Parental Involvement and Students' Attitudes, Motivation,
and Achievement in the Study of French
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Introduction

Reflecting upon my first year of teaching and thinking of the years to come, I recognize

now the importance of my students' motivational orientation. Motivation can come from within a

student and from outside sources that touch the student. These outside sources can include, but

are not limited to, teachers, parents, other family members, and the foreign language (FL)

community. It is essential to look at how motivation can affect students and try to inspire,

encourage, and develop it so students can become proficient in a FL and respect foreign cultures

and customs. The following two stories provide a background on why I believe that the

relationship between a child and a parent are important in FL acquisition and how parents can

either contribute to or inhibit a student's motivation to learn a second language.

"Sarah" came into my French II class as a freshman. From the very first day, she actively

participated in classroom discussions and activities, and she worked hard at home to hand in

flawless assignments. When I met her mother during a parent teacher conference, I realized that

her hard work, determination, and motivation to succeed were influenced by her parents. Sarah's

mom worked very hard throughout most of her life, but she needed to quit her job in order to

take care of Sarah's two younger disabled siblings. Her mom explained to me that when she

graduated from high school, college was not as heavily pushed as it is now; therefore, she and

her husband did not attend college. Instead, they went straight into the workforce. With only one

parent working, Sarah was not able to have all of the splendors and worldly items that most of

her peers had available to them. Instead, from the day that Sarah was born, her parents explained

that if one works hard, his or her dreams would be realized. Sarah, a child who was given no reward except positive reinforcement and encouragement from her parents, works hard in all of her subjects in order to obtain a better life and to become a better, more well-rounded individual. One can see Sarah in advanced placement science, math, and English classes, and she was nominated for student of the year in 2008. Without her upbringing, the support and the deeply intrinsic motivational orientation that was fostered by her parents, Sarah would not be who she is today.

The following story explains how a parent can have a negative impact on the development of a child's motivational orientation. "John" is a sophomore in my French II class because he failed the eighth grade proficiency. John grew up in a single-parent home. His mother worked double shifts throughout his childhood, and he was raised on video games and television. John's mother's mindset was that if John was in school, he should pass. This belief was passed onto John. One day, after I gave students their quarter end grades, John was astonished that he was failing class. He was failing because he never turned in a single homework assignment or project. John exclaimed, "How can I be failing if I'm here every day?" which was the exact sentiment expressed by his mother when she called me later that day. John's mother explained to me on the phone that all material should be taught in class and that no homework should be assigned. She also explained to me that schooling is an imposition of the state and just a stepping stone to the workforce. The lack of and need for intrinsic motivation to learn and to become a better individual was absent in this home. In class, John always needed constant teacher attention to stay on track, refused to participate in activities, and did not make any effort to reap any benefits from learning French. I believe John's extrinsic motivational orientation resulted from this type of environment and from continually being passed along in the school system.

Through my experiences with John and Sarah this past year, I have realized how parental views and attitudes towards FL instruction contribute significantly to a student's success or failure in a FL course. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore the question of how parental involvement influences students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement in studying and learning French, what the research literature has to say about it, and how I plan to investigate it in my own classroom through an open house, using questionnaires, projects, and rubrics. The following section offers a brief overview of the socio-educational theory and self-determination theory (SDT) and the professional literature pertaining to parental involvement with their children in their FL studies and will end with the classroom intervention I designed to investigate parental influence through classroom trials.

Review of the Literature:

Parental attitudes toward FL learning, as related to their child's motivational orientation, have been gaining attention in FL motivation research. Although some researchers tend to dismiss the role of parents in a child's FL learning process, the research described below shows that this is an area in need of further exploration and development.

Gardner (1985) is a prominent researcher in the area of FL learning motivation and the author of the socio-educational model. Attitude, motivation, and orientation comprise the key variables for this theory. The proposal that attitudinal variables support L2 motivation, which in turn, will result in achievement in FL study, is another aspect of the socio-educational model (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). To better understand this model, one must first understand Gardner's perspective on motivation, which he defined as a combination of effort, desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, and favorable attitudes toward the language (Gardner, 1985a). Masgoret and Gardner (2003) define a motivated person as one who possesses goals,

desires, and aspirations for achievement, and who is driven by these characteristics. They also state that motivated individuals expend effort, are persistent and attentive, enjoy activities, and use strategies to achieve their goals. These two researchers also assert that for a motivated individual, experiences reinforce success and they feel disappointment from failure. The key components of this theory include the integrative motive, integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation and motivation, and integrative and instrumental orientations. These components may be influenced by each other. Dörnyei (2003) proposes that this model provides a macro-perspective for broadly studying how a FL is acquired. Although the model may be broad, Gardner's proposal of integrative and instrumental orientations toward FL learning is the central focus of this exploratory study.

