

Culturally Responsive Leadership: Manitoba School Principals' Perspectives on Leading French
Immersion Schools

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores the role of school leaders in facilitating culturally responsive learning environments within Manitoba's French Immersion schools, amidst a time of rapid demographic changes. Utilizing a qualitative, case-study approach based on Stake's methodology, the research draws on interviews with school principals across various educational contexts. Central to the inquiry is the question of how school leaders can effectively respond to increasing Indigenous, racialized and linguistically diverse students in French Immersion settings.

Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework—specifically his concepts of field, habitus, and capital—this study reveals the systemic barriers to inclusivity within French Immersion programs. The findings illustrate how the hierarchical nature of educational fields impact school leader agency and their ability to cultivate culturally proficient learning communities. By examining the habitus of educators, the research highlights the cultural and social capital that shapes their responses to diversity, as well as the phenomenon of hysteresis, where established practices lag behind changing student demographics.

Recommendations emphasize the importance of recruiting diverse professional staff, supporting teachers in developing inclusive practices, and building strong community relationships. School leaders must actively confront barriers to inclusion and foster a culture of openness among educators. By prioritizing continuous professional development and mentorship, principals can enhance staff capacity to meet the needs of all students. This research provides essential insights for developing equitable educational environments in French Immersion contexts, highlighting the critical need for culturally responsive leadership in the face of change.

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Introduction

Research Problem

There is a tongue-in-cheek nickname for public French Immersion (FI) schools that has been used since at least my childhood (which, yes, was spent as a student of French immersion school): “poor man’s private school.” There is a fair amount of Manitoban cultural and educational history to unpack within this short phrase. French Immersion programs were introduced in many provinces outside of Quebec in the 1970s, with the goal of increasing official bilingualism in Canada (Blanchette, 2017; Keep, 1993; Mady & Masson, 2018). The origins of the program were, thus, not necessarily driven by a commitment to increasing school choice for families, but rather by the desire to increase the number of anglophone Canadians who were fluent in French (Marshall & Bokhorst–Heng, 2020). Nevertheless, the advent of French Immersion programs, operating in parallel with (mostly) English-only programs, has been one of the main opportunities for Manitoban parents to exercise choice over the education of their children (Worswick, 2003). French Immersion programs were conceived with the goal of generating fluency in the French language. Introducing children to French as a second language as early as kindergarten also quickly earned, among many anglophone parents, a certain cachet. A French Immersion education provided a means to enhance their children’s future job opportunities as well as access to postsecondary education after graduation (Marshall & Bokhorst–Heng, 2020). Thus, was born the saying – “poor man’s private school”.

With the allure of an assured fluency in French that saw French Immersion as children’s path to opportunity and future prosperity, French Immersion programs became very popular in Manitoba (Marshall & Bokhorst–Heng, 2020). This popularity has only been increasing in recent years. Provincial enrolment statistics from 2016-17 show 24,381 students in French Immersion

schools in Manitoba, jumping from 17,871 ten years before (Manitoba Education and Training, 2022). But these programs have suffered from a *lag* of sorts, the first of several. For years, French Immersion programs in Manitoba have failed to proportionately reflect the increasing cultural diversity within the province itself. One known barrier is the tendency to filter out students with exceptional needs for whom French Immersion educators perceived as unsuited to the “rigours” of French language learning. Additionally, the program’s student population has historically had relatively little diversity in terms of race, culture, class, learning needs, or linguistic background (Blanchette, 2017; Keep, 1993; Mady & Masson, 2018). In fact, this well-practiced, but little talked about hidden selection criteria is responsible for the attrition rates and filtering out students from French Immersion programs (Blanchette, 2017; Keep, 1993; Mady & Masson, 2018). Beyond the notion of filtration, French Immersion schools have not been a welcome place for newcomer families, historically. Indeed, many teachers have voiced that French immersion is a seemingly unsuitable program for newcomer students, and school principals have been known to discourage families from enrolling due to limited English first-language proficiency (Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006; Mady & Masson, 2018).

Traditionally, second language education in Canadian schools has been structured that French language instruction is for students whose first language is English (Anglophones) and English instruction is for students whose first language is French (Francophones) (Roy, 2010). In recent years, however, a significant shift in student demographics has begun. In effect, due to immigration trends and a significant increase in numbers of Indigenous students, the level of diversity on several of the above-mentioned fronts *has actually been increasing* within French Immersion settings. The ingrained binary structure of Anglophones and Francophones in Canada has been criticized for failing to recognize the growing number of newcomer Canadians who

speak a first language that is neither English nor French (Lamarre, 2002). The increase of such students in Canada and increasing numbers of students self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit or Metis has critical implications for French immersion schools. Indeed, such learners are sometimes excluded from immersion on the basis of teacher and principal attitudes of their limited English language proficiency, as documented by Roy (2015). In my first principalship leading a French Immersion milieu school, from 2020-2023, 19 percent of the total student population was born outside of Canada and 5% were self-declared as Indigenous students, a significant change from a very homogeneous population just ten years prior (School Data, 2022)¹. Mamahtawisiwin, The Wonder We are Born With – An Indigenous Education Policy Framework states:

“Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning commits to work across the system and alongside caregivers, families, communities, and educational partners to embed equity, collaboration, shared responsibility, and accountability into an Indigenous-inclusive education system. (Education and Early Childhood Learning, 2022)

This document is translated into French, and an Indigenous-inclusive education system includes the Manitoba French Immersion program.

What happens, then, when demographics change and increasing cultural diversity find its way to where it has not traditionally existed? In short, organizational challenges that mostly present themselves through attitudes and behaviours of educators and translate into challenges in pedagogical and leadership fronts. Specifically, French Immersion schools have encountered challenges in offering cultural safety, diverse learning supports, and need-based accommodations as mandated under the *Manitoba Public Schools Act* and Mamahtawisiwin. (Manitoba Education

¹ School data was acquired through internal divisional student data sources.

Citizenship and Youth, 2022; Education and Early Childhood Learning, 2022). Furthermore, while the student population has diversified, the staff has not. School leadership and staff in many school divisions do not represent the level of diversity of the faces in the classrooms. In my sub-urban school division, most school leaders are Caucasian, and this is a Canada-wide reality. A report from Ontario found that increasing diversity in school leadership positions is key in supporting learners in French Immersion schools as just over 90% of Ontario principals were Caucasian at the time of publication (Pollock & Wang, 2019). Black principals accounted for only approximately three percent and Indigenous principals only about five percent (Pollock & Wang, 2019). The issue of representation among school leaders themselves is another important consideration in the context of this research.

With over two decades of experience as an educator in French Immersion settings—and with four of those years as vice-principal and principal, respectively—I have been observing these changes and the subsequent challenges with keen interest. This has brought me to reflect and to seek greater clarity on the role of school leaders in facilitating the development of school environments that are more culturally responsive in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools. **The main research problem that this thesis addresses focuses on the limited responsiveness towards cultural diversity in French immersion schools in Manitoba.** In particular, I am interested in exploring how French Immersion school leaders can and should effectively foster a school culture that adapts to and embraces cultural diversity, as more newcomers with diverse racial and linguistic backgrounds seek to join the program.

The terms culturally responsive leadership and diversity will be further explored in the literature review and the theory sections but should also be defined here. The concept of

culturally responsive leadership (CRL) was born first to amplify and meet the unique needs of minoritized (racialized) students (Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The body of research grew to include further epistemologies, including Indigenous perspectives (Davis, J. E., Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & 2016). Focus on diversity has become a prominent priority for schools and a core concept in education. The recently published Manitoba School Leadership Framework included a definition of diversity, stating that diversity in schools refers to “the variety of characteristics that all persons possess, that distinguish them as individual, and identifying them as belonging to a group or groups” (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2023, as cited in Government of Manitoba, 2024). Definitions of diversity vary amongst scholars. Authors have argued that it is necessary to go beyond the categories of race, gender, class, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religion, education, and family/ marital status, and understand that diversity honours the principles of inclusion, recognizes and values difference, and offers the ability to participate with an equal footing in society (Chan, 2005; Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). The focus of this study will be Indigenous, racial and linguistic diversity as I seek to understand leadership practices to support culturally responsive French Immersion schools.

Research Question

The purpose of this research is to examine and understand how school leaders in French Immersion schools navigate their role in facilitating a learning environment that is supportive to all students, with particular attention paid to racialized, newcomer and Indigenous learners. Central to this research will be the question of: **what is the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba’s French Immersion schools?** The following sub-questions will

inform the main research question:

1. How has both teacher and student diversity changed in French Immersion schools in Manitoba in the past two decades according to school leaders?
2. What factors may play a role in enhancing and/or hindering the school leader's efforts to facilitate culturally responsive school environments in French Immersion schools?
3. What leadership practices are perceived to be essential in leading change towards culturally responsive French Immersion schools?

This thesis aims to respond to the current need for empirical data on specific leadership strategies in the context of Manitoba's French Immersion schools by interviewing French Immersion school leaders in the field.

Significance of the Study

The Manitoban French Immersion system is in a process of transition due to changing student population. In my first principalship alone, the population of students from the country of Nigeria had grown from zero students to 20% of the student population in the last decade.

My experience within suburban French Immersion programs in Winnipeg—programs that historically have not had to contend with the same level of student diversity as English program schools—has sparked my interest in this research topic. The questions of how leaders and teachers understand diversity, the factors that enhance or hinder leadership efforts towards culturally responsive school environments, and leadership practices that are essential to supporting change are particularly pertinent to French Immersion in the twenty-first century. There continue to be many assumptions made about who belongs in French Immersion. For example, in research from Saskatchewan, some teachers and principals seem theoretically supportive of the inclusion of newcomer students in French Immersion (Davis, 2019). However,

the perceived lack of resources offered for student support led educators to consider pushing to exclude them using the assumption that English language learners require greater support than could be offered in French Immersion settings (Davis, 2019). There is a clear need for closer examination of the various organizational and individual factors that may play a specific role in the context of French Immersion schools in Manitoba and their ability to adapt to increasing student diversity, given recent demographic changes.

As such, and most importantly, this thesis has a practical significance by contributing to the field of educational administration. This research will deepen understanding of the opportunities, blockages, and strategies commonly encountered by French Immersion school principals as they seek to cultivate French Immersion schools which are representative of and responsive to their increasingly diverse student populations.

Second, this thesis makes an important theoretical contribution in merging complementary strains of organizational theory, cultural sociology, the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, as well as established educational research. These allied theoretical approaches come together to bring into stark relief the subtle, yet intransigent, ways in which institutions can sometimes resist change—or, at the very least, fail to adapt to it.

Finally, this thesis has clear potential to inform school-level policies. One example is school entry points. The newly published French Immersion Policy in Manitoba document outlines three entry points to the French Immersion Program:

1. Early Immersion – Kindergarten or Grade 1
2. Middle Immersion – Grade 4
3. Late Immersion – Grade 7

This document has a new section called *Access and Flexibility to These Entry Points*. The document suggests to school divisions that they consider, “allowing students to enter at any grade level, with appropriate academic and linguistic supports in place (The French Immersion Policy in Manitoba, 2023, p.7). This thesis aims to advance equitable opportunities for all students in Manitoba and outline recommendations to school-leaders as they lead 21st century schools.

