphrased in a few words each of the themes that had been highlighted and recorded them in red ink below the answer to the question. The themes were then all compiled in a master list and combined when necessary. The researcher noted how many participants had stated similar themes.

## Results and Discussion

### Interviews

Interview data asked of the study's participants from the 6 questions on the Interview Protocol (Appendix B) were closely examined by the researcher. A summary of responses for each question in the transcripts (Appendix C) appears in Appendix D.

### Themes

Five reoccurring themes were identified as commonalities in the interview data analyzed for this study.

**Travel opportunities.** All of the participants mentioned travel to other countries various times. Jack described his travel experiences to France during his time in the FI program as an exchange student with a French family that he grew close to over 6-7 years as an way that the FI program impacted his cross-cultural relationships and experiences. Helen also did a student exchange trip to Paris in high school. All of the participants had traveled to Canada and had used their French skills as best they could in francophone regions.

All of the participants expressed a great desire to travel and to intentionally travel to places they are able to use their French, and where it would be less intimidating to go for that reason. Helen in particular highlighted a hunger to travel and making travel a priority as one of the ways the program has impacted her life. The opportunities she had to travel in high school and the focus on other cultures in the FI curriculum whet her appetite to continue learning about other places and peoples. She eventually lived abroad in France for a year in college, and has traveled the world extensively. Although some of these trips were not directly organized by the FI program, the participants clarified that participation

in the program and having abilities to speak another language motivated them to travel and brought up opportunities to do so in the FI program community, where such experiences were encouraged.

**Friends within the FI program.** All of the participants responded to Question 2, “To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures?” This particular question examined the FI impact on their relationships, by focusing a great deal on friendships within the French Immersion program, amongst their fellow immersion classmates. Two of them related the relationships amongst classmates to some type of familial relationship. “So you are more than just classmates because you are with the same kids every year so they become more like your family” (Helen). They all also emphasized the persistence of those friendship bonds and their value of those friends to this day. Helen is getting married soon, and her maid of honor will be her best friend who also grew up in her FI class. This was a surprising find, as I thought the question would lead to sharing about cross-cultural relationships or relationships with French-speakers outside of the program. However, it is clear that relationships in the FI program, although not so much multicultural, are crucial in these individuals’ minds as they consider the impact that the program had on their relationships in general.

Interestingly enough, 2 participants, especially Jennifer, said that this tight-knit group characteristic of the program was also one of the negative aspects of it, because if one did not get along with others, there was no escape for the next several years. Jennifer also spoke about her daughter’s current experience, saying,

It has been interesting seeing my daughter experience it now and its effect on her friendships and relationships. It hasn't always been easy, and she has had buddies in her class, but they have two classes that get mixed each year and so friends get separated. (Jennifer).

Jack and Jennifer never had to deal with this issue, since they were part of the first class in the immersion program, which only consisted of one group of students.

**Cross-cultural relationships.** Travel opportunities due to or inspired by the FI program in the lives of 2 of the participants in particular led to deep cross-cultural friendships. Jack traveled to France to stay with a family, and they came to the U.S. to stay with his family many summers in a row when he was young. He says,

And we did that for about 6 or 7 summers, so I got to know that family, you know I lived with them all those years over the summer, and I got to know them extremely well, as well as their friends. And all that was directly because I was in the French Immersion program, the program itself didn't facilitate it, but it was because I knew the language and we were able to take a student in, and it just worked out from there." (Jack)

Helen also stayed with a host family in France when she lived abroad, for part of her time there. She also met a French Canadian man while traveling through Canada and they are soon to be married. He and his family are fluent French-speakers, so she said it has been good to be able to speak to them in French and that it has brought them all closer together. This is a strong example of how her FI education may have had some part in impacting her life and resulting in a cross-cultural marriage.

**Open-mindedness.** In answer to Questions 3, “As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally interconnected world?” and 4, “One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this,?” the bulk of the answers consisted of suggesting that open-mindedness and being open to other cultures was both a crucial part of the subjects’ role as bilingual and biliterate Americans and also a fruit in themselves that shows their program was able to help equip them to be just that. Two participants specifically mentioned that they felt they were more aware and accepting of cultural differences, were exposed to bigger world perspectives and are open to talking about other cultures. One of these individuals referred to being less ethnocentric as a part of his role as a bilingual and biliterate American. Helen used the term, “I’m not always full American” to describe how she feels that she compares to others who might not have had the multicultural influence of FI in their lives, saying, “I hear people say, “this is the way I was raised and I would never do anything else” and I think I’m very open to the ways other cultures do things.” Jack included in his understanding of his role a hope that he was a good ambassador for FI and said, “Hopefully, I am able to convince other people that learning about other cultures is worthwhile.” He currently works with individuals from countries all over the world on a daily basis and believes his immersion experience has helped him to understand people and respect them as individuals.

**Self-perceptions.** In answer to Question 4, Jack implies that global citizenship involves being open to learning about other cultures, while Helen focuses her answer on

travel experiences and cross-cultural relationships and highlights these. Jennifer, the one participant who did not see herself as being bilingual or biliterate<sup>1</sup>, even though she uses a bit of French daily in her teaching job, and says she can understand French fairly well and respond very slowly, said she felt a connection to all things that have to do with French, and has always wanted to learn more about it. This reveals a personal return to the one language/culture she was exposed to a great deal in her FI program.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In every study and especially in one of a qualitative nature, one must consider factors that cannot be controlled.

One might expect to see patterns of a great deal of multicultural experiences that may be fit for a high social class, because of the wealth in the region where the program is located.