The integrative orientation (Gardner, 1985), the most studied of Gardner's orientations, can be defined as a desire to learn a language in order to identify and interact with members of the FL community (Noels, 2001). Students who have an integrative orientation tend to reach high levels of proficiency and have a positive social identity (Noels, 2001) because they are driven to interact with others who represent their central priority in studying a FL. Dörnyei (2003) explains that a psychological and emotional identification disposition is the backbone of integrative orientation. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) state that self-ratings, grades, tests, and essays help promote an integrative orientation because the success from these assessment measures correlates with future/present success in the FL community.

An instrumental orientation, as defined by Noels (2001), is the desire to learn a FL for pragmatic reasons, including future career opportunities, the fulfillment of a graduation credit, parental encouragement, and academic goals. Instrumental orientation is typically associated with high achievement in FL proficiency as well because students are often motivated to

accomplish their goals (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). Although little research has been conducted on the instrumental orientation construct, a teacher can instantly recall students with these practical reasons for studying a FL.

In addition to Gardner's FL-specific view of motivation, SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) is also important to this study because it will help a teacher recognize students' motivational orientations. Motivation, according to SDT, can be defined as being moved, energized, and activated to do something. Motivation is not a unitary phenomenon; there are many different kinds of motivations and orientations. SDT considers three major categories: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. According to Noels (2001), SDT postulates that we have certain psychological needs. The fulfillment of intrinsic motivational needs is essential for an individual to behave in a self-motivated manner. Intrinsic motivation is fed by autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and these needs necessitate support from relevant others such as parents and teachers, choices within the instruction process, the ability to solve problems independently, and informative feedback (Noels, 2001). SDT focuses on fostering the internalization and integration of learning experiences and behavioral regulations into the student's core self. SDT also emphasizes the influence of important others in a child's life. In addition to teachers, Noels (2001) names parents as being among these important others.

Deci and Ryan (2000) describe two SDT sub-theories: Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) and Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). CET is associated only with intrinsic motivation and specifies three social context factors that generate intrinsic motivation: feelings of competency, a sense of autonomy, and relatedness. Autonomy is the most relevant to this article and will be discussed in detail below. According to CET, intrinsic motivation can be either supported or thwarted, depending on whether or not needs for autonomy and competence

are met within the classroom and/or home environment. On the other hand, OIT deals with extrinsic motivation. OIT details the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the contextual factors that either promote or obstruct internalization and integration into the core self. These two sub-theories are important in analyzing research results within SDT because they offer a more detailed explanation of the FL learner.

Intrinsic motivation, a category within CET, signifies doing something because it is innately interesting and enjoyable to do (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is often the most sought after motivational orientation; FL teachers hope their students possess it because it represents students' personal choice to learn the language. An example of a student who is intrinsically motivated would be one who insists that he or she is studying French because it is fun. Noels (2001) noted that students who are intrinsically motivated often will continue learning the language for a longer period of time, have lower anxiety, more positive attributes towards language instruction, and greater feelings of self-efficacy. She also listed three subtypes of intrinsic motivation: intrinsic-knowledge, intrinsic-accomplishment, and intrinsic-stimulation (see Table 1). Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that acquiring intrinsic knowledge is a natural process that exists from birth and should result in high-quality learning as a child grows. They also offer two measures to assess whether a person is intrinsically motivated, either through a free-choice observation tool or with self-reports of interest and enjoyment of an activity. This exploratory research will incorporate the latter.

Extrinsic motivation, the second motivation orientation proposed by SDT, connects to Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). Extrinsic motivation, as defined by Noels (2001), is studying or completing an activity solely for instrumental reasons. For example, a student may be studying French to advance career options, to receive grade point average rewards from their

parents, or to fill a requirement. The FL learning process should emphasize personal relevance to students who are extrinsically motivated. Otherwise, they will not find any benefit in continuing this study. There are four subtypes of extrinsic motivation. From least self-determined to most self-determined, the subtypes are external regulation, introjected regulation, identified and integrated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Their main features are displayed in Table 1 in order to show the differences among them, illustrate examples of key attributes, and offer an example of each motivational orientation.