Overall, this research is taken upon on the pursuit of a more nuanced, evidence-based understanding of this topic and in practical terms, supporting institutional change towards culturally responsive leadership practices that would provide meaningful access to French language learning for all. The significance of this topic is to deepen our limited understanding of the role of the school leader in facilitating effective change through leadership in support of culturally responsive French Immersion schools in Manitoba. In this research, adaptation to change will be generally defined as the capacity to incorporate new mindsets and behaviours as student populations increase in diversity and complexity (Kapasi & Pei, 2022). I seek to understand what leadership practices, supports, and structures may be beneficial to supporting learner diversity in French Immersion schools, as well as any challenges that may arise and how to mitigate them. My hope is that this will provide insights for other educational leaders and educators seeking to lead visionary French Immersion schools in the 21st century.

Researcher Positionality

My thinking about French Immersion education is shaped by both my personal and my professional experiences. I am a settler Canadian, born into a family of privilege. My parents were both university-educated and both teachers. I am white, cis-gender woman, and I carry many further layers of societal privilege. My parents made the decision to enroll me in a

Kindergarten French Immersion program in 1981, the first French Immersion class in my particular suburban school division in Winnipeg, although the French Immersion Program was not officially recognized until 1995 by the Manitoba Department of Education (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2017). French Immersion was all the talk amongst the parent community on the sidelines of the mini-soccer games they gathered at on weekends at the time. With the allure of an assured fluency in French that saw the path of French Immersion as their children's path to opportunity and future prosperity, French Immersion programs became extremely popular in Manitoba. The information sessions that they attended spoke of the long-term benefits of bilingualism as members of Canadian society. The benefits of learning a second language to the brain and this impact on future academic learning were discussed alongside the economic benefit of bilingualism in Canada for future job prospects. I remember my father being so proud of the explicit choice they had made for me and my three siblings, sharing widely with friends and acquaintances, whenever he had the chance. I was reminded often that learning French would have a positive impact on my life. And it was true. I graduated from high school with necessary second language skills to pursue a university undergraduate degree in French, with the already established goal of becoming a teacher. I was empowered to move to France and teach English as a foreign language in the French public-school system. This experience further developed my French language skills. In moving back to Canada, I quickly secured a permanent teaching contract with the school division where I am still employed more than 20 years later. These messages of future success continue to be important in French Immersion recruitment materials and policy documents. For example, one of those materials states ambitiously that "French Immersion's role in preparing our Canadian youth with the knowledge, skills, attitude and mobility needed to meet the challenges of global, knowledge-based society and economy of

the 21st century is significant” (French Immersion in Manitoba, 2022, p. 2). One study that interviewed Grade 8 French Immersion students found this notion to be true - that language as social capital, and perceived access to future economic capital was a driver for many students and their families (Marshall, 2020). And I had the privilege of benefitting from this capital. The decision my parents made for me as a Kindergarten student, and my luck in fitting the norms established by the system as criteria for successful entry and continuation in the French Immersion program at the time, have provided me with the continued capital required to have a position of power in my field.

Although my French Immersion education had well-defined benefits, I have always also wondered about the potential losses. In my personal experience of schooling as a French Immersion student, all my classmates for the 13 years of my public education were just like me. All my peers were of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. I had no experience learning in a classroom with students from racialized communities, children with significant additional learning needs, or English language learners in all of those 13 years. Newcomer students were not offered entry to the program at the time, and students with identifies learning needs may have been in my classrooms in the very early years, but were streamed to English-only programs as the years went on. A well-known concern in the French Immersion research and literature is the possibility that French Immersion programs running alongside traditional English programs will lead to a “streaming effect” (Worswick, 2003, p. 4). This is explained as where the higher ability and, or higher socio-economic status children enter the perceived more demanding French Immersion program (Worswick, 2003). French Immersion is identified as a more demanding, rigorous program as children are expected to learn another language along with their core and elective programming (Worswick, 2003). Invisible criteria of good behaviour and initial success

in language forces a streaming effect from the early years, and an attrition effect over time (Blanchette, 2017).

As a professional, I have spent the entirety of my career in education working in French Immersion schools. In two decades, I have seen a marked shift, especially during the past 10 years, in the demographic of the French Immersion language learner. As stated, early in my career, my students mirrored those that I went to school with being white, privileged, unilingual, neurotypical, and members of the dominant religious culture. But this is changing. The last few years of working as a school leader in five schools in a suburban French Immersion program has drawn my attention to the challenges that increasing demographic change and cultural diversity of students can bring to the educational practice of teachers and school leaders. No longer homogenous settings, the school culture has struggled to adapt to a changing student body. My previous school alone had more than 20 home languages represented. Questions about who should be accepted into the program—and “suitability”—have surfaced from teachers, administrators, and even parents. Indeed, historically, French Immersion programs have not had to accommodate the same level of learner diversity as urban English programs. In my current school division, newcomer enrollment in the French Immersion program has jumped from 150 students in 2011, to 750 students in 2019 (Divisional data, 2020)². Culturally, communities are making decisions on various groups around school choice. In the catchment of my first school principalship, for example, Nigerian families choose the French Immersion program in the early years and continue in the middle years as a broad community decision. This is noted in looking at feeder schools and looking at the data around school choice as related to distinct cultural groups represented in each school community.

² Divisional data was acquired through internal divisional student data sources.

In this research I am applying the worldview of a settler-Canadian woman who is married to a Métis man from the Vogar Métis local in the Interlake region of Manitoba and is working in French Immersion school as a principal. In my family, we have two children, and we are privileged to spend a great deal of time on homestead land near Lake Manitoba First Nation. The family names are Spence, Pottinger, Dumas, and Monkman, and there were Anishinaabemowin speaking grandparents and elders, yet many in the family did not self-identify as Indigenous people until this generation. As a settler-Canadian, I have walked alongside my husband and his family as they moved through the experience of reclaiming identity, from a place of shame for some to a place of pride for many. My own children now claim their Indigeneity in a way that their grandparents could not. They proudly engage in ditch-fishing and canning suckers alongside their grandparents, foraging for medicines, setting up trail cameras to seek out game, and learning pieces of lost language, with their father (and me) at their side. Within this family lineage lie many stories of struggle, shame, trauma and abuse in the wake of the historical wrongs of the last century and more. This has taught me the importance of leading schools forward in a good way, and that any research in current school leadership must include Indigenous education. A culturally responsive school leader has been defined long ago as a public intellectual, curriculum innovator and a social activist (Johnson, 1996). They are someone who works to transform the curriculum, promote equity, and make schooling more responsive to diverse students and their families (Johnson, 2006). My personal connected experience, combined with my professional work as an educator leading with a social justice lens, has inspired me to pursue academic work in the field of culturally responsive school leadership. As public schools strive to welcome and support all learners to their full potential, I wish to engage thoughtfully and critically with the issues surrounding student and community diversity in

French Immersion schools, in particular. I am currently the principal of a Kindergarten to Grade 8 dual-track school, having previously led a middle years French Immersion milieu school, after having worked in seven schools in my 25-year tenure as an educator. I seek to explore the role of the school leader in promoting and ensuring a culturally responsive, anti-racist, decolonizing school in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools.

My worldview is transformative, and I seek social change in my actions and leadership. This may lead me to hold a certain bias in questions that I pose and ways in which I perceive responses. In this research I am intentionally mindful about questions that may assume cultural proficiency or focus. I am also aware of the leadership position and the power that I hold and the potential difficulties this may pose in eliciting truthful conversations with my colleagues. I interview principals in the field, which hold the same lateral position as I do, which may help to mitigate some risks associated with this research and my positionality.

Contextualizing French Immersion Programs

The French Immersion program is a form of bilingual education for students whose first language is not French. Students receive most of their daily classroom instruction in French, and French is also the means of communication throughout the school (Government of Manitoba, 2023). FI programs are popular beyond Manitoba, and all throughout Canada, with the Canadian Parents for French organization reporting 451,936 across the country in 2021 (CPF, 2021). Reviews of the French Immersion program in Canada's first 25 years elicited many successes, including the following: 1) empirical evidence demonstrating positive linguistic and academic gains for students, and 2) a growing Canadian perception that bilingualism led to increased socio-economic mobility (Karpiuk, 2023).

Despite the popularity of the FI program, it has been criticized for denying equitable access for all students (CPF, 2013). In the case of newcomer students, for example, 60 percent of immigrant families felt that their children learning both of Canada's official language was a benefit (cite). But despite parental support, and research that indicates that newcomer students excel in the FI program, students are often not encouraged and sometimes actively discouraged from enrolling (CPF, 2013). Middle class families were found to be able to choose school programs for their children more actively as they had more resources to navigate complex systems and processes, and benefit from the choices on offer (Yoon, 2020). Research that targeted teacher perceptions of barriers to access for students included the personal experiences of teachers and varied educational contexts. Examples of personal experiences included limited experience with students with varied learning needs, and a disconnect between pre-service learning and classroom practice (Pawer, 2023). Many contextual factors are cited in the research, including class size and composition, attitudes of colleagues, and school district support. One

contextual factor that stands out is the impact of the school administration. In Pauer's study of six FI teachers in British Columbia and their perceptions of recommendations to support increase inclusion in FI schools, they all listed the school administration as having a high level of impact (2023). The role of the school leader has not yet been researched in the context of barriers to inclusive FI programs. The 2023 French Immersion in Manitoba Policy Document states that the FI program is intended for all students, with various learning abilities and whose first language is not French (Government of Manitoba, 2023). This is a gap in the literature and the focus of this thesis.

French Immersion Programs in Manitoba: Rising Numbers, Rising Challenges

To understand the roots of the research issue at the center of this thesis – limited responsiveness towards cultural diversity in French immersion schools in Manitoba – a closer examination into programmatic history is necessary. As mentioned above, French Immersion programs were introduced in Canada in the 1970s with the goal of increasing bilingualism in the official languages among the English-speaking majority of the country (Blanchette, 2017; Keep, 1993; Mady & Masson, 2018). The creation of a French Immersion system in Manitoba, which operates parallel to (mostly) English-only programs, has created one of the main opportunities for Manitoban parents to exercise choice over the education of their children (Worswick, 2003). This choice has proven popular over the decades, and student numbers have continued to grow in recent years. In 2009, 101 schools offered French Immersion programs in Manitoba, with over 19,000 children enrolled. Ten years later, there were 113 French Immersion schools across the province with over 26,000 students enrolled (Government of Manitoba, 2022). Manitoba French

Immersion programs are often as one of two delivery models: single-track and dual track. Single Track schools offer only French Immersion programming to students. The entire student population is enrolled in the French Immersion program. Dual Track schools offer either the French Immersion program or the English program to families, and these programs coexist in the same school (Government of Manitoba, 2023).

There are three notable benefits of the French Immersion program from the point of views of parents and supported in research. The first is functional bilingualism upon graduation from High School, and above average results in numeracy and literacy skills in both first languages and French. The higher socio-economic status could not account for the differing success rates when comparing English-only, and French Immersion programs (DeWiele & Edgerton, 2021). DeWeile and Edgerton state the second benefit of the French Immersion program is the evidence that learning an additional language enhances cognitive abilities such as memory and creativity and supports increased problem-solving skills (2021). The third benefit is the career opportunities that are enhanced with functional bilingualism in Canada's two official languages, with parents calling the program a 'social trampoline' (DeWiele & Edgerton, 2021).