Additionally, all participants were recommended to the principal investigator via an administrator, so there could be some bias in the nature of whom she thought to recommend for the study. For example, 2 of the 3 participants work in the school, which is perhaps why it was easy to think of them and contact them.

It is also difficult to separate the experience that they have had from what their parents would have modeled for them even if they had not been in FI. Jack acknowledged this several times, saying he does not know what his life would have been like otherwise, and wondering how much of his cross-cultural experiences sprung from the initiative taken by his parents. Pierce, (2010) reinforces this, saying, “the people who tend to seek out these specialized public programs already have a foundation of cultural capital, and

thus the FI programs will only reinforce what they have passed down to their children” (p. 78).

It was also discovered very late into the study that one of the individuals left the immersion program after her 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. Thus, she did not technically complete the immersion program all the way through Grade 12. However, the data were considered valid for the purposes of this study since she still had most of the immersion experience, and by the time she would have gotten to her final year, instruction in French would have been significantly reduced anyways. Her slightly early departure from the program could have influenced her choices later on in college regarding further study of the language.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by the research and, in general, with my original hypotheses. All participants recalled their FI experience with fondness and many were generous in their attributing much of their multicultural experiences and wider global perspectives to immersion and the opportunities it provided. The opportunities that were most highlighted as leading to cross-cultural exposure and relationships were travel to francophone regions and countries, as well as the relationships that sprang from their travels. Subjects used almost exact language that was found in the literature, such as *less ethnocentric*, *open to other cultures*, *accepting of other cultures*, and *sensitive to other cultures* to describe the impact their immersion education has had on their global perspectives to shape how they now see their role as being global citizens.

The findings of this study imply that this French Immersion program had profound and lasting multicultural impact on the lives of at least 2 out of 3 subjects, especially as they were able to continue pursuing their use of French.

In the future, hearing from a larger group of alumni from a variety of FI language programs, including some who attended the FI a long time ago, and some who are recent graduates, would provide a more comprehensive understanding on this topic and greater insight into this research question.

If I were to do the study over, I might ask different questions that would try more specifically to measure some of what I now know to be the multicultural fruit in the life of an immersion alumnus/alumna. The negative aspect of doing this however would be that it would be less open-ended. For example, I might ask, “How many countries have you traveled to?” “Have you had friends who are native speakers of the target language?”

I would also revise the Interview Protocol questions. Some were a bit ambiguous for all participants to answer. In retrospect, the questions could have been simpler. However, I wanted to purposefully use the same qualitative, open-ended language that I found was being used by researchers who described these programs. Cultural impact, however, is a multi-faceted concept and part of a complex identity of individuals and their life experiences.

### **Note**

1. Pierce also writes,

Based on my subjects’ responses, I determined that aside from the pragmatic view of bilingualism, ‘being bilingual’ is also a personal state of mind that reflects identity formation because it is linked to the individual’s self-perception and confidence. Since bilingualism cannot be measured, individuals can choose to make the trait of being bilingual a part of their identity if they perceive themselves in that way. (p. 66)

### Annotated References

Babbie, E. R. (2007). *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

In this book, Babbie gives in-depth explanations of research methods in the social sciences. The description of quantitative research explained well my rationales for using these particular methods to conduct my research for this thesis.

Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (5th ed.). Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

In this introduction, author Baker discusses some key terminology surrounding bilingualism that need to be understood in order for a discussion regarding the nature of bilingual education to occur. One dimension that is explained is *culture*, and Baker makes a distinction between the characteristic of being *bicultural* and *multicultural*, and explicitly states that an individual can be proficient in two languages but remain *monocultural*.

Brecher, J., Childs, J. B., & Cutler, J. (Eds.). (1993). *Global visions*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Caccavale, T. (2011, November). *Holliston Public Schools French Immersion Program*.

Prepared by Therese Caccavale, Coordinator, French Immersion Program.

This document provides a history of the French Immersion Program in Holliston Public Schools that began in 1979 and now extends K-12. Caccavale explains the modes and degrees of instruction in French at different levels in one's education, and several of the primary goals of the program, including coverage of the Holliston School curriculum through the medium of French, oral functional fluency in French, written language skills in French that are explained to be

transferable to the native language, and exposure to culture. The author then cites research conducted by Drs. Wallace Lambert and Fred Genesee of McGill University to discuss various advantages of a Foreign Language Immersion Program. I find the sub-point addressing the advantage of cross-cultural tolerance to be directly applicable to my study.

Caldwell, W. (2007). Taking Spanish outside the box: A model for integrating service learning into foreign language study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40, 463–471.  
doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02870.x

In the beginning of this article, the need for global awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the context of this increasingly globalized society is highlighted through the teaching of world languages and the skills of bilingualism in the United States.

Cazabon, M., Lambert, W. E., & Hall, G. (1993). Two-way bilingual education: A progress report on the amigos program. UC Berkeley: *Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence*. Retrieved from <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/633345b4>

In this study, authors Cazabon, Lambert and Hall give an overview and update on the results of the Amigos bilingual elementary program in Cambridge, MA. They begin by giving historical details as to the origin of bilingual education in America, a description that would be of great interest and value to this investigator because of the mention of the importance of developing bilingual/bicultural skills in American citizens so that they might be globally competitive on an economic market, and might help create a more positive view of Americans around the

world. The study focuses on test scores of Amigos students in comparison to a control group of English and Spanish students, and includes the findings of a survey conveying parents' views on multiculturalism in America. Findings reveal that students in the Amigos program succeed in academics just as much as their corresponding control group, and make friends in the classroom with no regard to ethnocentricity. I primarily use information on the historical context that is given for original rationales of bilingual education in the United States.