An important finding within research on extrinsic motivation is that tangible rewards will often undermine intrinsic motivation and students' willingness to learn a FL. Instead, students will begin to focus solely on the reward, which represents a form of extrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan 2001). Although teachers are at fault for the number of tangible extrinsic rewards in the FL classroom, parents are often guilty of the same type of behavior at home.

Amotivation, the final motivation posited by SDT, is a state of lacking an intention to act (Ryan & Deci 2000). Noels (2001) states that amotivated students believe that whatever happens to them had no relation to their behavior or their own actions. She describes amotivation as a state of "learned helplessness" (p. 48). These students do not see any value in learning a FL and will often disengage in all activities within the classroom (see Table 1).

Table 1:

| Regulatory Styles	Amotivation	Extrinsic Motivation				Intrinsic Motivation
Sub-Regulatory Styles	Non-regulation	External Regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	Knowledge, Accomplish-ment, and Stimulation
Associated Processes	• non-contingency • low perceived competence • non-relevance • non-intentionality	• salience of extrinsic rewards or punishment • compliance /reactive stance	• ego involvement • focus on approval from self or others	• conscious valuing of activity • self-endorsement of goals	• hierarchical synthesis of goals • congruence	• interest / enjoyment • inherent satisfaction
Perceived Locus of Causality	impersonal	external	somewhat external	somewhat internal	internal	internal
Potential Student Examples	This school is making me take French.	I have to take French to get my Regent's credit.	I'm taking French because my cousins don't take a language and I'll look really cool in front of them.	I'm going to France in the summer and I want to be able to talk to people.	I want to be bilingual to feel educated.	I'm learning French to become bilingual.

This table has been adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000) and Noels (2001).

Another important SDT construct is autonomy. According to Noels (2001), autonomy is an innate self-governing inclination to feel volitional and self-determined. This SDT construct is important for my study because it is often influenced by important relevant others in a child's life. These relevant others include teachers, family members, and members of the L1-speaking and FL-speaking communities (Noels, 2001). Autonomy support, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), facilitates internalization or the process of taking in a regulation or a value, which represents a critical step in proficiency and FL acquisition. However, before the internalization process begins, the student must first grasp the meaning and worth of the material under study or the activity in which he or she is engaged. Ryan and Deci claim that autonomy is typically found in intrinsically motivated students but can also be seen in studies of integrated regulation, the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. The autonomy factor in SDT is important for teachers because it will help their students internalize positive behavior and learning strategies.

Although there are many similarities between Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model and SDT, there are also distinct differences between two. The categories within these two theories do not simply fall into place with one another. Noels (2001) explains that integrative and instrumental orientations are extrinsic with regard to FL study because language is always acquired to achieve externally orientating goals and that there is nothing innate about it. After analysis, one might say that integrative orientations are similar to intrinsic orientations, but they cannot be interchanged with one another. There is also a strong link between instrumental orientation and external regulation. However, SDT offers many shades of instrumentality, which vary in their level of integration into the core self. Diagram 1 details the comparisons.

