

Chapter 6: French as a Second Language

In Newfoundland and Labrador, students learn French as a second language through core French and French immersion.

Core French

Core French is required for students between Grades 4 and 9. At the high school level, students can decide whether or not to continue following the core French program. The goal of the program is to provide students with the opportunity to develop basic communication skills, knowledge of the language and an appreciation of French culture in both Canada and the world.

Students following the core French program have two enrichment opportunities available – intensive and/or expanded core French. The intensive core French (ICF) program is for Grade 6 students who desire a more in-depth opportunity to learn the French language. Students are provided with additional opportunities to meet and surpass the outcomes of the elementary core French program. French is the language of instruction, and communication in French is the focus of the program. Students receive up to four times the number of hours of instruction normally devoted to French. They will experience French language training between 60% and 80% of the school day. Once students complete ICF in Grade 6, they can choose to continue in core French or late French immersion in Grade 7.

The expanded core French (ECF) program is for senior high school students who want to build upon the learning outcomes achieved in the core French program. Students complete courses in accelerated French, as well as courses taught in French from other subject areas. In the accelerated French courses, students are expected to not only meet the core French course outcomes but to achieve additional outcomes in each of the five organizational strands (communicating, understanding cultural influences, acquiring information, using language learning strategies, and experiencing creative works).

French immersion

The French immersion program provides students an opportunity to be completely immersed in the French language. French is the language of instruction and, as much as possible, the means of communication in the classroom.

Currently, students have two options for French immersion – early and late immersion. As the names suggest, the difference between these two programs is when students start the program: Kindergarten for early French immersion and Grade 7 for late French immersion. While there are schools across the province offering the early French immersion option, the late immersion program is only available in the Eastern school district. Once in senior high, students in both

programs complete three two credit courses in Français and three other two credit courses in another subject area taught in French. Upon graduation, students who successfully complete the graduation requirements will receive a French immersion designation on their transcript and diploma.

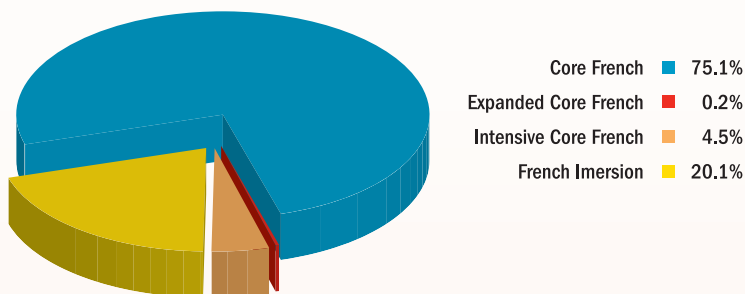
French program enrolment (2009/10)

In 2009/10, 41,743 students in the province participated in French. Of these, three quarters were completing core French and 20.1% were in one of the two French immersion programs (see Figure 6.1a). The low percentage of students in intensive and expanded core French programs is related to the limited availability of these programs. For example, ICF is only for Grade 6 students and was available in 50 schools.