Center for Applied Linguistics. (2011). *Directory of foreign language immersion programs in U.S. schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/resources/immersion/>.

This resource by the Center for Applied Linguistics provides information on immersion programs including total immersion, partial immersion, and two-way immersion. The website provides brief descriptions of each of these variations, then contains a search engine through which one can look up a certain school or narrow down the list based on one or more characteristics. Also included are summaries of the data located in the directory, in the form of graphs and tables, one of which is particularly helpful as it contains information on the "Growth of Language Immersion Programs in the U.S." from 1971-2011.

Corbaz, P. (2006, November). Assessing the affect of foreign language immersion programs on intercultural sensitivity. *The ACIE Newsletter*, 10 (1). Retrieved from [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/nov2006\\_research\\_assessing.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/nov2006_research_assessing.html)

This article features a study composed in urban Oklahoma to compare the intercultural sensitivity of upper-level elementary immersion students to their mainstream, English-medium program counterparts who served as the control

group. Using the measure of the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity scale, three subscales based on (a) the diversity of contact sought out with others, (b) the relativistic appreciation of oneself and others, and (c) a sense of connection with the larger society or humanity as a whole were measured in girls and boys. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in immersion girls' and non-immersion girls' attitudes on subscales b and c. The authors state that more research is needed to understand how intercultural sensitivities are developed in students of immersion, and affirm that cross-cultural awareness and multicultural competence are increasingly important in our global society. In my future studies, I will attempt to further explore these topics through quantitative research.

Cutshall, S. (Ed.). (2013). Spotlight on E.E. Waddell Language Academy. *The Language Educator* 8(2), 17.

This article features E.E. Waddell Language Academy, the immersion recipient of the 2012 ACTFL Melba D. Woodruff Award for Exemplary Elementary Foreign Language Education. Ynez Olshousen, the principal of this school, is quoted as mentioning that the education of their students will equip them to thrive in a *diverse and multicultural society*. This is one example of an administrator stating with confidence that students will, through their immersion experience, be more competent global citizens, and my study seeks to answer if this statement has been met.

Fortune, T. (2003). What parents want to know about foreign language immersion programs. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0304fortune.html>

In this digest, authors Tara Fortune of CARLA and Diane Tedick from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota, give a brief overview of the history, nature and benefits of foreign language immersion programs to answer common questions of parents who may be interested in having their child become a student in said programs. The difference between different types of immersion is articulated, as are several early instructional strategies used by bilingual teachers in the immersion classroom. The social, economic, and cognitive benefits of these types of programs are also pointed out, and the audience assured that immersion education has not been proven to negatively affect a student's literacy skills in English in the long-term. Fortune and Tedick encourage immersion education for children of all backgrounds and socio-economic levels, and invite parents to investigate more on this topic.

Genesee, F. (2007, May). Ten most consistent findings from research on foreign language immersion. *The ACIE Newsletter*, 10 (3), 7, 10. Retrieved from [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007\\_researchfindings.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007_researchfindings.html)

In this short article, Genesee lists the top most consistent findings that have been drawn from research over the past few decades on foreign language immersion education. Most of the points presented are related to second language acquisition and student performance in academics, however, in the final point he states that students in immersion *may* emerge with a greater understanding and tolerance of other culture due to their immersion experience, which directly relates to my research findings as I interview alumni of French Immersion to determine this.

Genesee, F., & Gándara, P. (1999), Bilingual education programs: A cross-national perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, 665–685. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00141

The authors of this piece spend some time introducing four different theories that link bilingual education to intergroup prejudice and discrimination, including contact theory, status expectations theory, acculturation theory, and multicultural education. Multicultural education is particularly described as having characteristics of multiple cultural perspectives, which then affect individuals' views of themselves and others, and is said to endorse and seek to promote intergroup understanding and effective cross-cultural relations. It will be interesting for my study to consider how immersion education considers and implements these theories, and what sustained effect they seem to have on alumni.

Guetzkow, H. (1950). Unitizing and categorizing problems in coding qualitative data.

*Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 6, 47–58. doi: 10.1002/1097-4679(195001)6:1<47::AID-JCLP2270060111>3.0.CO;2-I

Graber, S. (2008, November). Minnesota immersion graduates inspire enrollment in new immersion program. *The ACIE Newsletter*, 12 (1).

[http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol12/no1/nov2008\\_pointsforparents.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol12/no1/nov2008_pointsforparents.html)

Author Shannon Graber describes the opening of a Spanish immersion school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota in the fall of 2008, and how former immersion students and parents gave testimonials to prospective families in which they reflected on how their immersion experience had impacted them. Many of these former French Immersion students of the author, who were graduating from college in the year the immersion school in Sioux Falls opened, were multilingual and had gone on to study many other languages as well as live and study in other countries outside the

U.S. The multicultural experiences of these students were emphasized in the article, as well as the benefit of immersion students being able to “embrace a larger world view of life” and to “view the world, other cultures, and other languages in greater depth” (para. 7, 10).

Grosjean, F. (2008). *Studying bilinguals*. Oxford: University Press.

Holliston Public Schools. (2011, May). Foreign Languages Curriculum Review. Retrieved from <http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/curriculum/flcr.htm>

This website provides a comprehensive description of the curriculum for foreign languages in Holliston Public Schools, Holliston, MA. The missions, visions, and goals for the program include specific comments regarding cross-cultural competence and the skills essential to living in a global society, which are factors that I hope to measure in my descriptive study.