Diagram 1:
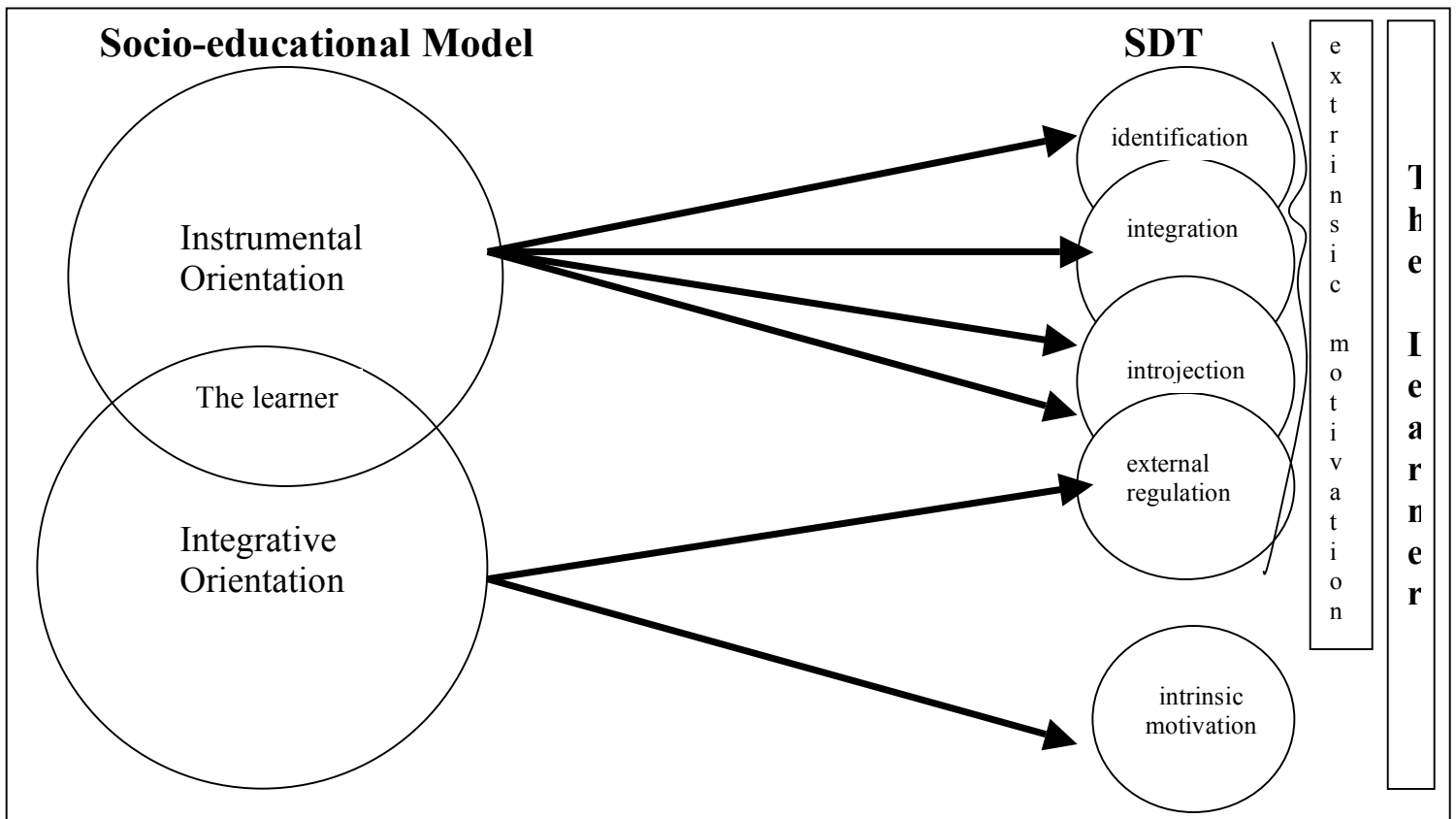
Let us return to the issue of how parental involvement specifically influences students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement. Research on parental involvement in their child's motivational orientation has demonstrated the importance of parents in their child's life with regard to FL acquisition and attitudes. Researchers have employed both the socio-educational model and SDT in the study of the parental factor. Sung and Padilla (1998), who adopted Gardner's approach to FL acquisition, found in their study that a quarter of their testing group was studying a second language due to parental influences and interests. These two researchers found that parental involvement was essential in students' motivation for learning Asian languages in school, and I believe that a similar statement could be made about children who study European languages such as French and Spanish. This differs from Noels's (2001) SDT perspective that parental attitudes and views are only relevant within a child's beginning years; that is when their motivation to learn is shaped. Gardner (1985) argues that parents can actively and passively pass on their beliefs toward studying a FL, foreign cultures, and the second language community. His stance is more useful to my study because students are not necessarily exposed to foreign languages at birth. Mormori (2007), who conducted her research employing Gardner's socio-educational model, found similar evidence. She states that, "Should parents desire to promote success in language learning, they must both transfer positive attitudes and support appropriate learning practices, such as encouraging their children to seek contact experience with the language, watch foreign programmes on TV, read foreign newspapers, etc." (p. 246). Mormori's study lends support to the socio-educational model, suggesting the importance of parental involvement in FL study.

Familial influences, in particular, parental influences constitute an important factor in the shaping of a child's motivational orientation and success in FL learning. Research has been

conducted on this factor, but further study is needed. The contribution of my study is the combination of the socio-educational model and SDT motivational perspectives with the important question of parental involvement. That is why the following question needs to be addressed: How does parental involvement influence students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement in studying and learning French? I would also like to understand more deeply how parental views and beliefs influence the quality of attitude, motivation, and achievement of my students.