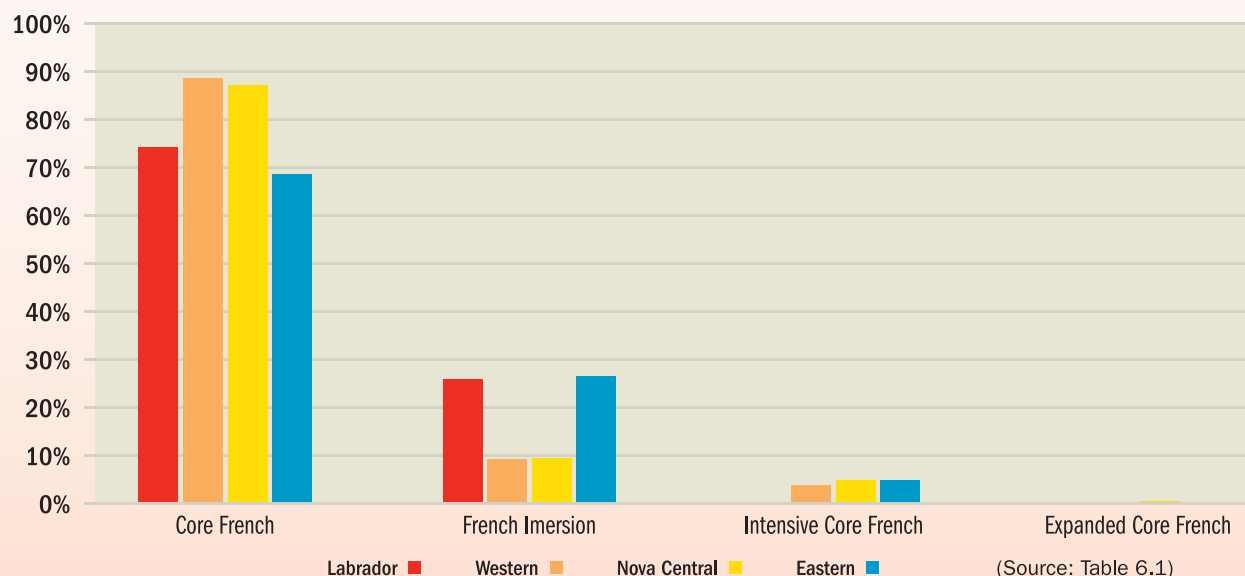
At the district level, Western and Nova Central had the highest percentage of students following the core French program. The Labrador and Eastern school districts had the largest percentage of students following the French immersion program (see Figure 6.1b).

Figure 6.1: French Program Enrolment (2009/10)

(a) Provincial enrolment



(b) District enrolment

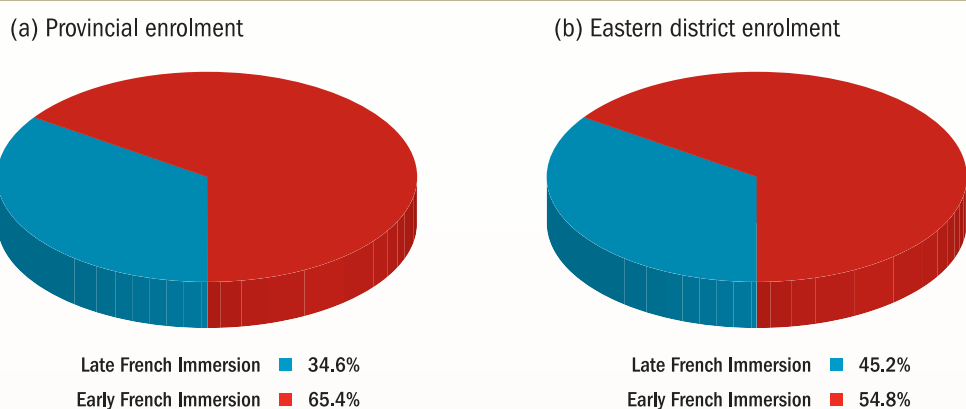


(Source: Table 6.1)

Early and late French immersion

As previously stated, there are two program options for students entering the French immersion program – early and late. In 2009/10, approximately two thirds of immersion students were in early French immersion (see Figure 6.2a). Late French immersion was only available in the Eastern school district. In Eastern, 45.2% of the 6,436 immersion students followed the late immersion program with the remaining 54.8% following the early immersion program (see Figure 6.2b).

Figure 6.2: Enrolment⁴ in Early and Late French Immersion (2009/10)



(Source: Table 6.2)

Trends in French program enrolment (2005/06-2009/10)

The majority of students follow the core French program. Between 2005/06 and 2009/10, the percentage of students in this program continually declined from 83.0% to 75.1%. At the same time, enrolment in the French immersion program grew by 5.7% (see Figure 6.3a).