Howard, E., & Sugarman, J. (2007, May). Top ten items on the research agenda for two-way immersion. *The ACIE Newsletter*, 10 (3), 11, 14-15. Retrieved from [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007\\_researchtwoway.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol10/may2007_researchtwoway.html)

The authors of this article present what they deem to be the ten most pertinent aspects of two-way immersion, or dual language education that should be addressed and answered in research in the near future. The second point on the list, “How can the development of cross-cultural competence in TWI students be measured?” relates to my study, since I attempted to measure some form of cross-cultural competence in alumni of one-way immersion, which is closely related. I find that this call for research that answers this particular question serves to

support my efforts to pursue this study as an area that has yet to be thoroughly explored.

Jones, R. (1995). Why do qualitative research? *British Medical Journal*, 311(2). Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2550075/>

This author provides a brief description of why qualitative study is crucial to topics of a subjective nature, in which people are asked to make sense of their own experiences, which is a rationale for my use of these particular more naturalistic research methods in this study.

Met, M. (2012, November). *Starting and growing an immersion program*. Session presented at the ACTFL 2012 Annual Convention and World Languages Expo. Philadelphia, PA. Retrieved from <http://community.actfl.org/Communities/Resources/ViewDocument/?DocumentKey=0b7dbfd0-a9c0-44ff-ab93-df9369088875>

In this comprehensive presentation from the ACTFL pre-conference sessions on immersion programs, various experts in administration and research of immersion education explain why immersion is important and steps for implementing these types of programs. I found it interesting that *intercultural competence* was initially named as one of the goals of immersion education, but not mentioned further in the presentation.

Pierce, S. (2010). *French fries and English muffins: A study of elementary language immersion education and identity*. (Unpublished senior thesis). The College of Wooster, Ohio. Retrieved from <http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/curriculum/apphffe.pdf>

In this thesis, author Sara Pierce discusses French Immersion education with a particular focus on a FI student's development of a linguistic identity. She reviews the theories concerning conception of the "self" of several social scientists, and also conducts semi-structured interviews with FI administrators, students, and alumni directly addressing their perceptions of self-identity. Her discussions of the cultural benefits of FI have particular relevance to my study, as do the sections in which she addresses understandings of the concept of bilingualism.

*Survey of 1998 and 1999 Manitoba french immersion graduates.* (2002). Educational Support Services Branch; Manitoba Education, Training, and Youth. Retrieved from [http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/french\\_imm/report.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/french_imm/report.pdf)

This published survey from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada sought to measure the experiences and attitudes of French Immersion students a decade after they graduated from public schools in the province. They were asked to answer questions involving topics including the perceived value of their French Immersion education, post-secondary studies, and use of the French language and maintenance of language skills. This quantitative data shown in charts and sprinkled with quotes from participants shows answers to some of the questions that I am asking in my research, and reveals trends of former students going on to pursue French-based experiences in studies or careers.

Wise, J. M. (2008). *Cultural globalization: A user's guide*. Published online: Wiley Online Library. DOI: 10.1002/9780470696699

In the conclusion of his book about globalization and cultural territorialization that impacts the everyday construction of identity, especially in the lives of youth,

Wise addresses the question of how we should live in a globalized world, and offers a primary answer that there are skill sets necessary to make one's way. Furthermore, he says that being a part of these transitions and diasporas does not necessarily make one a prepared agent with insight into global processes. These themes tie in well with my search to understand what it means to be a global citizen and how a world language immersion education may or may not equip an individual with those skills to which he refers.

## **Appendix A**

### **IRB Approval**



Office of Research & Engagement  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

1534 White Ave.  
Knoxville TN 37896-1529  
605-874-7397  
fax 605-974-7400

April 1, 2013

IRB#: 9113 B

Title: "A Curious Passport: The Impact of World Language Immersion Education on Adult Alumni"

Hannah Parks  
Modern Foreign Languages & Literatures  
106 Bailey Education Complex  
Campus- 3442

Patricia Davis-Wiley  
Modern Foreign Languages & Literatures  
Bailey Education Complex  
Campus – 3442

Your project listed above has been reviewed and granted IRB approval under expedited review.

This approval is good for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. If signed consent forms are being obtained from subjects, they must be stored for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice (Form R) on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lawson  
Compliance

Enclosure

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**Big Orange. Big Ideas.**

## Appendix B

### Interview Protocol

## I. Rapport Building

### A. Pseudonym Chosen By Participants

1. I will explain what a pseudonym is and why it will be used.
2. What would you like your pseudonym to be?

### B. Background Information

1. Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?
2. Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

## II. Guide Questions

1. Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.
2. To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures, etc.)?
3. As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally interconnected world?
4. One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?
5. What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?

6. Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Transcripts**

**Transcript – Jack****Interview conducted via phone April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013****Duration: 16 minutes, 43 seconds**

HP: What would you like your pseudonym to be?

J: Jack. HP: Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?

J: So, the program I was in started at the kindergarten level, so it wasn't so much a matter of helping me decide as it was deciding for me at that point. My parents. And to be honest I don't know exactly...the year that I began was the first year the program was run, and I don't know how far in advance they learned about it, I'm not sure how much discussion they had—I'm sure, you know, they talked about it quite a bit but I'm not sure. I wasn't really part of that discussion.

HP: Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

J: Um, my father spoke some French, but certainly not fluently, about what you'd expect of someone who took high school French 20 years ago. He spoke a little bit, but not much at all. So, basically no.

HP: Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.

J: So um, after graduating from high school I minored in French in college, so I used it quite a bit then. Um, I went to school in Vermont close to the Canadian border, so on occasion, I could go up to Montreal, but predominantly it was when I was in classes that I

would use it. Let's see, I've traveled to France twice since graduating from college, so I definitely used it there. On a daily basis I wouldn't say I use it very often. Every once in a while I use it in my professional life to translate a paper that would be in French, but that is maybe once a year.