Proposed Study

In my study, I will be surveying approximately 100 eighth graders in a suburban school. These students will be tested using pre- and post-test questionnaires on four specific topics from the eighth grade curriculum (a suggested project is shown below with a pre-test and a post-test) and by using a questionnaire about motivation and parental involvement, which will be given at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. Students will be told that their answers to these questionnaires will not be graded and to answer honestly. Students' fourth quarter averages from seventh grade will be used and compared to their final fourth quarter average in eighth grade and eventually with their New York State Proficiency Exam grades. Every questionnaire will use a Likert scale format and will be analyzed so pertinent questions can be compared between the surveys. The questionnaires will also be analyzed to uncover the motivational orientations (intrinsic, extrinsic) of my students and how assigning them to different configurations of parental involvement affects their motivational profile.

There will be three types of groups analyzed within this year.

- Group 1 will have a mandated parental involvement component in the major project for that unit. Parental involvement will be measured with signatures and short responses.

- Group 2 will have an optional parental involvement component in which students will be given both the projects of group 1 and group 3. There will be no advantage or disadvantage to whether or not a student chooses to work with his or her parents. This group will measure the willingness of students to have their parents participate in their French language education and the willingness of parents to do so.

- Group 3 will have no parental involvement whatsoever for their projects. This third group will act as a control group.

Exploring the connection between parents' and students' attitudes and motivational orientations around the study of French and how it might influence students' attitudes, motivation, and achievement in my French class is the central purpose of this exploratory research. In analyzing the effects of various levels of parental involvement in classroom assignments, I hope to show the importance that parents have in their child's development and motivation levels to study French. Although this research has not yet been conducted, I believe that incorporating parents into FL activities and projects will potentially positively influence their child's motivational orientation and achievement in class. Following is a description of how I plan to carry out this study of parental involvement and students' motivation and attitudes.

Intervention 1: Open House

This suburban middle school has its open house in mid-October. There is usually a very high turnout of parents at the open house. Open house will be the first phase of interventions for this exploratory study. This intervention incorporates the parameters of both Gardner and SDT models.

I will treat the groups of parents differently, depending on the placement of their children in group 1, group 2, or group 3. Using open house as an intervention will help assess parental

involvement in learning French and parental attitudes towards French instruction for groups 1 and 2. After each group comes into the classroom, my expectations, requirements, and objectives for the class will be announced firmly but not sternly. After each group leaves, I will make notes about each group, verbal comments, nonverbal behavior, attitudes, and atmosphere. I will take notes about group 3 as well; however, parental involvement will not be mentioned at all since this represents the control group.

During open house, I will try to collect the e-mail addresses from my students' parents. I will mandate either an e-mail address or a number to reach a parent for groups 1 and 2 in order to make sure that parental involvement and participation is occurring. I would like to notify parents of upcoming advance projects, due dates, and other assignments such as test/quiz dates. Groups 1 and 2 will have e-mails sent to their parents about the projects, and the project itself will be attached.

Intervention 2: Motivational/Parental Questionnaires

At the beginning of the year, questionnaires (1, 2, and 3) will be administered to the students by no later than late September. This student data will be compiled and measured for each separate class. Of the five classes being tested, two classes will comprise group 1, two classes will comprise group 2, and the remaining class will become group 3. These groups will remain the same throughout the year.

The end-of-the-year questionnaires will be given to the students in mid-June. These questionnaires will be the same ones from the beginning of the year. Data will be compiled by class and compared with the beginning-of-the-year questionnaires. Scores on various measures of socio-educational model and SDT-related constructs will be compared and contrasted with

these beginning-of-the-year questionnaires. This information will be presented in the form of a graph to represent progression or regression for each class throughout the year.

Questionnaire 1 is based on Gardner's (1985) socio-educational theory and centers on integrative vs. instrumental motivational orientations. Questions that have "int" after them represent integrative orientations and questions that have "ins" signify instrumental orientations. Questionnaire 2 is based on SDT. This survey addresses competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and will show which factor is most influential with regard to student achievement. An "a" represents autonomy, an "r" signifies relatedness, and a "c" represents competence. These surveys will be tabulated by class, and every questionnaire will use a Likert scale. Questionnaire 3 is based on The Attitude Motivational Test Battery (Gardner, 1985b). These questions relate to perceived parental involvement in learning French and perceived parental attitudes.