The data indicates that, for many years in Manitoba, French Immersion programs have not had to accommodate the same level of learner diversity as English language programs. The student population at the school I lead as principal from 2020 until 2023 represented 22 countries of birth and 36 home languages (School Data, 2022). This is of great contrast to my experience growing up as a French Immersion student, and my early career experiences as a French Immersion teacher. In both of these contexts the dominant and almost exclusive home language was English, and the country of birth was Canada. There have been many reasons for this homogeneity, historically. One of the primary reasons is the story of who belongs in this public

program, and the subsequent filtering out of students who presented with a variety of perceived barriers to French language learning (e.g., English language learners, lack in academic excellence, behaviour problems, mental health disorders), depriving the remaining French Immersion students of a school experience that honours difference and diversity, and more importantly denying access to marginalized learners (Dallaire, 2018). Advocates for French Immersion programs adamantly deny claims of elitism in FI settings, stating that all students are welcome in French Immersion schools (DeWiele & Edgerton, 2021, as cited in Payton, 2016).

Recent observable trends suggest that there is an overdue demographic shift underway for many French Immersion schools. Within the past decade alone, French Immersion programs in Winnipeg have seen immense demographic change and increasing cultural diversity within the student body. Within my school division as a whole, for example, newcomer English language learners have increased from 1,233 students in 2010 to 3,149 students in 2018, representing more than 40 home countries (Divisional Data, 2018). Self-declared Indigenous student numbers have risen as well, from 909 students in 2010 to 1156 in 2018 (Divisional Data, 2018). Within the French Immersion program in my school division, newcomer student enrolment has increased by 400 percent in the last decade (Divisional Data, 2020). Relatedly, the provincial vision for French Immersion Programs in Manitoba has moved away from one centered exclusively on traditional Franco-Manitoban culture to one with a global plurilingual view (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017). For example, a stated programmatic goal in the provincial document *French Immersion in Manitoba: A Handbook for School Leaders* is that the Immersion program fosters an awareness and an appreciation of the French peoples and their cultural diversity (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2017, p. 4). Another stated goal is that graduates of a French immersion program will be better able to appreciate other languages, cultures, and communities

throughout Canada and around the world (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2017, p.4). In the most current publication, *The French Immersion Program in Manitoba: A Renewed Vision* (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 4), the published goal of the French Immersion program is to develop proud, confident, engaged, plurilingual global citizens. Although these are the stated goals in governance documents, the historically homogenous population of French Immersion schools, including staff members, have failed to offer a culturally responsive environment for an increasingly diverse student body. In fact, one sub-goal of French Immersion learners as global citizens asks students to be “open” to cultural diversity (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017, p. 4). This seems in line with the language of tolerance as opposed to Riffel (1996) and Brown’s (2006) push away from this limiting and marginalizing notion. The term tolerance is problematic as we push towards school environments that center diversity, reconciliation, and repair. Exploring the under representation of diverse student demographics in French Immersion Programs such as First Nations, Inuit and Métis students is an established recommendation, along with the perceived lack of suitability of newcomer students (Davis, 2019). A further Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth document, *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services* (2006) is grounded in human rights legislation (cite, year). The identified core values of an inclusive French Immersion Program include understanding that French Immersion students come from diverse backgrounds and these backgrounds should be respected. Immersion students, as all students, have the right to appropriate educational programming; and the planning process for appropriate education is collaborative and must include the parents and the students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007). The goal of giving equal opportunity to students’

identity and intercultural development as to the perceived preparation for participation in the economic marketplace is present in current French Immersion policy (Marshall, 2020).

This recent change is pivotal because a key role of a French Immersion educational leader is to develop and maintain positive organizational culture in support of achievement for all students (Safty, 1992)—a goal that is especially difficult, and yet even more essential, when it concerns areas of educational practice experiencing challenge and change (Safty, 1992). French Immersion programs are changing fast and furious, and schools are tasked to pivot quickly.

The literature around culturally responsive school leadership is abundant, and although research specific to the context of French Immersion is a growing field, what remains to be explored is the role of the school leader in fostering successful adaptation to an inevitable surge in diversity after an extended history of feeling relatively little need to heed the call of accommodation for all learners—such as in the Manitoban French Immersion context. This study will advance the understanding of important leadership actions school principals must bring as they move towards more actively anti-racist French Immersion schools and meaningful access to French language learning for all students. As stated in the current vision for French Immersion in Manitoba, learners that are engaged, proud, confident, plurilingual, global citizens (MET, 2017).

The provincial policy documents identify the need in Manitoba's French Immersion context, to understand that the program is increasingly diverse and that pedagogy, school goals and school culture must align with the identity and needs of the students. However, the practices in many schools have not yet shifted.

Indigenous Education in Manitoba

A particular focus around the French immersion schools in Manitoba must be given to Indigenous students who have been left in the margins for decades and is a group poorly addressed in current programming. As such, the following reflection and review of the literature includes seeking the legal and policy frameworks that direct schools in meeting the needs of all learners, but specifically Indigenous students. School leaders are tasked to create the conditions for meaningful access to learning for Indigenous students, in a critical time of acknowledging past wrongs and moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and restorative action. When thinking about leadership actions that support increased diversity and inclusive French Immersion schools, Indigenous education must be a part of the research. Although not legally binding, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2015), and its 94 “Calls to Action”, seems to stand almost alone in pointing the way forward as a guiding light for culturally responsive school leadership in the context of Indigenous education. Research in culturally responsive leadership must be informed by the Canadian history and legacy of harm to move forward in a good way.

Reconciliation in education is grounded in treaty education since the colonial history and truth must lead the way. Since even before the Royal Proclamation in October of 1763, a document that outlined the guidelines for European settlement of Indigenous territories, treaties were established between First Nations communities and the crown (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2020). These treaties were recognized in Imperial law, many of which continue to not be honoured even today. Each of the seven treaties negotiated between the crown and the First Nations groups at the time included provisions for education, although the language used was not consistent (Carr-Stewart, 2001). While the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982 does not

define treaty rights, it does include section 35, which recognizes and affirms existing aboriginal and treaty rights. Section 25 of the same constitution act offers protection against any derogation of these existing rights and freedoms (Department of Justice, 2019). This leaves the open question, what are Indigenous rights when it comes to education? The crown states in Treaty 1, the treaty land upon which the University of Manitoba sits, “Her Majesty agrees to maintain a school on each reserve hereby made, whenever the Indians of the reserve should desire it” (as cited in Carr-Stewart, 2001, p. 128). As well, Treaty 1 and the further 6 Treaties, established the government’s financial responsibility to First Nations education (Carr-Stewart, 2001). But these simple statements leave a lot unsaid.

From just after Confederation until the 1970s, large numbers of Indigenous children in Canada were required to attend government-funded, church-run residential schools (Barnes, Josefowitz & Cole, 2006). Key elements of the colonial residential school ecology were settler-driver curriculum, maltreatment, removal of first languages, and rampant racism, among other negative elements (Barnes, Josefowitz & Cole, 2006). This trauma has long impacted Indigenous students in achieving the primary purpose of school—education and employment prospects. Residential school students were exposed to inappropriate curriculum, poorly qualified teachers, reduced classroom instruction time, limited parental involvement in their education and therefore were at significantly increased risk for poor academic achievement and impaired cognitive development (Barnes et al., 2006).

As a federal act of repair, the Indian Residential School Settlement Act - the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history – began on September 19, 2007 (IRSSA – Schedule N, 2006). Part of this historical act included the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which states the following as part of its mandate, “The truth telling and

reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing” (IRSSA Section N, p. 1). This commission issued its final report in 2015 after hearing from over 6,500 witnesses to residential schooling in Canada and collecting 5 million residential school records from the Government of Canada. The closing event held in Ottawa in June of 2015 allowed the TRC to officially present its findings and the 94 “Calls to Action”. The Canadian government ensures its commitment to working with each province to ensure that the recommendations of the TRC report are implemented, for the benefit of all Canadians (CIRNAC, 2019).

Unlike the Indian Act (1876), which simply states that First Nations children (including the Inuit after 1939 and the Métis after 2016) must be provided access to school, transportation and offers a set of regulations around attendance, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s “Calls to Action” (2015) provide a clear set of recommendations for all Canadians, and specific actions directed to schools (TRC, 2015a). “Calls to Action” 63 (2015a), for example, with the goal of repairing the legacy of residential school harm and advancing the process of reconciliation in Canada, outlines a valuable framework for defining culturally responsive school leadership and making recommendations for systemic response to schools as a pathway of repair and meaningful access for all learners. The TRC’s (2015) stance stands in stark contrast to Paquette and Fallon’s (2008) argument that the Indian Act offers no protection to First Nations children around the quality and relevancy of the education provided. Call to Action 63 articulates helpful systemic leader and teacher response in carrying out the steps identified as required to move forward in reconciliation and repair for Indigenous people, and all Canadians. The specific components of this Call to

Action are a commitment to curriculum development that teaches *the truth* about colonial history and the maltreatment of Indigenous people, identifying best practices, Indigenous approaches, and pedagogy, building intercultural understandings, and identifying teacher training needs (TRC, 2015a). Using these components as a guide allows culturally responsive leadership practices in Indigenous education to be uncovered, in the goal of clearly defining leadership actions in decolonization. What the Indian Act is sorely lacking, the TRC's Calls to Action clearly provide and light the way forward.

Theoretical Framework

The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu

The uptake of Bourdieusian theory is gaining prominence in the discipline of educational leadership (Burgess & Newton, 2015). Bourdieu's work in power and agency, specifically around the triad of concepts of field, habitus, and capital, seems highly applicable to this research, a study that focuses on mobilizing change towards school principals having the power and agency to cultivate culturally proficient learning communities. His theorization brings great strength in providing theoretical guidance through concepts that frame the factors that underlie hierarchy, inequality, and power and would help to inform the organizational change in school contexts. Once one understands the ideas of a field, the habitus (required to exist within a field), and the capital (necessary to gain status and power), one can apply these ideas broadly to look at injustice and imbalances of power in society and furthermore in schools. In the field of education, and in the context of understanding individual reluctance to change, Bourdieu's theorization aligns well with the idea of identifying the cause of marginalization of groups of people, and factors that may prevent successful educational transformations. The school leader's

ability to actively identify inequities in their school context, and differences in the social capital of students, families, and staff, as well as barriers to positive change through concepts like habitus and hysteresis, may allow them to actively work towards fostering inclusive FI schools. A *field* is Bourdieu's first metaphor, representing sites of cultural practice and is defined as a series of institutions, rules, behaviours, attitudes, categories, designations and appointments that constitute an area of specialized cultural practice or expertise (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

“In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations, they impose upon their occupants...in the structure of the distribution of the species of power” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, p. 97, 1992).

This definition of a *field* put forth by Bourdieu suggests differential positioning of individuals along with differential amounts of capital. In essence, *fields* are hierarchical. *Fields* are spaces of conflict and competition, but also of shared norms, in which participants of the *field* try to establish a monopoly over the type of capital (or social power) effective in it (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). If we understand the concept of a *field* as the site of on-going struggle, we also understand that struggles of power reproduce and get reproduced by inequality (Vaughn, 2008). In particular, the concept of a *field* has provided an approach to the study of struggle and a new way of thinking about how power impacts social organizations (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). The idea of a *field* as hierarchy may easily be applied to the differentiated position that a school leader has over the teachers and other staff. As a French Immersion principal works alongside staff members and leads change, the awareness of the hierarchical positional power differential becomes important in implementing change. Understanding Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus will inform leadership practices in identifying inequities and actively taking steps to

mitigate them. Intentionally supporting new staff members by directly preparing them for a meeting structure beforehand, for example, may allow that staff member to feel more empowered, safe and successful in their work, for example. Navigating the challenges of the hidden curriculum of a school's structure requires direct support from school leaders and colleagues. Newcomer staff meetings the week before the general opening staff meeting in the fall is an important practice for French Immersion school leaders.