HP: To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures, etc.)?

J: I would say a huge amount, for a couple reasons. In terms of friendships, our class was the only one in the school that was in French Immersion, so we were grouped together from kindergarten until 4<sup>th</sup> grade I guess. We were all kept together. And so we got to know each other very well and I'm still friends with some of the kids that were in that class. And then, from 5<sup>th</sup> grade on it became less and less part of the day, so the class shortened to like 2 hours a day, and the rest of the time we got integrated in with the other students. But we still had contact for 2 hours a day with the same people, and that stayed, you know, it got shorter and shorter until in high school it was just a normal class. But still we had those same people that we had been together with since elementary school. So, I got to know all of them quite well. In terms of outside of school it opened up a huge amount of opportunities for me in terms of travel. I spent, when I was in middle school, maybe even elementary school, my parents took in a foreign exchange student from France, and he had brothers and sisters that were my age, so when I was 8 turning 9 I went back to France and stayed with his family, and then we had kind of an exchange between our families where I would go back and they would come over. And we did that for about 6 or 7 summers, so I got to know that family, you know I lived with them all those years

over the summer, and I got to know them extremely well, as well as their friends. And all that was directly because I was in the French Immersion program, the program itself didn't facilitate it, but it was because I knew the language and we were able to take a student in, and it just worked out from there. So in terms of exposure to other cultures and things like that it had a huge influence.

HP: Anything else?

J: Like I said, probably going up to Montreal, it was less frightening than it would have been for me. As it stands now I can understand French fluently when someone speaks to me, I can read it fairly fluently, I have a hard time coming up with vocabulary on my own just because I haven't used it all that often. So if someone speaks to me I can understand them, but if I try to speak to them it takes me a little while to get the sentence out. But I can still make myself understood, and I think if I were to spend any time there it would eventually come back to me. Traveling up to Canada is much easier because of that.

HP: As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally-interconnected world? J: Well, I think it makes me more aware of cultural differences. Hopefully it makes me less ethnocentric, although I don't know... it's a little hard to answer since this is the only experience I've had, so it's hard to compare to what it might have been like had I not had these experiences.

HP: Certainly.

J: And it's hard to decouple my experiences through the French Immersion program from experiences my parents would have exposed me to anyhow, I mean, we always ... it was frequent that we would eat a variety of different foods from different cultures, so it wasn't... um... so they exposed me to a lot. The immersion program certainly did as well.

Not just the language, but certainly I would say some of the art, some of the other aspects that came out of another culture. I probably had more exposure to that than I would have had otherwise.

HP: Can you tell me more about that?

J: Oh, I don't know, just I guess when we were doing projects in class, and instead of that being to choose one of the 50 states we would choose one of the regions in France to describe. So, by default we were seeing a bigger picture.

HP: Anything else you want to say to that question?

J: Um... not really... I guess in terms of how I would view my role, I guess I see myself as very open to talking about these kinds of things in my experiences, and hopefully I have been a good ambassador for these kinds of programs. I think it was a good experience for me and hopefully I am able to convince other people that learning about other cultures is worthwhile.

HP: One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?

J: Well I think the biggest impact it had was providing me with those travel opportunities, but you know, learning firsthand about other cultures. It probably made me more aware of and more sensitive to cultural differences. In my job now I work with people for all over the world. I work with students from Pakistan and Jordan and India and China, and I think that my experiences in the immersion program at a young age made me more comfortable in dealing with these people as people and not as foreigners.

HP: Any more thoughts on that statement?

J: Well, I mean I think...in terms of it being an objective of the program, in my experience it certainly helped accomplish that objective. And I'm trying to think of some of my friends that graduated from that program also. I think all of us are pretty open to learning about other cultures.

HP: What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?

J: Overall it was a great experience. I am not particularly adept at learning other languages, and I don't think I would have been able to learn another language had it not been at such a young age. Like I said, I made some great friends that I'm still in touch with. Even though I don't use French on a daily basis, it certainly opened huge opportunities for me to travel and allowed me to meet a lot of new people. I went to summer camp over in France one year and met a whole other group of students other than the family I had been living with. So I guess it did make me feel special growing up, doing something that other kids weren't and giving us a skill that other kids didn't have. I don't ever remember any of us speaking French in front of other kids as a way of trading secrets or anything like that, I don't think any of us ever did that or even thought to do that, but, I think it definitely gave us something interesting to talk about when people would ask us what we were doing in school and that kind of thing. I just remember other adults being impressed by it even though it was sort of a daily routine for us. So, I would say it had a... it built confidence in that regard, and made me feel special.

HP: Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

J: Like I said, I thought it was a great experience. If there was a program like that now that I have kids I would definitely enroll them. There isn't in my area, unfortunately. But, I have no regrets having been through it and I don't know what my life would have been like without it, but I'm certainly glad that it was part of my life.

### **Transcript - Helen**

**Interview conducted via phone April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Duration of interview: 16 min 43 seconds**

HP: What would you like your pseudonym to be?

H: Helen

HP: Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?

H: My parents. I was in kindergarten when I started so I didn't have any part in that decision. It was a decision my parents made for me.

HP: Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

H: My brother and sister are older than me and are both also products of French Immersion. They were enrolled prior to me. My parents speak a little bit of French, and had some prior knowledge of the French language, but my brother and sister are both fluent as well.

HP: Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.

H: So, I graduated high school in 2001 and I went to college and became a French major and studied French all through college and spent a year abroad in the South of France, in Aix-En-Provence. I lived for a year and took classes there, some of the classes at an

American University and some at a French University. I was there for 9 months. I lived with a host family for one semester and had an apartment for another semester. After graduation I changed track a little and wasn't using my French. I am currently, as of September, working in a 1st grade French Immersion classroom. It is very much a part of my day-to-day life currently.