Questionnaire 1: (adapted from Gardner, 1985)

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	N/A 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. Studying French can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with fellow Canadians and other French speakers. (int)					
2. Studying French can be important for me because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people. (int)					
3. Studying French can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand French and Francophone art and literature. (int)					
4. Studying French can be important for me because I will be able to participate more freely in activities of other culture groups. (int)					
5. Studying French can be important for me only because I'll need it for my future career. (ins)					
6. Studying French can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person. (ins)					
7. Studying French can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job. (ins)					
8. Studying French can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a FL. (ins)					

This survey has been adapted using items from the Attitude Motivation Test Battery by Gardner (1985b).

Questionnaire 2: (adapted from Deci & Ryan, 2000)

	Very true 5	True 4	Somewhat true 3	Not true 2	Not at all true 1
1. I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live. (a)					
2. I really like the people that I hang out with. (r)					
3. Usually, I feel knowledgeable. (c)					
4. I do not feel pressured in life. (a)					
5. People I know tell me that I'm good in school, athletics, etc. (c)					
6. I get along with everyone I meet. (r)					
7. I don't normally keep to myself and have a lot of friends. (r)					
8. I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions. (a)					
9. I consider the people I usually talk with my friends. (r)					
10. I have been able to learn interesting new skills and techniques recently. (c)					
11. Frequently, I do not have to do what I am told to do. (a)					
12. People in my life care about me. (r)					
13. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do. (c)					
14. People that I normally talk to take my feelings into consideration. (a)					
15. In my life, I often get a chance to show how capable I am. (c)					
16. There are many people that I am close to. (r)					
17. I feel like I can pretty much be myself in daily situations. (a)					
18. People that I normally see everyday seem to like me. (r)					
19. I often feel capable. (c)					
20. There are a lot of opportunities in the day where I decide for myself how I want to do things in my daily life. (a)					
21. People are generally pretty friendly toward me. (r)					

This survey has been adapted using items from the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (Deci & Ryan 2000).

Questionnaire 3: (Parental Attitudes)

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. My parents try to help me with my French.					
2. My parents feel that because we live close to Canada, I should learn French.					
3. My parents feel that I should continue studying French all through school.					
4. My parents think I should devote more time to my French studies.					
5. My parents really encourage me to study French.					
6. My parents show considerable interest in anything to do with French class.					
7. My parents encourage me to practice my French as much as possible.					
8. My parents have stressed the importance French will have for me when I leave high school.					
9. My parents feel that I should really try to learn French.					
10. My parents urge me to seek help from my teacher if I am having problems with my French.					

This survey has been adapted from Gardner (1985b).

Intervention 3: Projects

The following project is an example for Group 1, the group that has mandated parental involvement. This project deals with *les vacances,* the last unit in the *Discovery French Nouveau Bleu* series textbooks. Although this project covers some grammar principles, it is essentially a cultural project because mandating parents to learn grammar rules and vocabulary words would not be beneficial or fair. These projects will be used to uncover cross-cultural attitudes and competencies.

Project for Group 1

Les Vacances

1. You and your guardian will choose a Francophone speaking country from the list given below:
    Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada (Quebec), Central African
    Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Tahiti, Gabon, Haiti, Laos,
    Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger,
    Rwanda, Senegal, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, or Vietnam
2. You and your guardian need to write separately why you have each chosen this country.
3. Both you and your guardian need to choose two activities or sites to see within this country.
    Your guardian needs to initial next to which items he/she has chosen. Find four pictures of
    these items and/or places.
4. You need to write two sentences in French describing each picture.
5. You and your guardian need to find the following additional information about this country:
    *size   *modes of transportation   *languages spoken
    *religion   *climate   *one historical fact
6. You will need to take all of the information that you and your guardian have found and present
    it to the class in French. You will need to have a poster with all aforementioned material in
    French. You will also need to include your four pictures. Your guardian may assist you in
    presenting your project to the class, and he/she will be allowed to speak in English.

Students will be given two weeks to complete each project, and parents will have this

project, with an attached rubric, e-mailed to them at the beginning of these two weeks. Certain

parts of the project will be due throughout these two weeks to make sure that it is not a last-

minute effort. Having the project due in two weeks will also offer parents an ample amount of

time to work with their child on the project and enough notice if they intend to make

arrangements in order to complete component 6 of the project. Students will be graded on

parental input into the project, quality, oral presentation, and grammar/written work. Each

project will have its own rubric (see Intervention 4).