The number of students in both core and expanded core French declined by 20.2% and 21.7%, respectively between 2005/06 and 2009/10. In the French immersion and intensive core French programs the number of students increased by 23.2% and 76.2% respectively. This is associated with an increase in the number of schools offering these two programs. The largest increase (by 51.5%) was seen in the number of schools offering intensive core French in Grade 6 (from 33 in 2005/06 to 50 in 2009/10). The number of schools offering French immersion increased by 11.5%, from 61 in 2005/06 to 68 in 2009/10 (see Figure 6.3b).

⁴ The percentages are based on the total number of French immersion students in a given year. For example, in 2009/10, there were 8,408 French immersion students. Of these, 65.4% were in the early French immersion program and 34.6% in late French immersion.

As shown in Figure 6.4, a similar pattern was present in each of the four districts. In each case, the percentage of students in core French declined between 2005/06 and 2009/10 and the percentage in French immersion increased. Smaller increases were also seen in the percentage of students in ICF. The percentage of students in ECF remained stable during this time. When reviewing Figure 6.4, it must be noted that the ICF and ECF programs were not available in Labrador during this time.

Figure 6.3: Provincial French program enrolment (2005/06-2009/10)

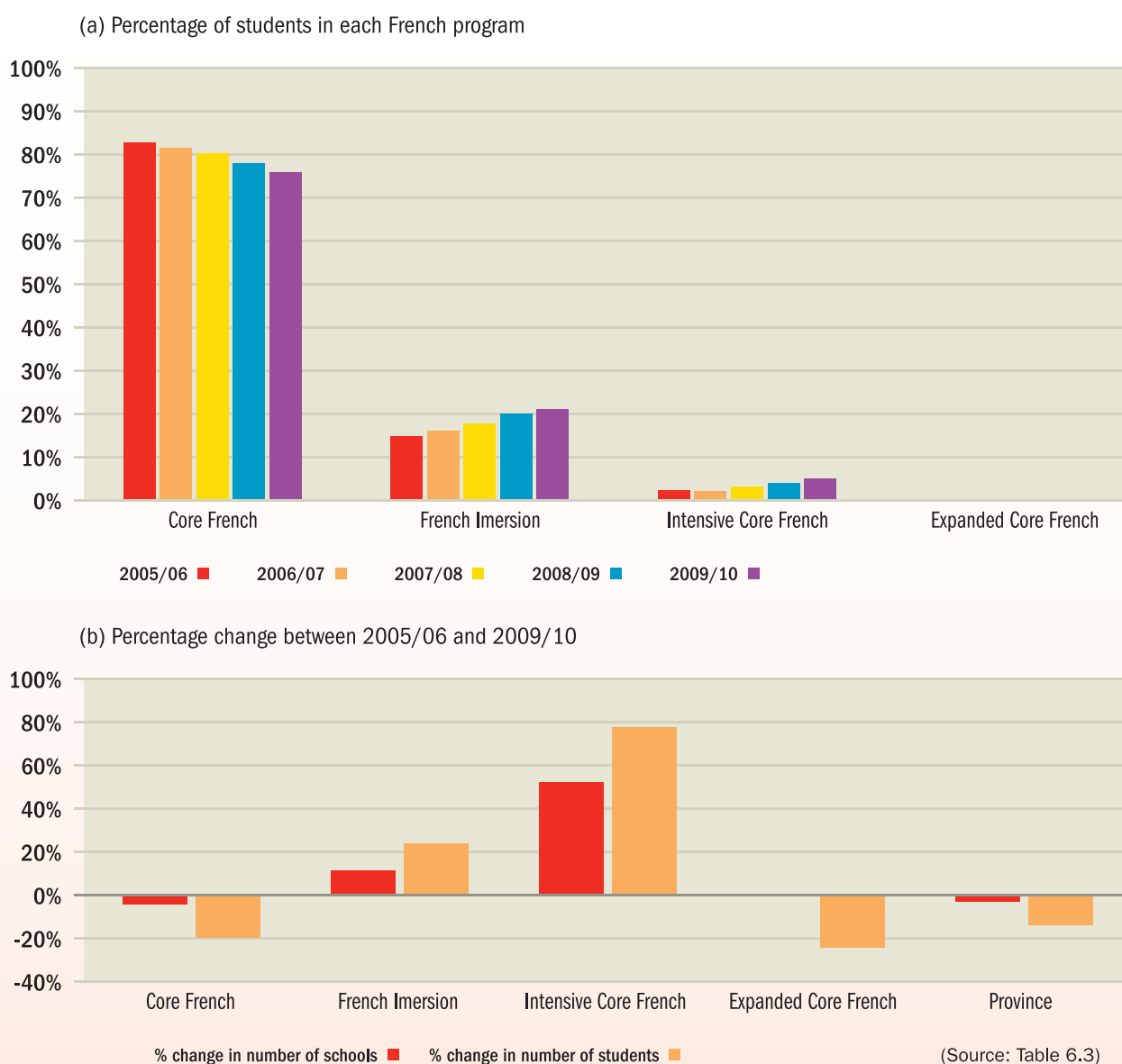
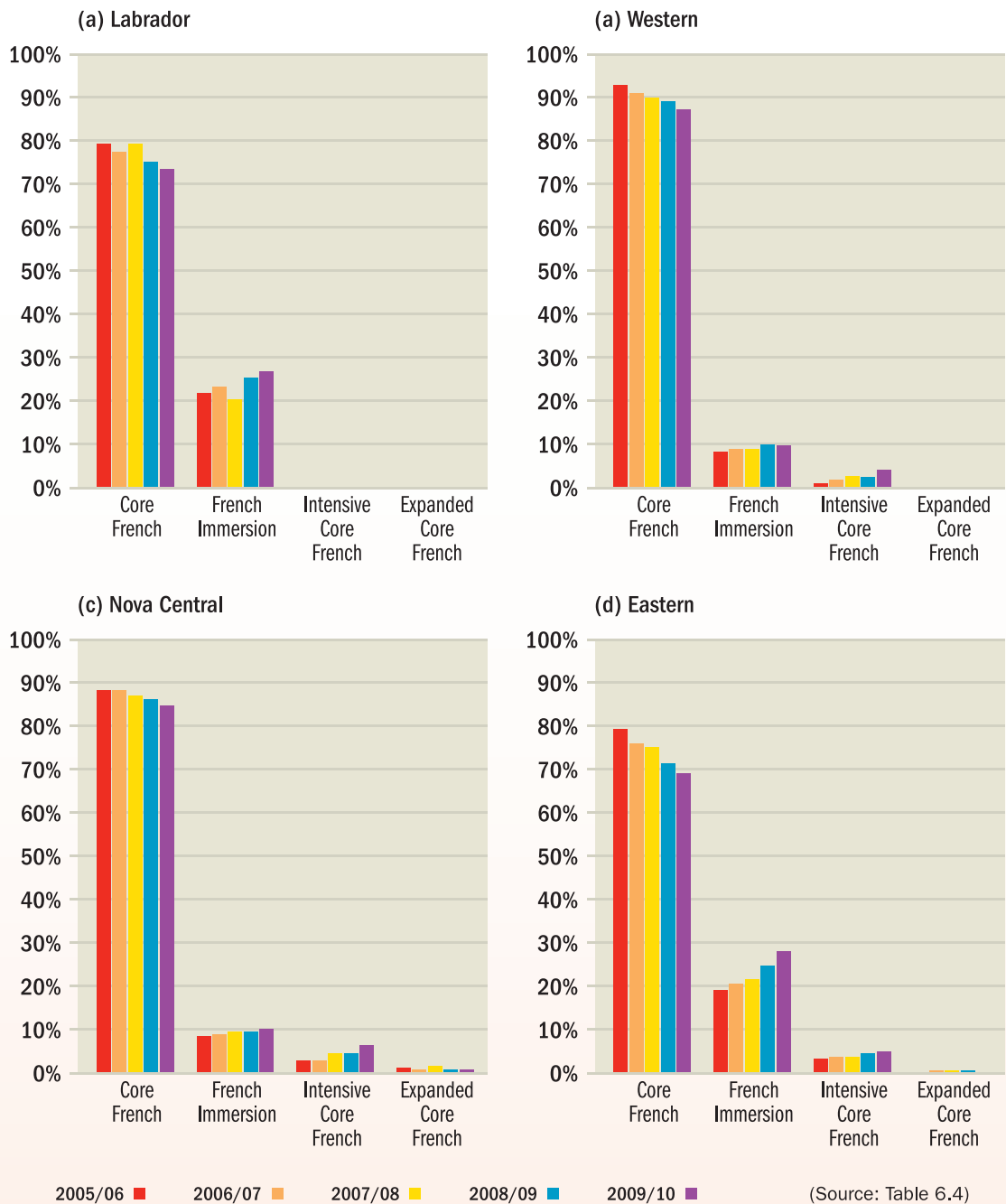