HP: Anything else?

H: Well, I have traveled a lot and definitely have used a lot of my knowledge of French throughout my travels. And I met a Canadian who I am marrying, who speaks French fluently and his family is all French Canadian and I use it to speak to them and that has brought us together. So that's a part of my life as well.

HP: To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures, etc.)?

H: I think growing up in an immersion program especially the younger grades and learning about other cultures puts something inside of you that makes you want to travel; it gives you this exposure that you don't get in a traditional classroom. I just have this passion for everything French; French food, French culture, French music, French art—it makes me want to travel more. My first trip out of the country was to Canada and to France. And then it was kind of like “where else can I go?” My family and I have a lot of friends who have been through the immersion program we all make travel a really big priority, I think that exposure at a young age to foreign ideas and foreign cultures and knowing that other countries do things differently makes it less scary and more exciting and I think that it definitely drove me to make travel a priority in my life. It also let me

want to explore other languages. I did Hebrew school all growing up, so I was exposed to a really different language. When I got to college I wanted to try Spanish, and it wasn't as easy as I thought it would be but I thought I got French down so let's see if these skills transfer to Spanish. So, a curiosity for language and cross cultures came from the immersion program. And I also think in terms of relationships at least in my town in which I did French Immersion, because it was such a unique program there weren't a lot of kids in it, so you were with the same classmates, every year, for your whole childhood. So you are more than just classmates because you are with the same kids every year so they become more like your family. We fought like brothers and sisters and there were times where we were horrible to each other, but looking back on it, it was also some of the strongest relationships, I am getting married in two months and my maid of honor was in my French class. She's like a sister to me and we know each other so well. It is a very unique dynamic with these students because you don't have the mix with other people and you are in it together and especially within your grade it's almost as if you look to each other for survival. It's like, "what did she say? What is she doing?" Because we are learning really fast. So, I think it really does build these really strong bonds and strong friendships with friends with similar interests. We all love to travel, and I feel like that is something I have taken out of the program, and that is really great life-long friends.

HP: As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally-interconnected world?

H: I think that, I'm very open-minded; I'm very open to other cultures. I'm not always full American. I hear people say, "This is the way I was raised and I would never do anything else" and I think I'm very open to the ways other cultures do things. When I think of other

cultures, I think I can learn from my family, my school, and my country. When I look into food and other things like that, I don't always think of it as strictly American. I try to think of it as more worldwide issues. In terms of my bilingual experiences, I think that I had to be a little more open-minded than some of my peers and I was learning other ways and other experiences. We had to learn that there are countries that do things very differently.

HP: One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?

H: I would say it definitely accomplished it for me. The heart of the curriculum is the focus on francophone countries. There's a big focus on Canada and then France, but then it really opens up to other countries worldwide, and at every grade level you are learning about something else. And I think it gets your thirst to travel and your curiosity growing. I've been to 15 countries and counting. I think that the school helps. It's not always a part of the curriculum but there are always opportunities for exchange students and it works both ways. I high school I went to Paris and stayed with a French family, for about 2 weeks. And all growing they were taking programs from France and bringing them to our town. So, we probably had 4 or 5 different summer exchange students staying with us. I think that they really made it a priority for us to interact and do pen pals, and some families got really into it and would go back and forth, and stay with them one year or have them come stay one year. I think they really made it a priority to make the global citizen thing happen. I think they really pushed for it. There was a field trip to France, and a field trip to Canada. I don't know a lot of 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that would take a group of

kids to Canada. And now it's a big part of the curriculum. I think that the parent support and the staff support is what makes it work for us. In theory, one big part of this immersion program is getting up there and moving it. There's nothing like going up to Canada with your parents and showing off your French. I think the first time my parents heard a little 5-year-old ordering food from a restaurant in French they must have been blown away. I think that builds up a really positive relationship in the family. The school will say "we have an exchange group, would anyone like to host" and they really help facilitate. It creates very international, intercultural relationships, all growing up and still does today. So, I would say it definitely accomplished filling out my path for it.

HP: What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?

H: I think there are a lot of positives. I got a masters in special education, and I did a lot of research on languages and things like that, and I think that there is a lot of evidence and a lot of research about students with disabilities and pros and cons to learning a second language, and all the research says that learning a language at a young age opens up a lot of doors for you and a lot of positive experiences for you. Learning a second language in high school is not as exciting and focuses on learning a lot of grammar and you're conjugating your verbs... But then, learning from a young age, in the class that I teach in, they don't really totally know what I'm saying, but they're listening. I think that some of those learning difficulties are lessened, because it's about survival. In a normal elementary classroom they don't always pay attention, but in my classroom if they want to know what's going on, they need to be looking at me, they need to be listening to me, they need to be hearing what I'm saying, otherwise they're not going to know. If they want to

know when to get in that lunch line or when to have snack, they need to be looking and watching. And the results of that are so exciting. I can name so many positives, both as a product of immersion and also as a teacher of immersion. The only negative that I can think of, and this might just be the town that I was raised in, are those social ideas that involve a certain stigma of being an immersion student. I think sometimes others can be mean, and they don't understand what the program is and they hear us speaking French, and there is teasing and things like that. Also, I think because you are with the same kids every year, if you don't happen to like the kids in your classroom, you're stuck with them from K-12. And there are some interactions with other classes, when you take other classes in middle school, but they schedule it like that. So, if you're going to always be with someone you don't really get along with, you don't have many options in terms of a different placement. Other kids sometimes think it's a little weird, they don't understand why the immersion kids are speaking French, but I think after a while they get used to it. Going to other classes in middle school was really hard. Middle school is difficult socially anyways, and that is just another thing working against you. So that is the only negative that I see in it. Everything else is very positive. I think this first grade French class teaching position...it's something that I have always thought about, ever since I was a little girl, I would line up my stuffed animals and teach them French. It's not something I had really pictured myself doing as an adult, but when the job came up and everything kind of fell into place, it's neat to remember myself as a first grader. I'm teaching all these things, using my French again, and it's really exciting to be able to be able to take all those years of learning French and teach it to first grade. Especially in the first year, they

come in not knowing much, but they come out speaking French all day. It's wonderful to watch them grow.