Once again, group 2 will have the option of choosing either project from group 1 or group 3. Parents will receive an e-mail explaining the project and with both projects and rubrics attached. It will be up to the parent and/or child to decide which project to complete. Their decision will need to be made early on in the course.

Project for Group 3

Group 3 does not have any type of parental involvement component. Therefore, the following project accomplishes the same goals and ideals of the project for group 1; it is just missing the mandated parental aspect. Group 3, therefore, is a control group because parents do not need to be incorporated into their project. If a parent decides to help or if a child decides to ask his or her parent, it will be entirely up to them.

Les Vacances

1. You will choose a Francophone speaking country from the list given below:
      Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada (Quebec), Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Tahiti, Gabon, Haiti, Laos, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, or Vietnam
2. You need to write why you have chosen this country.
3. You need to choose four activities or sites to see within this country. Find pictures of these items and/or places.
4. You need to write two sentences in French describing the picture.
5. You need to find the following additional information about this country:
      *size   *modes of transportation   *languages spoken
      *religion   *climate   *one historical fact
6. You will need to take all of the information that you have found and present it to the class in French. You will need to have a poster with all the aforementioned material in French. You will also need to include your four pictures.

Intervention 4: Surveys

The pretest will be administered at the beginning of each unit throughout eighth grade. The following units will be tested: *le monde personnel et familier, en ville, le shopping,* and *les vacances*. All of these units come from the *Discovering French Nouveau Bleu* (2002) textbook published by Houghton Mifflin Company. The test will ask students what they know, how the information from this unit applies to their daily lives, and what role their parents will play. The post-test will be given after the unit and major project is completed. This information will be tabulated by class and presented on a graph and chart to show change between the pre-test and post-test. The purpose of these questionnaires is to measure achievement and the students' perception of how well they have learned the material for that unit of study.

The following survey is an example of a pre-test and post-test survey for a unit. The proposed unit of study for this questionnaire is the travel unit. Every pre- and post-test will be given to all three groups of students. These questions will assess learning, motivation, parental involvement, and achievement.

	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	N/A 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
1. I know all vocabulary related to modes of transportation, direction vocabulary, and travel vocabulary.					
2. I know how to conjugate the verb *aller*.					
3. I know how to conjugate the verb *venire*.					
4. I know about the differences between travel in Francophone countries and the United States.					
5. I can name five countries where French is spoken.					
6. I know a lot about French-speaking countries (excluding France).					
7. My guardian(s) know a lot about French-speaking countries (excluding France).					
8. My guardian(s) appreciate French-speaking countries.					
9. My guardian(s) knows about the differences between travel in Francophone countries and the United States.					
10. I (did) think that this is going to be an interesting and fun topic to learn about in French.					
11. I would feel comfortable in travel situations in French and Francophone countries.					

Rubrics will be the principal form of assessment for projects, and they will differ by group. However, group 3 will have a similar grammar element within the rubric in comparison to group 1. The only difference between these two rubrics is that group 1 will have a mandated, graded parental involvement aspect. Group 2 will have access to either project, it will be entirely their choice, and they will use the appropriate rubric for each project. These rubrics will grade the entirety of their project and will later be incorporated into test averages (50% of grades).