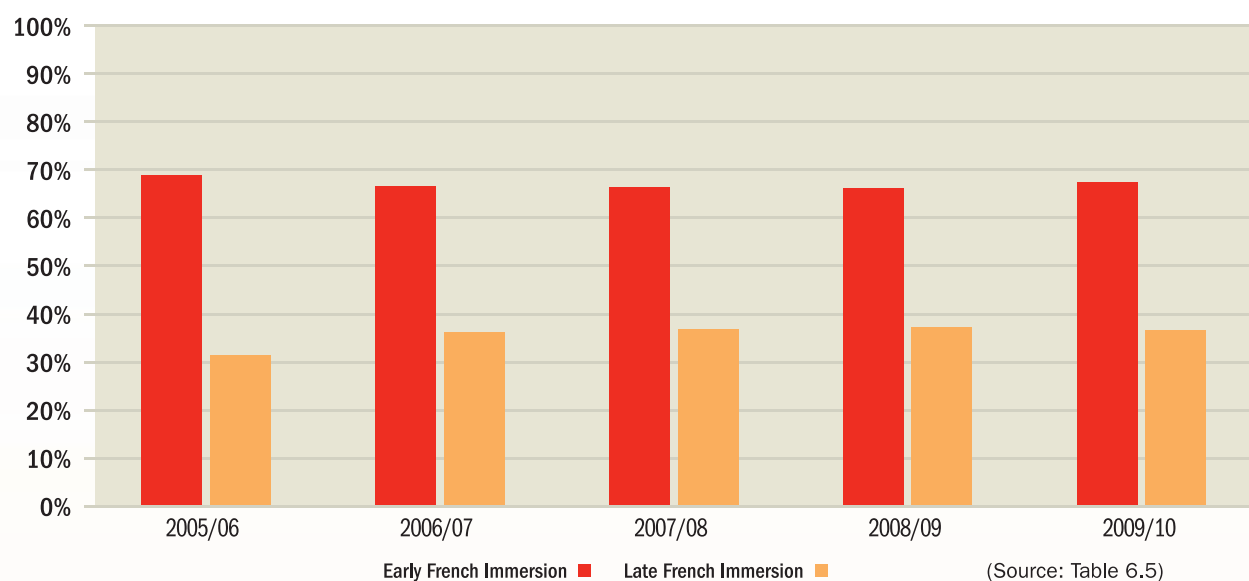
Figure 6.4: District trends in French program enrolment (2005/06-2009/10)



Trends in early and late French immersion enrolment (2005/06-2009/10)

The number of students in the early and late French immersion programs has grown by 17.4% and 36.0% respectively. A higher percentage of immersion students consistently follow the early French immersion option (see Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Enrolment⁵ in Early and Late French Immersion (2005/06-2009/10)



⁵ The percentages are based on the total number of French immersion students in a given year. For example, in 2009/10, there were 8,408 French immersion students. Of these, 65.4% were in the early French immersion program and 34.6% in late French immersion.