The next Bourdieusian master concept is that of *habitus*. Bourdieu's definition is that "Habitus is a socialized subjectivity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 126). It shares the same root as the word *habit* and explains the idea of being socialized into the culture of a *field*. To continue Vaughn's (2008) thinking that the three master concepts co-exist relationally, the field is the area that structures one's habitus, and thus a *habitus* is particular to a *field*.

Bourdieu explicitly stated that *habitus* and *field* function fully only in relation to one another as the rules of a *field* are defined by those who inhabit the domain (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu expands the concept of field to include the notion of a 'subsector', a set within a field with its own logics, norms and practices (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The French Immersion programme is a unique subsector of the field of education in Manitoba. School leaders must in turn tune into what are the dominant and permeating ideas of the members of the French Immersion programme (subsector of the *field of education*) and examine how these relational ideas of *habitus* and the *field* may impact school culture. French Immersion professional staff are often connected to a particular social network of Franco-Manitoban peers. This group has norms and customs, and community connections that provide privilege of relationships, information and support. Being from a certain small town, or playing a certain sport gives access to relationships and feelings of belonging. This staff culture can then impact

whole-school culture. What sports or clubs are offered as extra-curricular activities, for example, and do they benefit a certain group more? Are their opportunities for all community members to see themselves? Are staff equipped to reflect on their beliefs around what is offered and whom does it benefit? Who is not included?

The final master concept that is fundamentally connected to field and habitus is the notion of *capital*. Bourdieu defined *capital* as a “species of power whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). Occupants of the field try to increase the amount of field-specific *capital* that they have, but also seek to increase the symbolic value of that *capital* in relation to the overall field of power. Further to Emirbayer and Johnson’s (2008) relational approach, Bourdieu explained that “A capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field. It confers a power over the field” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). In French Immersion school leadership, it is important to be aware of the specific types of *capital* that lead to power that are present in a staff community, and those who hold both formal and informal positions of power within the *field*. The first form of capital, *economic capital*, is simply accruing economic wealth. French Immersion families often hold more economic wealth. This can serve as referent for understanding Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Middle class families are more likely than working class families to exercise school choice when determining school programming for their children, (Yoon, 2020).

Bourdieu explained the concept of *social capital* as resources that one accumulates by virtue of possessing a robust network of relationships (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Using this concept, from a leadership perspective, a principal well-connected to an established community by virtue of long-standing relationships, cultural referents, and belonging possesses beneficiary

social capital to be accepted quickly by community. The opposite would seem to hold true that a newcomer principal may lack the professional and community network, and inherent social capital, making school leadership a more difficult task. In the French Immersion community, many teachers and school leaders are from the Manitoba Francophone community, where relationships can be very interconnected. The invisible curriculum of the dominant Franco-Manitoban culture creates hierarchical opinions, resentment, and resistance to otherness amongst teaching and leadership staff in French Immersion settings.

Within the study of education, Bourdieu is best known for his concept of *cultural capital*. He developed it within the context of researching education in France, arguing that, “By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give” (cited in Aubrey & Riley, 2017, p. 86). Asking that newcomer students, for example, bring with them essential elements of cultural capital that they do not already possess brings a hierarchy of student potentialities in terms of achievement and is also a source of teacher frustration. This is very helpful in understanding the possible difficulties English language learners and their families face when joining schools in Canada. Identifying those elements of cultural capital that school systems implicitly expect or assume students to have upon entering, is critical. These can include certain notions of manners, classroom etiquette or behaviour, previous educational experiences, language skills, arts, culture and sports experiences, notions of play and social interaction. All these pieces and more can be thought of as elements of cultural capital that bring an ease of school success to learners and their families as they navigate the educational system. But what about students and families who do not bring the cultural capital that corresponds to the

dominant culture? This concept is critical for thinking through the inequalities inherent within our education system.

Cultural capital such as speaking a country's official language, or in the context of French Immersion, the allure of giving one's children the capital of speaking both official languages in Canada is referred to linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991, Yoon & Gulson, 2010). In a post-colonial Canadian context, having more attributes associated with whiteness including language, continues to afford greater access to power (Yoon & Gulson, 2010). It is critical for French Immersion school leaders to be conscientious of this embedded inequality through lack of pre-existing cultural capital and linguistic capital in their intentional support and welcome to students and families new to Canada. Acknowledging this barrier, and actively planning sessions such as newcomer welcome evenings that plan for linguistic diversity is essential. Interpreter services, translated documents, visual communication, and directly speaking to the culture and system of Manitoba French Immersion schools support racialized and linguistically diverse families navigate with more success. Another important leadership practice in a French Immersion context is having open entry points to the French Immersion program. Newcomer families do not have the same access to information regarding school choice as Manitoba families that have been thinking about kindergarten placement in the home country for five years. Many newcomer parents discover the possibilities of French Immersion instruction only after being enrolled in an English only program. Closed entry points at Kindergarten and Grade 1 only disproportionality impact newcomer families.

I find Bourdieu's theoretical triad of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* in the analysis of individual adaptation to demographic change helpful and informative. Swartz (2008) referred to these three concepts as Bourdieu's "Master Concepts", and argued that in a true relational

approach, one must draw upon all three in the study of organizations and added that in existing research it has been rarely done. The proper purpose of social science, then, is examination of the double and obscure relation between *habitus* and *fields* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Emirbayer and Williams (2005) agreed, arguing that the concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* are not “stand alone” conceptual perspectives. They also note that in the sociology of education, cultural *capital* is often referenced, and in organizational studies, *field* is commonly cited, while the concept of *habitus* rarely emerges (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). The three master concepts of *field*, *habitus* and *capital* will be used to frame the theoretical thinking around individual (school principals) adaptation to diversity in a school as organization.

These concepts also provide a way of thinking about how power operates within social life (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). This is very applicable for an administrator to examine how power operates within the social life of a school community. It is important for school leaders to understand the hierarchies of power, capital and the positional power differential between staff members in both formal and informal leadership roles.

Bourdieu and Education

It is in thinking about school culture, and the internal norms, behaviours and attitudes present therein, that the use Bourdieusian analysis becomes apparent. While Bourdieu did not study leadership specifically, the attention he gave to the relationship between individual agency and structural determinism is of importance (Eacott, 2013). In applying the Bourdieusian concepts of *habitus* and *field*, we can think about the dispositions, norms, and practices within a specific milieu. Nuancing for the organizational structures within public schooling in Manitoba would suggest that such elements of normative formation can arise both at the level of a larger

field of professional education or even within a specific school culture. We can define the educational habitus as the durable set of dispositions and practices acquired by teachers who inhabit the educational field (Hallett, 2003). The socialization within a professional milieu and the *habitus* that develops from this overcome the more progressive teaching philosophies that the teacher may have encountered while studying for their education degree. Hallett (2003) explained that organizational culture is a negotiated order that emerges through the interactions between organizational actors, or “players” from Bourdieu’s metaphor of the *field* of education. People with symbolic power influence this order (Hallett, 2003). This is a powerful concept for a school leader to think about, as the players that make up the field highly impact the normative values and assumptions present in a school culture.

Bourdieuian theory to the field of education, as applied in my study, could be said that teachers will draw upon previously held notions and find examples that agree with their past experiences. This can pose a challenge to teaching communities as leaders seek to support changes in practice as student needs evolve. In thinking about the context of French Immersion schools, teachers now have new demographics to deal with—as said, an increasing number of racialized students, newcomer students and Indigenous learners. The social class of teachers, and school principals, as compared to their students is another factor to consider, as the dominate social class in my current context is upper middle class, female and white, as compared to a student population that is much more diverse. Teachers may complain of the deficits these students bring or explain that they have always taught in a certain way, and they have no intention of changing now. Principals may not have well-established networks and relationships lean into and learn from; social capital is an important concept here. Two further concepts of *habitus* and *hysteresis* are particularly well-suited to thinking about change leadership and the

reluctance of teachers to change their practice. Questions often surface around which students belong, which additional outside supports and funding will be added to accommodate changes in student need profiles, and why pedagogy should shift to accommodate these changing demographics. As objective conditions within a field change, as McDonogh and Polzer (2012) explained, there is often a lag in *habitus*. It would be applicable in education, then, and appropriate to surmise that as student needs change, there is a lag in teacher response and adaptation as well.

Habitus and Habituation: Bourdieu's Concept of *Hysteresis*

Bourdieu explained the concept of *hysteresis* as where the *habitus* falls out of alignment with the *field* (Eacott, 2013). Further, Bourdieu underscored that, while *habitus* responds to the solicitations of the *field*, this does not mean that the *habitus* is always perfectly attuned to the contemporary state of the *field*. Rather, Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* can speak to the difficulties encountered by members of a field in the face of changing dynamics. In general, "there is a probability...that experiences will confirm habitus, because most people are statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.133). But what happens when new conditions arise? Bourdieu stated that our primary social experiences tend to have a disproportionate weight in *habitus* formation and that there is "an inevitable priority of originary experiences and consequently a relative closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). McDonogh and Polzer's (2012) work in researching change in the public service is helpful in this context as well. They apply Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis* and explain it as "a term that Bourdieu employed to indicate a cultural lag or mismatch between habitus and the

changing ‘rules’ and regularities of a field” (p. 359). Hysteresis is a concept worthy for school leaders to understand. Applying this concept to the current FI context in Manitoba schools, the situation in the field changes when schools encounter changing student demographics and learning needs, but staff attitudes, and the diversity of professional staff have not.

Acknowledging this mismatch, which is the hysteresis, may allow school leaders to identify and employ specific leadership practices in support of inclusive French Immersion schools.

Analytical Framework

Diversity as a Concept in Education

Diversity has become a core value in Manitoba French Immersion Programs. The formal mandate of the program emphasizes that French Immersion students come from diverse backgrounds and that these backgrounds should be respected; that Immersion students, as all students, have the right to appropriate educational programming; and that the planning process for appropriate education is collaborative and must include the parents and the students (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007). Sensitized to contemporary demographic shifts in French Immersion, Manitoba Education and Training (2017) declared that the “goal of the French Immersion Program is to develop proud, confident, engaged, plurilingual global citizens” (p. 5). The Ontario Trillium Foundation, as referenced in the Manitoba School Leadership Framework, defines diversity as referring to the variety of characteristics that all persons possess, that distinguish them as individual, and identifying them as belonging to a group or groups (Government of Manitoba, 2024).

Focus on diversity has become a prominent priority for schools and core concept in education, yet there is no uniform understanding on what diversity means. Chan (2005) defined diversity as the contested territory of race, gender, class, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religion, education, and family/ marital status. Authors have argued that it is necessary to go beyond this set of categories, and instead recognize that diversity honours the principles of inclusion, recognizing and valuing difference, and the ability to participate with an equal footing in society (Chan, 2005; Tamtik & Guenter, 2019). This understanding of diversity is in contrast to the vertical stratification associated with cultural capital. Participants are not granted equal footing in

society from a Bourdieusian theoretical perspective (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Cultural capital is hierarchical, and the inequality of power granted to certain groups over others must be acknowledged (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Indigenous culture and knowledges have not historically been prized in educational settings, for example. Acknowledging forms of stratification and allows school leaders to work against these barriers and lead school cultures where access is granted for all.