Rubric for Group 1's Project

Criteria	Exceeds Standard 5 points	Meets Standard 4 points	Near Standard 3 points	Below Standard 2–1 points
1. Timeliness of Completion	All assignments and parts of the project are handed in on time	All assignments are completed on time with minor exceptions	Several assignments and parts were submitted after due dates	Many assignments were handed in late and a pattern began to form
2. Student reflection on why they chose this country	Handed in on time, carefully written, few to no errors	Handed in on time/ late, carefully written, some errors	Handed in on time/late, mostly carefully written, some/many errors	Handed in on time/late, insufficient work, "rushed," many errors
3. Parental reflection on why they chose this country	Handed in on time and is very descriptive	Handed in on time and is sufficient	Handed in one day late. Reflection is sufficient.	Handed in more than one day late. Reflection is insufficient.
4. Parental signature next to two activities/places	Signature is present for both activities/places	Signature is present for one activity/place	Signature is present but handed in one day late.	Signature is present but more than 1 day late
5. Four relevant pictures found for activities/ places	Four pictures clearly represent the chosen country	Four pictures represent the country, one irrelevancy	Three pictures represent the country, few irrelevancies	Three or fewer pictures represent the country with many irrelevancies
6. Sentences about the picture (grammar)	Eight sentences have been written that describe the pictures. few to no errors	Eight sentences have been written, errors may impede comprehension	Six to eight sentences have been written, many errors are present	Fewer than six sentences are written with many/ major errors.
7. Six additional facts listed on project worksheet	Six are accurately represented	Six are represented, one irrelevancy	Four to six are represented with few irrelevancies	Fewer than four are represented, many irrelevancies
8. Poster quality	Poster is creative, neat, and in no way looks rushed, and has all relevant material	Poster is neat, presentable, and does not look rushed, missing one to two relevant items	Poster is presentable, looks slightly rushed, missing three to four relevant items	Poster is rushed, messy, and/or missing many relevant items
9. Oral presentation	All aspects of project are clearly addressed in French (minor errors)	Most aspects of project are clearly addressed in French (some errors)	Some aspects of project are clearly addressed in French and English	A few items are addressed, English is predominately spoken
* A grade of a zero may be given for any category if below standards requirements are not met.*				

Rubric for Group 3's Project

Criteria	Exceeds Standard Seven to six points	Meets Standard five points	Near Standard Four to three points	Below Standard Two to one points
1. Timeliness of Completion	All assignments and parts of the project are handed in on time	All assignments are completed on time with minor exceptions	Several assignments and parts were submitted after due dates	Many assignments were handed in late and a pattern began to form
2. Student reflection on why he or she chose this country.	Handed in on time, carefully written, few to no errors	Handed in on time/ late, carefully written, some errors	Handed in on time/late, mostly carefully written, some/many errors	Handed in on time/late, insufficient work, "rushed," many errors
3. Four relevant pictures have been found for activities/ places	Four pictures clearly represent the chosen country	Four pictures represent the country, may be one irrelevancy	Three pictures represent the country, few irrelevancies	Three or fewer pictures represent the country with many irrelevancies
4. Sentences about the picture (grammar)	Eight sentences written that describe the pictures; few to no errors	Eight sentences written, errors may impede comprehension	Six to eight sentences written, many errors are present	Fewer than six sentences written with many/major errors
5. Six additional facts listed on project worksheet	Six are accurately represented	Six are represented, one irrelevancy	Four to six are represented with few irrelevancies	Fewer than four are represented, many irrelevancies
6. Poster quality	Poster is creative, neat, and in no way looks rushed, and has all relevant material	Poster is neat, presentable, and does not look rushed, missing one to two relevant items	Poster is presentable, looks slightly rushed, missing three to four relevant items	Poster is rushed, messy, and/or missing many relevant items
7. Oral presentation	All aspects of project are clearly addressed in French (minor errors)	Most aspects of project are clearly addressed in French (some errors)	Some aspects of project are clearly addressed in French and English	A few items are addressed, English is predominately spoken
* A grade of a zero may be given for any category if below standards requirements are not met.*				

Conclusion

Since this is an exploratory study to deepen my understanding of the influence of parental involvement on their children, there are some limitations. The first is the number of participants. If further research is to be done, there should be more participants in each of the three groups. This will make the data that are collected and analyzed more representative of the main goal of this paper, which is to see how parents' attitudes compare to their children's motivational orientations. There should also be randomness in subject selection, which was not possible for this study. With randomness addressed, results will be more robust in speaking to the larger population of LOTE students and their parents. Another limitation is that this is only one study completed in one school. Further research should be done to see whether the same results would occur in rural and urban schools. Although the limitations of this study may seem quite extensive, the potential results from this research can inform the manner in which teachers can integrate parental involvement to enhance student motivation and achievement in the study of French. I also invite colleagues and researchers to conduct similar research on this topic so teachers can benefit from the results and so the results will be more conclusive.

Larsen-Freeman (1997) poses a very important question, "How will we know if our treatment is an ordinary pebble or an avalanche trigger?" (p 155). Perhaps if instruction were delivered in optimal ways that recruit parental support, we might witness an avalanche of inspiration. The inspired LOTE learner would then become accepting of others, excited to learn, proficient in the language, and more appreciative of foreign cultures.

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