HP: Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

H: I think I want to just see more schools pick up on the early immersion program. That would be a wonderful thing to see happen. I know a lot of schools do Spanish immersion, and that's great, and immersion programs are few and far between, but I think that it opens up a lot of doors. It's been a very positive learning experience, and it would be wonderful to see more towns offer it. I don't know if it's the right fit for everybody, but for most people it's opened up a lot of doors for a really positive experience for them.

### **Transcript – Jennifer**

**Interview conducted via phone April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

**Duration of interview: 17 minutes, 51 seconds**

HP: What would you like your pseudonym to be?

J: Jennifer

HP: Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?

J: Well, I was four at the time so my parents made the choice for me.

HP: Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

J: No.

HP: Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.

J: OK, well, I did not completely finish the program, for whatever reason, I don't know why I didn't do it my senior year. So, I don't know why I didn't finish it. I graduated and then 6 years afterwards I got my degree in teaching. My first job out of college was back at Holliston, I was working half day as an APA therapist and the other half of the day in a French Immersion kindergarten class. I was very nervous about it at the time, but I was a teaching assistant and it was a little over my head because it had been at least 6 or 7 years since I had spoken any French. And then, I have taught 1st grade English for a couple of years. But I would integrate a little bit of French, so we would do a little counting or colors or something like that. Nothing major at that point whatsoever. Then I came back to Holliston, and after that I was working as a technology specialist and I would work with the students in both the traditional classrooms and the French classrooms and I would try and use the French I knew with the French classes, although my French is definitely limited. Now I have my children and I stopped working in 2004 after my second child was born but have recently gone back to Holliston Public Schools and am working as a gym/music teacher and when French classes come in, again, we'll do colors in French, sing songs in French, very basic stuff. That is the extreme extent of my use of French. My eldest daughter is also in a French Immersion program.

HP: To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures, etc.)?

J: I haven't done as much traveling as I would like to do; I think that is more of a financial reason as opposed to anything else. Not a lack of desire. We would like to. I traveled up to Montreal, Canada a couple of times. French is amazing it creates an almost sibling-like

relationship with the people you have in your class, there was only one class at the time when I went into the immersion program. It was just one class of students. We were always together year after year, so I really got to know those people. I personally think that is a positive and a negative, there are really strong relationships and now when I see those people I would always think of them as good friends, and always want to know about what is going on in their lives and connect with them. But it was very hard when you got together with the rest of your grade because there was a big divide between the two groups and it was kind of hard to figure out where you fit in and who were your friends and try and work to figure out these other kids who have all been together for a long time too. It's kind of segregating them, in a sense. There are positives and negatives to that I think.

HP: You mentioned traveling to Montreal, could you tell me a little more about that?

J: It was a long time ago, I know we did it and I remember trying to use any French that I possibly could while we were there. It was a while after I graduated. We are looking to bring our family back again because my daughter is doing French and we would like for her to have a similar experience to that as well. I really wish I could say I remember a lot of it, but I don't remember the details. I remember when there was an opportunity or occasion I definitely tried to speak and read in French whilst I was there. I am not fluent anymore. But I remember a decent amount; I didn't take any French classes after I graduated or continue on, I know a lot of people do. I did not. I am not fluent but I can definitely speak a great deal, whenever I go into a French classroom I understand and I could have a conversation. I can get hung up trying to find a word here or there but I can

usually figure it out. Reading it would definitely be challenging to me, I know that would be much harder. I haven't read in French since I graduated, probably.

HP: As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally-interconnected world?

J: I have no idea... guess I don't even think of myself as "bilingual" or "biliterate" because it is so limited, to some people maybe I would be, maybe not, but to me it seems limited. I don't feel like there is a great deal that I can do, I suppose what I do at work, helping students to connect things... I just don't think of myself as bilingual or biliterate to be honest. Maybe I am. I don't know. Others who did a similar program I would imagine are using it a lot more than I am.

HP: One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?

J: I guess I didn't think about it much when I was younger, but it is a little bit different now. I guess you think of everything a little bit different. I don't know. I guess I always feel a connection to anything related to or that has to do with French, I desire to go over there, and always have wanted to learn more about it. I hope to travel there someday in the future. I don't know.

HP: What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?

J: I guess when it comes to the positive, understanding and knowing other languages; there is nothing negative about that whatsoever. It is a gift to know and speak another language, and people are always blown away to know that. I feel like we should definitely

know more than one language. I am fortunate to understand some French and speak it. My biggest negative would be the social piece of it. I guess for myself I didn't necessarily see it as much of a negative growing up and it all worked out. I'm probably combining my experience with that of my daughter. My daughter has had a harder time with it. Growing up my experience was the only one I had, and I didn't know anything different, but it has been interesting seeing my daughter experience it now and its effect on her friendships and relationships. It hasn't always been easy, and she has had buddies in her class, but they have two classes that get mixed each year and so friends get separated. But I didn't have that, we only had one class and we were all together every year. I always knew who was going to be there. There are positives and negatives to that. But overall there are no negatives to learning another language—it is really an amazing thing. And again, those people are good great friends of mine that I cherish.