What does understanding diversity mean in the context of education? Schachner (2018) explained that a climate of cultural diversity has the goal of preventing prejudice and discrimination. Positive inter-group contact means equal treatment of students, cooperation and common goals amongst peers, support from authority figures, and intergroup friendships. The notion of diversity, however, can be conceptualized in multiple ways. Stemming from her research in the German school system, Schachner (1995) suggested that approaches to accommodate diversity can be categorized as either *cultural pluralist* or *equality and inclusion based*. (In this sense, terms such as *cultural diversity* and *multiculturalism* are often used interchangeably in the research.) Cultural pluralist approaches, according to Schachner (1995; 2018), tend to prioritize individual cultural autonomy within the scope of a larger group and embrace students' diverse cultural backgrounds as a resource that supports an enriching experience for all learners. Conceptualizations of diversity emphasizing equality and inclusion, on the other hand, center on positive, respectful, intergroup contact and connection (Schachner, 1995; 2018). Indeed, Brown's (2006) seminal work on the politics of intergroup relations affirms that the concept of tolerance alone is problematic. The very notion of tolerance implies the hierarchical marginalization of one group over another, and those who are the objects of

tolerance “are marked as deviant, marginal, or undesirable by virtue of being tolerated, and the action of tolerance inevitably affords some access to superiority” (Brown, 2006, p. 14).

Operating from an equality and inclusion standpoint, critical scholars such as Ladson, Billings, and Tate (1995) advocated for conceptualizing diversity in education as a reform movement designed to effect change in a school to increase equality and student success for those from diverse racial, ethnic, or other marginalized groups. Publishing just prior to the turn of the millennium, they acknowledged a shift in definition, with the term *diversity* expanding to include issues around gender, ability, sexual orientation, and the potential inherent intersectionality (Ladson et al, 1995). They continued to define diversity as “many cultures” existing together in a school climate of respect and tolerance, but also use the term *multicultural* interchangeably with *diversity* as a term used to define all kinds of difference (Ladson et al., 1995).

In thinking about diversity, we also need to turn to the notion of culture. When seeking to define culture, a topic notoriously difficult to define, Helen Spencer-Oatey (2012) referred to a list of 164 different definitions compiled by American anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, and still no agreement amongst researchers about this. The following definition from Matsumoto is one that may be helpful in the context of this work. He described culture as the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, and passed down from one generation to the next (Matsumoto, 2007). Several researchers have highlighted limitations in conventional multicultural frameworks of education. For example, Isar (2006) invited readers to think beyond a ‘billiard ball’ notion of culture, with separate spheres stacked neatly beside each other in an effort to protect what is inside. Relatedly, Bennet (2020) argued that a major challenge in our engagement with diversity is that modern societies, with

schools as representational microcosms of the larger society, are being forced to reconcile the challenge of allowing cultural communities *both* shared space for diversity *and* a sense of separateness (Bennet, 2020). Culture is defined in the Manitoba School Leadership Framework as the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, habits, and the way of life of a group of individuals (Law insider, 2013, as cited in Government of Manitoba, 20024). Critical perspectives on multiculturalism are important to note. Indigenous perspectives are often silenced under the frame of multiculturalism. Indigenous groups are sovereign nations because of their original rights to the land, and that this land was never willingly ceded. Indigenous peoples assert that multiculturalism is a public policy that has served to undermine Indigenous sovereignty. In schools, multiculturalism and notions honouring diversity is often used to justify refusal for authentic engagement with Indigenous people, or in teaching culture or history, using a statement such as, “Indigenous students are not the only students here” (St. Denis, 2011). As a result, school leaders must be especially mindful when thinking about multiculturalism in their school contexts.

Globally, outside the western world, the predominant view of student diversity is often limited to ethnic diversity in comparison to dominant majority cultures. In contemporary thinking about diversity, however, multiple categories of difference are recognized as placing groups outside the dominant social and cultural norms, such as difference based upon sexuality, gender, ability, or neurodivergence (Isar, 2006). Gardiner and Enomoto (2016) agreed that Canadian schools are diverse in age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, physical and mental ability, language, and ethnicity. They assert that although some schools may have greater challenges in a context of increasing diversity, all schools must recognize increasing

diversity as a challenge in meeting student needs and plan accordingly (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2016).

Campeau is a cultural sociologist who studies organizations and their ability to respond to changing contexts, with particular attention to policing. Her concept of “cultural inertia” is defined as a reluctance to adapt to shifting environmental conditions (cite with page number). She explained that organizations and their members can react slowly to both opportunities and threats to their environment (Campeau, 2019). Campeau introduced the concept of institutional myths in her work in understanding organizations and reluctance to change. “Widespread understandings of social reality which possess an intrinsic quality of ‘truth’ about them and are often used to justify ways of doing things” (Campeau, 2019, p.72). In educational settings, these concepts speak to the concern that there all these shorthand forms of understandings of the myths, such as who belongs in French Immersion, that people in the organization use to justify action or inaction (Campeau, 2019).

The complexity emerging around diversity in schools as outlined in the literature adds to validity of the need for further research and the challenging task for French Immersion school leaders as they grapple with organizational change. Using the concept of diversity, this project uncovers and critically examines school principal attitudes, values, and beliefs around a changing student population in French Immersion.

An additional tension in the context of French Immersion student and teacher populations exists between the concepts of diversity and difference. Diversity refers to racial, cultural, and linguistic pluralism and incorporates individuals and groups from both minoritized and dominant groups (Schachner, 2018). However, the notion of difference refers to a relational space and how we treat others. When referring to individuals who are racialized or minoritized, issues of power,

and exclusion, come to the surface. Within French Immersion program is a social context where Franco-Manitoban teachers often hold more social and cultural capital than their newcomer, global francophone, professional peers. Labeling someone as different often happens when one perceives this individual's identity markers as an obstacle to familiarity. This often results in a fear of the other, leading to acts of exclusion. The role of the school leader in culturally responsive education is to be aware of these tensions and enact leadership practices that support inclusive French Immersion schools.

Leithwood et al. (2004) pointed to the school leader as the dominant force in shaping school culture in what they pay attention to, in role modelling, and the way they deal with critical incidents. Thus, it has been well-observed that leader behaviour and organizational behaviour are tightly linked (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Although researchers have paid some attention to the issue of diversity in French Immersion settings (Keep, 1993; Blanchette, 2017; Mady & Masson, 2018), what remains to be explored is the role of the school leader in fostering successful adaptation to the current surge in student diversity. This is important particularly after an extended history of feeling relatively little need to heed the call of accommodation for all learners. It is to this history in Manitoba—in order to better set the context—that I now turn.

Eacott (2013) said that school leadership should be a disruptive practice, not simply a role characterized by tasks that might be described as management or administration. As previously stated, a culturally responsive school leader is defined as a public intellectual, curriculum innovator and a social activist (Johnson, 1996). They are someone who works to transform the curriculum, promote equity, and make schooling more responsive to diverse students and their families (Johnson, 2006). The *Manitoba Public Schools Act* mandates that public schools welcome and support all learners who enter their classrooms with appropriate

educational programming (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2022). School leaders must therefore think critically about and confront teacher reluctance to accommodate increased racialized and Indigenous students, employing leadership practices to support this change. We know that some teachers find themselves ill-equipped to meet the needs of a changing population of students (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). As demographics change, some educators may still perceive language learners from different cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous students, through a deficit paradigm (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). Questions of belonging surface amongst staff as they may have long-held beliefs about which learners belong in French Immersion programs (Worswick, 2003). A key challenge, then, for the school leader, is to confront teacher reluctance, accommodate demographic change and adapt to student diversity (Safty, 1992). As Coelho (2004) has argued, students that feel safe, valued, and able to contribute are more likely to be successful and thrive in their learning. Failing to adapt to increasing student diversity therefore creates another barrier for teachers in engaging learners in a meaningful way (Himmele & Himmele, 2009). A key question for French Immersion school leaders, then, is how to effectively foster a school culture that adapts to and embraces the racial and linguistic diversity of newcomer and Indigenous students. This approach requires for a critical examination of current school leader attitudes, values and beliefs, and seeks to formulate relevant recommendations in a Manitoba context.

Pedagogy for Diversity – a Foundation for Culturally Responsive Leadership

Kiiniwi, “You and us (together),” is an Anishinaabemowin phrase used to portray the partnership between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators that is required to move forward in reconciliatory education (Morcom & Freeman, 2019, p. 808). Ladner describes

Indigenous conceptions of leadership as centering balanced relationship, where leaders recognize and amplify the gifts and strengths of the members of their community (2023). These are apt guideposts for this research study. Supporting the development of social-justice oriented teachers who can identify inequity and effectively carry out change must be a priority for all school leaders (Morcom & Freeman, 2018). Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argued that the increasing diversity of all students, paired with the continued homogeneity of teachers themselves, makes culturally responsive schooling more urgent than ever. These findings parallel my own leadership experiences collaborating with teachers that often feel ill-equipped to meet the needs of an evolving population of students and who may perceive of Indigenous, racialized, and linguistically diverse learners through a deficit paradigm. To fully accomplish the goal of schools that are responsive to all students, research is clear that teachers and school principals of diverse heritages must be present (Johnson, 2014). It is critical that teachers possess: 1) a strong knowledgebase and understanding of why education that honours Indigenous and diverse perspectives is essential; 2) confidence developing appropriate content in partnership with families and communities; and 3) the pedagogical skills to teach this content in a culturally safe and appropriate manner. This is really the essence of *Kiiniwi*, “You and us (together)” (Morcom & Freeman, 2019, p. 808).

A key role of the French Immersion school leader is to foster and encourage culturally responsive learning environments that hold value for all students. Teachers should seek to embed cultural referents and Indigenous perspectives into their instruction and classroom management, but this alone is not enough. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive practices and the inclusion of varied approaches must be amplified and prioritized by the school leader. Schools must respond to culturally unique contexts, just as they require teachers to respond to diverse

students. As population demographics evolve, so too must leadership practices. Culturally responsive leadership promotes a school climate that is inclusive of all students (Khalifa et al., 2016). Student support practices that are non-judgmental, breakfast programs for all students, discreet processes around late entry, assuring minority representation in staff, engaging community members to share voice and presence, support in student attendance to remove barriers (such as staffed walking school bus where a support is offered by the school where children walk to school safety in a group). These are all examples current in urban schools that relate to culturally responsive leadership. Further, in thinking about 21 century schools, success has been seen to be driven by student centered learning within a culturally responsive atmosphere, described as holistic, experiential, and relational instruction, deeply steeped in students' own worldviews (Papp, 2020).

The concept of culturally responsive education has a large research base behind it. In 1976, Cazden and Leggett recommended that all schools bring the invisible culture of the community into the school through parent participation, hiring, promotion of minority group staff, and professional learning opportunities. The duty for carrying out these recommendations falls to the school principal, who holds the moral responsibility to counter historical oppression (Khalifa et al., 2016). It is the role of the school leader to create culturally responsive learning environments that allow access to meaningful learning for minoritized students, and important considerations emerge around appropriate staffing and professional learning (Khalifa et al., 2016). The principal must prioritize recruitment and sustainment of culturally responsive teachers who are prepared to work with marginalized youth (Khalifa et al., 2016). They must lead professional development that is constantly evolving to meet the changing community needs and that is in accordance with the "Calls to Action" from the TRC. Key recommendations

include this powerful statement, “Reconciliatory education can be accomplished through respect and love, alongside an unyielding commitment to honouring Indigeneity, speaking truth and building wisdom” (Morcom & Freeman, 2018, p. 808).

