What is this research about?
This study investigated the motivation of students born in Canada (and whose first language was English) to learn French, compared with Allophone students (students whose first language was neither French nor English) and who were born outside of Canada. Specifically, this study compared the motivation of Allophones who began learning French in grade 9 after coming to Canada, to Canadian-born students who began learning French in grade 4.

What did the researcher do?
The researcher conducted 12 interviews with grade 9 students in a southern Ontario high school. The students chosen for interviews were all completing their compulsory grade 9 French credit. They were also representative of three different types of groups:

- Group one: Allophone students learning French for the first time as a Second Language (FSL) in grade 9;
- Group two: Canadian-born students whose first language was English;
- Group three: Allophone students whose first language was neither French nor English who were born outside of Canada.

What you need to know:
This study examined the motivations of students, born in and outside of Canada, to learn French as a Second Language (FSL). The researcher found that Allophone students (whose first language was neither French nor English) who were born outside of Canada, tended to have more positive perceptions about learning French compared with Canadian-born students whose first language was English. The researchers found that Allophones tended to have a greater level of motivation to learn French as they viewed it as a positive step towards integrating into Canadian society and because their families tended to encourage French language learning.
**Group two:** Canadian-born students completing their FSL credit at the *academic* level in grade 9; 

**Group three:** Canadian-born students completing their FSL credit at the *applied* level in grade 9.

Although a survey questionnaire and individual interviews with students were conducted, the researcher chose to only report the result of the interviews in this research article.

To arrive at her results, the researcher analyzed interview transcripts for common themes.

**What did the researcher find?**

In this study, the researcher found that the motivations of Allophone students’ (*Group one*) to learn French differed from the motivation Canadian-born students. Allophone students:

- connected learning French to a wider purpose (increased opportunity for getting a good job and a good education);
- were more positive about learning French, which was in part attributed to their parents’ attitudes about learning French;
- identified learning French with acquiring a Canadian identity.

On the other hand, the motivations of Canadian-born students (Group two and Group three) to learn French tended to revolve around the perceived importance of getting good marks and keeping their overall average high. Canadian-born students were not as positive about learning French as their Allophone counterparts, however Group two students expressed more appreciation for the value of second language learning than students in Group three. However, Canadian-born students did not connect learning French with improving their prospects for the future.

The researchers also found that all three groups identified that they were not comfortable speaking French beyond the classroom.

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How can you use this research?
Teachers and school administrators may wish to:

- consider the wider body of research on French as a second language learning, instructional strategies for French as a second language, and evidence-based methods of increasing student engagement in language learning;

- explore the attitudes held by French as a second language learners within their schools and classrooms;

- consider ways to support students in learning French, such as collaborating with parents to develop a positive and supportive environment for French language learners both in and outside of school;

- consider ways to increase students’ comfort level in using French beyond the classroom, such as developing exchange programs or pen-pal programs that allow students to engage with others outside of school whose first language is French.

Original Article
To learn more about this research, we invite you to read the original article:


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About this summary
The Ontario Education Research Exchange (OERE) is a project of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research, an Ontario network promoting the use of research in education. The OERE’s clear language summaries of academic research aim to support this mandate.

This summary has been adapted from the ResearchSnapshot series developed by York University and ResearchImpact and has been developed according to writing and design principles unique to OERE. For more information about this summary or the OERE network please contact oere.knaer.oise@utoronto.ca.

This summary reflects findings from this study only and is not necessarily representative of the broader body of literature on this subject. Please consult the original document for complete details about this research. In case of any disagreement, the original document should be understood as authoritative.