HP: Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

J: No, I think that's it. I would love to know more about how many people leave the program and if they use it after graduating. I would be curious about that.

## **Appendix D**

### **Summary of Results**

#### **B. Background Information**

1. Who helped you decide whether or not to attend a language immersion program?

All 3 participants said their parents made the decision for them to enter the immersion program, since they all began in kindergarten.

2. Does anyone in your family speak the target language of your program?

Two participants have at least one parent that knows a bit of French from taking it in school. One participant also has two older siblings who went through the French Immersion program and are fluent speakers. One participant had no one in her family who spoke the language.

## II. Guide Questions

1. Please describe the extent to which you have used, spoken, or studied the target language of your immersion program in your life, starting from the year you graduated from the French Immersion program, until now.
  - 2/3 participants majored or minored in French in college
  - 2/3 participants work in a French Immersion school, 1 as a French Immersion teacher and the other not in the immersion portion of the school
  - 1 participant has a child in a French Immersion program and 1 explicitly stated that he would if there was one in his area
  - 1 participant is marrying a French Canadian she met in her travels. He and his family speak French fluently and she frequently speaks to them in French
  - All 3 participants have traveled to French-speaking regions of Canada at some point in their lives, 2/3 have traveled there frequently as adults

- 2/3 participants have traveled overseas to France during or after their college education
- Helen, who majored in French in college, lived for a year in southern France
- 1 participant has traveled to 15 countries
- 2/3 participants hosted various French exchange students in their homes when they were young
- 2/3 participants did a summer exchange in France when they were in the FI program
- Jack went to summer camp in France one year, a different experience from the exchange he had done with a family
- 2/3 participants, who are not required to use French daily in their careers, try to implement their skills in French in small ways, whether through teaching simple and basic concepts in French in a classroom or translating documents once a year
- All participants had some length of time in their lives when they were not using French at all on a daily basis, even Helen, who now uses French daily in her job as a French Immersion teacher in Grade 1

2. To what extent do you think your experience as an immersion student has influenced your cross-cultural experiences and relationships in your life, during your school years and after (including friendships, travel experiences, exposure to other cultures, etc.)?

- Close friendships with students in the same class (mentioned by all, 2 used language to compare those relationships to family)

- Friendships with students in class are still alive and important today (mentioned by all)
  - Helen is getting married and her maid of honor was in her French Immersion class
- Travel opportunities during the program
- Exchange student from France came to live with Jack and his family, while he was still in the French Immersion program in the early grades
  - He traveled to France to stay with their family
  - Jack's exchange and friendship continued during the summers over 6 or 7 years
  - Helen did an exchange in France during high school
- Close friendships with native French speakers (mentioned by 2/3)
- Travel to francophone countries is less frightening and easier (mentioned by 2/3)
- Desire to travel (mentioned by all)
  - Travel to other countries becomes a priority
- Passion for French culture (art, food, music, etc.)
- Increased exposure to products of French cultures (art, history, etc.)
- General curiosity to learn more about other languages and cultures
  - Helen continued further study of other languages (Hebrew, Spanish)

3. As an American with bilingual and biliterate skills, how do you view your role in an increasingly culturally interconnected world?

- Fluency/Current ability of Jack: Can understand fluently, Can read fairly fluently, slow speaking but can be understood
  - Fluency/Current ability of Helen: Can understand and speak fluently
  - Fluency/Current ability of Jennifer: “Not fluent”, can understand well and have a conversation, slow speaking, reading is challenging,
    - Does not consider herself to be bilingual or biliterate
  - More aware and accepting of cultural differences (2/3 mentioned this)
  - Exposed to bigger world perspective and open to talking about other cultures (2/3 mentioned this)
  - Less ethnocentric
    - Not always “full American”
  - Desire to think of worldwide issues
  - Difficult to know what his perspective would have been otherwise
  - Difficult to decouple parents’ influence and FI influence
  - Ambassador for immersion programs
  - Desire to convince others that cross-cultural learning is valuable
  - Connects bilingual learning to cross-cultural understanding
  - Doesn’t consider herself bilingual or biliterate because her French is limited
4. One of the objectives of immersion education is often stated as a way to prepare its students to be *global citizens*. Based on your personal experience, how did your K-12 French Immersion education accomplish or not accomplish this?
- More sensitive to cultural differences
  - Working with people from around the world and treating them with respect

- Answered: Yes, it helped equip me to be a global citizen
  - Jack sees global citizenship as being open to learning about other cultures
  - Helen global citizenship as focusing on travel experiences and cross-cultural relationships and highlights these
- 1 participant says she is not sure of the answer, but feels a connection to French language and francophone cultures and a desire to learn more about French culture

5. What are your concluding thoughts on any positive and negative effects of immersion education in your own life?

Positives:

- Life-long friendships from the FI class (2/3 mention this)
- Wonderful travel opportunities (2/3 mention this)
- Made Jack feel special to be learning French
- May lessen some learning difficulties because it's all about survival
- Increases attention in young students (they must pay attention to understand what is going on)
- Students learn the language quickly and well from a young age
- Learning another language is valuable in general

Negatives:

- Social stigmas of being an immersion student which can lead to teasing because immersion students are different
- Stuck with the kids in your class
- Difficult to integrate back in with traditional students in middle school

6. Please share any other comments that you may have concerning what we have talked about in this interview.

- Thankful to have been in FI
- Desire to send his children to a similar program
- Desire to see more immersion programs exist
- Curious to know what happens to other alumni of these programs