Khalifa (2010) asserted that in the case of those in authority roles such as principals or teachers, some are simply not willing to validate non-traditional capital. In the school featured in his study— where the teachers possessed cultural or social capital associated with the dominant culture, but the students did not—it was again the school leader who played the key role in initiating change. This role was as both a buffer and a bridge. The leader functioned as a buffer in the protection of children and their families from missed opportunity or even discipline-based on the type of capital they possessed. The school leaders also acted as a bridge between students and their families, the teachers, and community, with the goal of developing a space from which they could access opportunities that dominant-culture students took for granted (Khalifa, 2010).

There are three key theoretical approaches in the research literature. Cazden and Legget (1976), in studying learning differences amongst children and culturally appropriate teaching styles, employed enlightened education theory. The main premise of enlightened education theory is that the way we teach should be adapted to how children learn. The second approach makes use of Bourdieu’s sociological theory. Khalifa’s research is grounded in the Bourdieusian concepts of social and cultural capital. From a culturally responsive lens, they value giving equal power to different leadership practice and amplify the harmful practice of using only a Western approaches to leadership (Khalifa, Gooden & Davis, 2016). Thirdly, there is the burgeoning movement to integrate Indigenous perspectives and worldviews into contemporary education. Anishinaabe education and spiritual philosophies were cited in Morcom and Freeman’s (2018) study of ally-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers for the purpose of

making the research approach directly relevant to students and local Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee community members.

In Johnson's (2014) essay, he explored the concept of culturally responsive leadership (CRL), an idea that has evolved from culturally responsive pedagogy. His research takes CRL from the school level to embracing the community. Johnson (2014) explained the history of culturally responsive pedagogy and then introduced emerging terms such as culturally sustaining pedagogy, community responsive pedagogy, and culturally revitalizing pedagogy. The later, he posits, counters colonization within the school system and deconstructs cultural essentialism. Johnson (2014) provided the qualities of a highly effective CRL, described as one who emphasizes high expectations, incorporates cultural knowledge, creates structures that empower students and families, and encourages staff mindsets that challenge inequities.

Khalifa, Gooden and Davis (2016) conducted a literature review that focussed on CRL behaviours, meaning they highlight best practices that impact school climate, structure, teacher efficacy and student achievement. They engaged in discussion around the connection of teacher preparedness, school environments, community advocacy and CRL, and present the themes that emerged as evidence of excellence in CRL based on observations in the field; critical self-awareness of the school-leader's values when it comes to working with diverse learners, culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation, inclusive school environments, and engagement of community and families. The authors brought diverse perspectives, including Indigenous leadership practices and leadership in post-colonial contexts. They shared the research-based argument that it is detrimental to institute one leadership style over another, and the promotion of Western leadership practices over other leadership approaches should be particularly examined. The authors also asserted the importance of Indigenous leadership

practices that have as a significant role, compassion, and community empowerment when leading change.

Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004), prepared a report which reviewed current evidence to offer recommendation for school-leaders and policy makers around effective school leadership. They sought to answer the following questions - how important is the role of the school-leader and in what ways does leadership matter, how important is effective school leadership on student achievement, and what are the essential ingredients of successful school-leadership? Their answers are important in that they suggested that successful school leadership plays a highly significant and very frequently underestimated role in improving student outcomes. A point of interest to highlight, as this research connects to other articles in this literature review, is the statement that ‘leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are most needed’ (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 5).

Asset-based leadership dispositions to advance true equity were studied by Fortner, Lalas and Stikwerda in 2023. Using a Bourdieusian approach, they posit that school leaders must lead with equity as their foundational thinking when supporting teachers to recognize, value and honour that racialized and linguistically diverse students bring strengths to the classroom (Fortner, Lalas and Strikwerda, 2023). School leaders that acknowledge, challenge, and take responsibility for barriers like power, capital, and language assure equity is not only embedded in school goals and visioning, but also enacted (Fortner, Lalas and Strikwerda, 2023).

Continued research in Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRL) focusses on CRL behaviours, meaning best leadership practices that impact school climate, structure, teacher efficacy and student achievement. Research focuses on the connection of teacher preparedness,

school environments, community advocacy and CRL (Khalifa, 2006). The themes that arose as evidence of excellence in CRL, based on observations in the field, are:

1. Critical self-awareness of the school-leader's values when it comes to working with diverse learners.
2. Culturally responsive curricula and teacher preparation.
3. Inclusive school environments.
4. Engagement of community and families. (Khalifa, 2006)

Teachers and school administrators must build a culture that is responsive to all students, and this is of interest to my research in the context of French immersion schools adapting to increased learner diversity. Understanding and uncovering best practices in culturally responsive leadership is essential to my study of in support of change towards culturally proficient learning communities and supporting meaningful access to French language learning for all.

Connecting the Concepts

A primary role of an educational leader is to develop and maintain positive organizational culture, even in times of shift and change. What defines positive organizational culture should then be articulated. Edgar Shein posited that organizational culture is “a deeper level of basic assumptions, values and beliefs that become shared and taken for granted” (as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p.180). William Ouchi articulates organizational culture as “symbols, ceremonies and myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of the organization” (as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2008 p. 180). How does culture communicate what it means to be part of the organization (Hallett, 2003)? The stories, myths and legends of a school are the symbols by which a school culture is expressed and are powerful in telling the story of who

belongs (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). It is in thinking about school culture, and the internal norms present therein, that the potential for Bourdieusian analysis becomes apparent.

The phenomenon this research is mostly concerned with is individual reluctance to change and difficulty adapting to increasing student diversity. Stuart and Thurlow's research found that early career teachers report feeling ill-prepared to face the complex demands of teaching increasing numbers of diverse learners, children with low family support, and children alienated from the dominant school culture (2000). Lack of perceived teacher competence, along with other factors, was found to contribute to this frustration (Stuart & Thurlow, 2000).

According to Hoy (1968), it is the role of the organization and its leaders to mould teacher ideology and performance, in line with the values of the organization. Contrary to this, however, Stuart and Thurlow suggested that the teacher is more often instead acted upon by a pervasive and pre-existing institutional culture, such that individual teaching ideologies are erased by these pre-existing norms (2000). Pugach argued that teacher socialization is a process that continues to sustain conservative educational practices, and that the teacher as an agent of change is not always an attainable goal (cited in Stuart & Thurlow, 2000).

When we apply the concepts of *habitus* and *field*, we think about the dispositions, norms, and practices within a specific milieu. Nuancing for the organizational structures within public schooling in Manitoba would suggest that such elements of normative formation can arise both at the level of a larger field of professional education or even within a specific school culture. The educational habitus is the durable set of dispositions and practices acquired by teachers who inhabit the educational field (Hallett, 2003). The essence of Pugach's argument, then, is that the socialization within a professional milieu and the habitus that develops from this overcome the more progressive teaching philosophies that the teacher may have encountered while

studying for their education degree. Hallett explained that organizational culture is a negotiated order that emerges through the interactions between organizational actors, or players from a Bourdieusian lens. People with symbolic power such as school leaders influence this order (Hallett, 2003). This is a powerful concept for a school leader to think about, as the players that make up the field highly impact the normative values and assumptions present in a school culture.

Further, Bourdieu underscores that, while *habitus* responds to the solicitations of the *field*, this does not mean that the *habitus* is always perfectly attuned to the contemporary state of the *field*. Rather, Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* can speak to the difficulties encountered by members of a *field* in the face of changing dynamics. In general, "there is a probability...that experiences will confirm habitus, because most people are statistically bound to encounter circumstances that tend to agree with those that originally fashioned their habitus" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). But what happens when new conditions arise? Bourdieu stated that our primary social experiences tend to have a disproportionate weight in *habitus* formation and that there is "an inevitable priority of originary experiences and consequently a relative closure of the system of dispositions that constitute habitus" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133).

McDonough and Polzer's (2012) work in researching change in the public service is helpful in this context as well. They applied Bourdieu's concept of *hysteresis* and explained it as "a term that Bourdieu employed to indicate a cultural lag or mismatch between habitus and the changing 'rules' and regularities of a field" (McDonough & Polzer, 2012 p. 359).

When we apply this framework to the field of education, it could be said that teachers will draw upon previously held notions and find examples that agree with their past experiences. This can pose a challenge to teaching communities as leaders seek to support

changes in practice as student needs evolve. In thinking about the context of French immersion schools, teachers now have new demographics to deal with—for example, an increasing number of Indigenous and racialized students. Students in French Immersion classes have historically not had the same level of learning needs. Schools with high numbers of newcomer students, for example, now have many English language learners in French Immersion settings. Teachers may complain of the deficits these students bring, lack of supports, or explain that they have always taught in a certain way, and they have no intention of changing now. *Habitus* and *hysteresis* are particularly well-suited to thinking about change leadership and the commonly experienced reluctance teachers express to change their practice. Questions often surface around which students belong, which additional outside supports and funding will be added to accommodate changing in student need, and why pedagogy should shift to accommodate changing demographics. As “rules” change, such as flexible entry points, and a move towards linguistic and cultural diversity, McDonogh and Polzer explained (2012), there is often a lag in *habitus*. It would be applicable in education, then, and appropriate to say that as student needs change, there is a lag in teacher response and adaptation as well. French Immersion school leaders now have a context that doesn’t match the practice of their teaching staff.

The question of teacher adaptation or maladaptation in the context of increased student diversity, and the response of school leaders, is highly supported by Bourdieu’s conceptual framework. Marrying organization theory’s definition of school culture and how the myths and stories of a school are powerful symbols of who belongs (Hoy & Miskel, 2008), with the concept of hysteresis, the Bourdieusian term indicating a cultural lag or mismatch between *habitus* and the changing ‘rules’ and regularities of a *field* (McDonough & Polzer’s, 2012), help school leaders tremendously in understanding teacher reluctance to change. The well-

established *habitus* of teachers in the *field* encounters difficulty in changing conditions and the notion of *hysteresis* allows leaders a lens in which to understand the lag in change in practice.

The research uncovered by thinking about the factors that prevent teachers to readily adapt to change and applying a Bourdieusian lens to effective leadership practices pushes me to narrow the field of research to the specific context of French Immersion schools in Canada. In the context of a French Immersion school, what are the myths and stories of who belongs? What is the current habitus of the school culture? How does the notion of hysteresis present itself, and what are the specific leadership practices that support overcoming the hysteresis and adapting to change?

The following graphic (Figure 1) highlights the essential concepts just presented, links them to research questions and, thus, serves as a helpful visual framework to guide the research analysis.

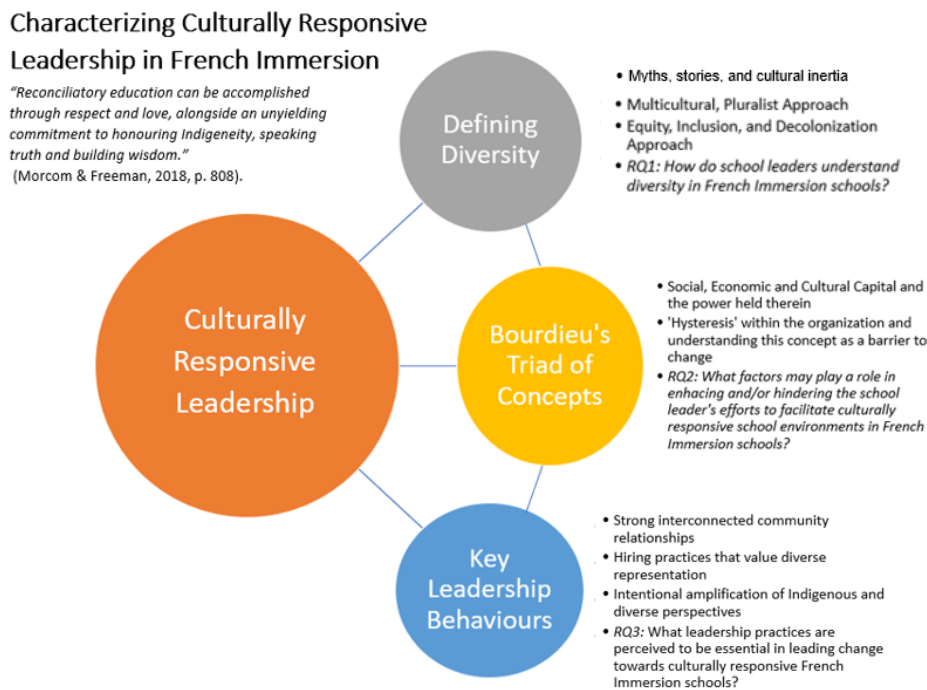


Figure 1. Visual mapping of culturally responsive leadership

Methodology and Methods

Worldview

The worldview that I am coming from for this study is transformative, with the understanding that knowledge reflects the power and social relationships in society, and the purpose of this knowledge is to help people improve society (Mertens, 2003, as cited in Creswell, 2013). Advocating for students on the margins of society and connecting with political and social oppression is a research agenda that I hold. I am looking to understand leadership practices that support teacher maladaptation to increased student diversity and leadership practices that are actively supportive of culturally responsive learning in French Immersion schools in Manitoba.

Research Design

I used a qualitative, case-study approach in this study using Stake's approach to the case-study method. Researchers have used qualitative case studies across varied disciplines to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of individuals, groups, processes, and relationships (Stake, 2005). This approach is defined as an inquiry where the researcher conducts and in-depth analysis of a case – in this context, the French Immersion program in a suburban Winnipeg school division, from the perspective of multiple individual school principals (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The school division selected has 11 French Immersion schools. Interviewees selected represent Early, Middle and Senior Years school settings, as well as both single and dual-track French Immersion environments. Criteria used to select interviewees

limited the number of participants but count more than half of the school divisions French Immersion school principals. School principals with more than ten years experience in the French Immersion context were invited to participate as they were likely to have experienced student and staff population change over time. Dual-track principals often have limited experience in French Immersion schools as they work in varied school contexts. Every school principal that met the criteria was interviewed in this study.

The outcome of a qualitative case study is a case description consisting of case-based themes (Boblin et al., 2013). Since case studies are best suited to research that asks “how” and “why” questions, this methodology was chosen (Boblin et al., 2013). This method is appropriate as it is the analysis of the shared experiences of school leaders, and the themes that emerge that will support how school leaders can support teacher-preparedness and positive school wide adaptation to increasingly racialized and linguistically diverse learners.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures followed recommendations offered by Creswell and Creswell (2018). In this case-study, I interviewed the six participants that met criteria. They were recruited through email invitation to French Immersion school leaders, and used a face to face, semi-structured interview guide. The guide was developed using open-ended verbs such as describe and began with the words how or why (Boblin et al., 2013). Study participants were all mid to late career school principals defined as having more than 10 years experience in French Immersion Schools in Manitoba. The researcher sought appropriate participant permission, then engaged in and recorded interviews with a password protected digital recording device and additional note-taking procedures. The in-person interviews lasted for approximately one hour each and used pre-selected questions and prompts (See Appendix A).

Organizational approval from the school division's senior administration team was obtained before the data collection began, along with approval from the University of Manitoba's research ethics board. French Immersion principals were recruited based on emails gathered from a publicly accessible divisional website, and by invitation at a French Immersion school leaders council meeting. Interested participants contacted me directly via email. Interviews were conducted in the fall of 2023.

Biographical information such as teaching assignment, educational background, and school experiences was collected at the beginning of the interview (See Table 1). This dialogue served as important piece to contextualize the experience of the participant, and to create a sense of comfort. A list of interview questions was sent with the consent form to all participants prior to the interview process, so that the participants felt an even greater sense of comfort with the process.

Pseudonyms were self-selected by participants and recorded by the researcher before the interviews began. I have stored the identifiable data (signed consent forms) separately from un-identifiable data (interview transcription records). The interviews were recorded and transcribed using the pseudonyms throughout. Recordings were destroyed immediately after transcription and the transcription data will be stored for five years, in anticipation of any possible academic publications. Following the transcription, the participants received an electronic copy of the transcript to review for accuracy and editing. No feedback was received. This indicated agreement of the validity of the transcript, as was made clear on the initial consent form. There were very minimal risks or harm associated with participating in this study. The purpose of the study was reinforced with the participants, who, participating in this research, will provide a better

understanding of how to actively support increasing diversity in French Immersion schools. This created a clear sense of purpose and meaningful contribution to research in the field of education.

Table 1. Participant Information.

Pseudonym	Educational Background	Years of Experience
Milly	16 years in FI school administration. Various teaching roles, predominantly in the middle years in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.	32 Years in Education
Willy	4 school administration positions, 2 in FI Division curriculum consultant role – dual tracks Various FI teaching roles from kindergarten to grade 9	30 Years in Education
Reese	3 school administration positions in FI Current leadership role in k-4 setting. Teaching and admin roles in High School and Middle Years FI settings	20 Years in Education FI student herself
Joey	5 FI school administration positions School counsellor Various teaching positions in early, middle and senior years in rural and urban FI settings	32 Years in Education
Manon	2FI school administration positions Teacher Librarian Various teaching roles in early, middle, and senior years in Saskatchewan and Manitoba in FI	30 Years in Education
Suzie	2 school administration positions in FI Divisional Curriculum Consultant role – dual tracks Resource Teacher in FI Various teaching roles in Early Years FI	Almost 30 Years in Education

The following is a brief introduction of the six participants of this research study.

Interview 1 – Milly

My first interview participant chose Milly as the pseudonym. Milly is an experienced educator with a broad educational background, including 16 years as a school administrator in French Immersion schools. Milly has worked in Saskatchewan, Ontario, European and Manitoba contexts. Her university undergraduate degree had a specific French Immersion focus.

Interview 2 – Willy

At the time of the interview, Willy had been 8 days retired from his 30-year tenure as an educator. Over his lengthy career Willy held 4 school administrator positions, a divisional consultant position and multiple classroom teaching roles between kindergarten and grade 9 – in both English and French Immersion programs. Willy had the unique opportunity of being both a classroom teacher and a principal of the same school, but many years apart. With this experience, he made some key observations around change.

Interview 3 – Reese

Reese was an interesting participant as she is both a graduate of the French Immersion program as a student herself, and an educator with more than 20 years experience teaching and leading in French Immersion Schools. She began by sharing her education experience as a student in three different inner-city French Immersion schools as an early, middle, and senior years student.

Interview 4 – Joey

Joey is currently a school administrator in a large, suburban, dual track high school. She has 32 years of broad experience in education in Manitoba. Joey started her career as a teacher in rural Manitoba, holding various roles from basic French teacher to Art teacher, to teaching English Language Learners. She moved to the city and continued to teach in a variety of capacities, including Law, Drama, Business, ELA (English Language Arts) and French. Joey later pursued further studies and obtained a Masters in School Counselling. She worked at dual-track French Immersion schools as the school counsellor and Teacher in Charge before moving

into school administration. Over the last 13 years she has held 4 appointments as a school leader, all in French immersion schools.

Interview 5 – Manon

Manon began her career in education almost 30 years ago in Saskatchewan. Her first teaching jobs were at varying grade levels from kindergarten to grade 9. She moved to Manitoba early in her teaching career and secured a position in the urban school division. Over her three decades with the division she has taught in classroom French Immersion positions, been assigned as Teacher Librarian in early, middle, and senior years settings, served in vice-principal roles and is now a principal of a K-4 French Immersion milieu school.

Interview 6 – Suzie

Suzie is a school leader in a French immersion school. She was a student herself in the French Immersion program. She grew up attending dual-track French Immersion schools. Her career in education has spanned almost 30 years. She has held varying teaching roles in early and middle years, worked as a resource teacher, curriculum consultant and school leader across multiple school divisions. Her current role is serving as principal of a large, dual-track K-4 school.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures that were used follow the recommendations offered by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Responses were coded using a combination of inductive and deductive codes. Examples of inductive codes were references to gaps in professional learning and gatekeeping, and references to feelings of anxiety in the face of change or expressions of

staff confidence or growth-mindset, these were coded as adaptability. Deductive codes were pre-determined in line with the research questions, as example being collective teacher efficacy. The codes were reviewed to eliminate redundancy and were then grouped into themes, ensuring responses and findings represent diverse perspectives. Finally, the codes with inductive themes were arranged in a concept map to be transcribed into a narrative for the findings and analysis section of this study.

Responses were coded as explained above using the conceptual framework previously shared (Table 2). This framework was used to analyse the data and to uncover school leader beliefs about student diversity in French Immersion, the factors that may play a role in embracing or hindering school leader efforts to embrace a changing context, and the leadership practices that are essential in leading this change.

The following table outlines the themes that were used to answer the research questions:

Table 2. Codes and Categories Used in Data Analysis

Research Question	Category Development – Deductive Codes	Substantive Themes – Inductive Codes	Theoretical Concepts
Q1	Barriers to Diversity	Gaps in Professional Learning	Field Habitus Capital Hysteresis
Q1		Gatekeeping in FI	
Q2	Resistance to Change	Adaptability	
Q3	Collective Efficacy	Hiring Bias	
Q3		Mentorship	
Q3		Communication	

Credibility

To ensure credibility, the following strategies were used, including clarification of research bias, member checking, peer debriefing, and qualitative reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Clarification of researcher bias

The researcher bias was articulated in writing in the thesis proposal in the reflexivity section. As stated, my worldview is transformative, and I seek social change in my actions and leadership. This may lead me to hold a certain bias in questions that I pose and ways in which I perceive responses. I was aware of the leadership position that I hold and the potential difficulties this may pose in eliciting truthful conversations with my colleagues. I made notes in the margins of my thoughts as I conducted the interviews. I interviewed principals in the field, which hold the same lateral position as I do, which may have helped to mitigate any minor risks associated with this research and my positionality. Trustworthiness was ensured as transcripts were returned to interviewees for their review and feedback. No feedback was received after members reviewed individual transcripts.

Limitations

The first limitation that was identified is in the interview method. Not all interviewees were equally articulate, or perceptive to the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A further limitation was discovered in the number of respondents elicited, as principals with more than ten years experience in a French Immersion context were limited in dual track schools. The criteria of this study were met at six interviews.

Ethical Issues

As sensitive information can frequently be revealed in an open-ended interview format, the following practices were in place (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). All The research objectives were clearly shared with participants both verbally and in writing, and a description of how the data collected will be used was shared. Before beginning, the participants were informed of all data collection devices and methods. Following the interviews and transcription process, verbatim

transcripts and reports were made available to the participants. All participants held the same position as the researcher. To mitigate any potential threat or competition between the researcher and participants as colleagues, the researcher used a transparent approach in engaging in the interviews. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Analysis

What is the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools? If a school leader is tasked to disrupt systems of inequity, then the following analysis will point French Immersion principals to practices that will ensure the culturally repossive learning environments for all students (Eacot, 2013).

The six interviews revealed many similarities in school leader perspectives in response to increasing learner diversity in French Immersion schools and provided saturated evidence for analysis. The following key themes emerged as the transcripts were examined:

- Gaps in Professional Learning
- Gatekeeping in French Immersion
- Adaptability to Change
- Hiring Bias
- Mentorship
- School Leader Communication

The following narrative compares each participant's points of view and highlights convergence in thinking within each theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Diversity Then and Now - The Evolving Nature of French Immersion Schools

Gaps in Professional Learning

All interviewees had two to three decades of experience in Manitoba French Immersion schools. In their collective experiences, which encapsulate urban, rural, suburban, single track, dual track, early, middle, and senior years contexts. All principals interviewed shared the same view of early French Immersion programs, and used similar descriptors such as culturally homogenous, predominantly white and middle-class. Reese shared her experience as a student and described her graduating grade 12 class as studious, hard-working, and free of any identifiable additional learning needs. Suzie shared her experience as a first-year teacher in the 1990s, being asked about her racial background and surmising that her parent community had not seen a brown person before meeting her. Milly's responses also corroborated with the view that limited diversity was historically experienced in French immersion schools. Respondents agreed that the learner diversity in the last decades in French immersion schools has shifted towards increased diversity among students, their cultures and languages. Willy used the term, 'exponential' in describing the recent growth of the EAL population of students in his school. Manon shared that her small school population, previously static in cultural diversity and learning needs, welcomed 19 newcomer families in the last two years. Reese said that 11% of her school population spoke a language other than English at home, and that these students were primarily in kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms, indicating a trend towards increasing diversity in her school population. Suzie identified Indigenous students as an increasing cultural group in

her dual-track French Immersion school, with 20% of students self-identifying as Indigenous, and an increasing number choosing French Immersion programming. Joey described the diverse student groups initiated in her school over the past few years including an active Graduate Student Association, a Black Students' Union, a Muslim Student Group. She shared that French Immersion students are currently part of all these communities of learners.

With rapidly changing demographics, Reese underscored a struggle with professional learning, remarking that it can feel like she is playing “catch up” with her staff, pushing in workshops to support new staff learning around autism or English language learners. “Sometimes it can feel like our staff is 10 years behind the training that others in the division have done.” This is an example of a lag in habitus, with professional learning not mirroring current student and staff needs (McDonogh and Polzer, 2012). The participants agreed, once white homogeneous French immersion schools have become more diverse with students representing many different Indigenous, linguistically diverse, and racialized groups. This identified gap in professional learning is an essential phenomenon for school leaders to take note of. School principals use school planning and professional learning cycles to empower teachers with tools to differentiate instruction, and to ensure a staff culture of inclusion and responsiveness for linguistically diverse, racialized and Indigenous students.

Gatekeeping in French Immersion

The theme of who belongs to French immersion schools emerged in the reflections of few of the participants as part of sharing about changing diversity. Both Willy and Milly acknowledged the elitist beginnings of the French Immersion program, having each spent over 30 years in the education system and bearing witness to a changing population of French Immersion students. Willy went into further detail in explaining his view of ‘the why’ around

such historical understandings of the nature of who belongs in French Immersion. The fact that the program was pushed into the education system by a group of advocating parents who had the means and resources to attend meetings and learn the intent of the program was one of the points. This speaks to the social capital of parents that had the means and connections to advocate for their children. Research has found that newcomer children, and children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are far less likely to choose French Immersion, in part due to lack of information (Worswick, 2003). Milly remarked that more and more newcomer families are choosing French Immersion for their children, and often wishing to enter the program later than the naturalized start date based on arrival date. Canada's broad immigration agenda is changing communities and the base of parents choosing French Immersion is broadening as well. Willy's metaphor around a system of filters was helpful in visualizing the barriers to the French Immersion program that may not exist in English programming. He talked about parental choices, and different "weeding points" where parental choice comes back into question. He reflected how parents make an initial choice to enrol their children in a program that is not in their mother tongue. They re-evaluate as their child learns to read at a potentially different rate than their peers in a unilingual program. They may re-evaluate their program choice at the time of provincial assessments, or natural school shifts, like moving from the early years school to the middle years school. This constant re-evaluation from parents often results in high school graduating classes of French Immersion students seen as elite groups of learners. ☐☐☐

Manon also shared the perception of an underlying message that is commonly understood by staff and families is that French Immersion students are the "better students" and that the program is looked at differently. Questions around suitability of students often surface at times of struggle. Suzie's experience was that grade 4 is a common time of question for teachers and

families. Teachers sometimes ask, “Is the student fit for French Immersion, or is this something extra for the child to manage?” Manon asked her staff to be thoughtful in their reflection of student progress, and to ask themselves to evaluate program accommodations for the student, rather than suitability. Joey shared that a common perception is that French Immersion is seen as “too hard” for some students. Joey noted that “Teachers don’t overly say anything, but the message of insuitability for the program comes across to students and families.” Scholarly work confirms that, in fact, some parents are overtly warned not to enroll their child if they are struggling in school (Worswick, 2003). There was an understanding shared that principals need to push back against any notions that French Immersion kids are stronger or better behaved according to Manon. Milly acknowledged that there are still teachers that continue to hold ideals of French Immersion as elitist but says she does see a shift. According to Milly more students with diverse learning needs, such as students on the autism spectrum, or newcomer students are now enrolling in FI programs and are gradually started to be seen as also belonging, although gatekeeping is a continual problem.

Joey described staff attitudes around increasing diversity in French Immersion classrooms as a “mixed bag.” Some folks continued to feel that the program is just too hard for certain students and encouraged them to move to the English program inadvertently. They do not overtly say anything, but the message comes across to students and families. She shared that this is especially true for struggling students and students who may not present as intrinsically motivated to learn the language.

Several interviewed principals spoke to the entry points for students in French Immersion. Some schools have strict entry points, and all French Immersion language learners learn French at the same rate of instruction. This practice caused newcomer families at Manon’s

school to separate siblings. Younger children were enrolled in the French Immersion program, and as older siblings were not eligible, they registered at the English program school in the catchment area. Newcomer families expressed interest in joining the program at later grade levels. This caused questions to surface amongst school leaders around how these students would be supported to make sure all feel that they belong. All administrators interviewed expressed openness to allowing greater access to the French Immersion program but were not sure how this would be supported in practice.

Suzie spoke about the question of belonging in French Immersion. She shared that there are points in a child's academic journey where suitability is questioned. If needs arise in grade 4, for example, questions might surface about whether the child should continue in the French Immersion program. She mentioned: "It's always that grade 4 cusp, in my experience. Are they fit for French Immersion, or is this something extra for the student to navigate and manage?" She said that communication with families that focussed on student strengths and progress towards learning outcomes was key; that we know there are difficulties, but there was progress too. Suzie questioned, "Is it that the French Immersion program is not for the student, or are we not making enough accommodations or differentiation to allow the student to reach their individual goals?"

Suzie continued that a barrier that the team continues to come up against is parental resistance to support in French Immersion. She explained that some cultural groups can be very resistant to any labels or programming that may be perceived to other their child. This parental fear is supported through time by many team members, including clinicians, to support families in understanding the needs of their children. This support in cultural capital and understanding systems is essential in supporting inclusion in French Immersion settings.

Gatekeeping continues to be a barrier to inclusion in French Immersion programs, it seems. Cultural and linguistic capital are identified obstacles for newcomer and Indigenous students and families, and the habitus of the field is operating in a way that seems inclusive in some ways but continues to either filter students at a high rate, or not allow access at all.

Resistance to Change

Adaptability

Teacher reluctance to change was expressed as experiencing anxiety by two participants. Xiyun et al point out that teachers with a low degree of self-efficacy as professionals have a much higher level of anxiety as compared with teachers with high self-efficacy (2022). As previously noted, Willy felt that teachers that see themselves as learners do not suffer in the same way that teachers who are attached to student performance for their own professional self-worth. This struggle is very real to an experienced teacher focussed on teacher performance and requires support to move through the context of changing student learning needs effectively. From a philosophical level, Milly felt that teachers in her experience were open and willing to have students with linguistic or racial diversity in their classrooms and theoretically they understand that they need to support all students. She felt that any fear or resistance could be attributed to the anxiety of not knowing what to do. For her, change really begins with staff adaptability: “Open-minded people are still going to have times when they say the wrong thing in their exploration, and their process of expanding knowledge...but it’s about learning.”

Growth mindset was identified by a few interviewees. Reese talked about staff adaptability as a key factor in embracing changing student populations. She also felt that a

growth mindset had a big impact in teacher ability to welcome diverse learners into their classrooms. Joey named that building a strong sense of teacher efficacy was an important tool in shifting mindsets. “Trying to get teachers to believe in their own capacity to ensure that students are successful” was said to be important by Joey. This quote illustrates the important role school leaders must play in supporting teachers in embracing change. According to Joey, changing staff and community mindsets was seen as continual goal in French Immersion programs. Educators are resistant when they are not confident, according to Joey’s observations. She feels that time needs to be spent on building staff capacity and confidence, emphasizing the importance of school leaders in this process. Culturally responsive leadership encourages staff mindsets that challenge inequities Johnson (2014). Teachers with a higher degree of self-efficacy seem more positioned to challenge barriers and embrace a culture of change.

All six participants spoke about early experiences as educators in the French immersion program as essential to build teacher self-efficacy and adaptability to change. Staff experience plays a role in professional adaptability and openness to change according to several of the participants in this study. For example, Manon shared that university programs now have education students from all over the world, and that there seems to be more diversity in broader society than she experienced as a student.

Suzie leads a dual-track school where staff are exposed to diversity in student learning needs more consistently than teachers in a single-track program. She felt that this had an impact in teacher adaptability to increasing to diversity in French Immersion. She also felt that French Immersion teachers are well-positioned to support newcomer English Language Learners, especially in the early years, since instruction is naturally multi-modal, and language focussed.

Similarly, Joey shared that staff attitudes were case-specific and related more to training and historical experiences than age of the staff member. She shared that some teachers believed that students should be streamed into certain courses, for example, and this is based on past experiences in schools. Suzie said that an important leadership practice was clear communication of beliefs and expectations, and a culture of support. A support team and a principal that models a growth mindset, reassuring that it's OK to try something and fail, that it's ok to fail because we are all going to learn something from it.

Reese echoed that age or more years of experience did not dictate staff attitudes around change. Some of her more long-time staff were described as eager change-makers. All leaders spoke about the importance and role of intentional mentorship and influence. Willy used this description of mentorship and support, noting that "I think it's the critical mass of 'go in with as many people as possible' to embrace diversity as a positive challenge." This theme emphasizes how professional experience and early exposure to classroom learner diversity helps to build teacher confidence, which could be mindfully supported by school leaders. Interacting with people of all different backgrounds and mindsets has been understood to present a challenge to professionals without prior exposure to diversity (American University, 2019).

All the experiences shared by these school leaders speak to Bourdieu's concept of hysteresis, where there is a mismatch between the habitus and the changing field (McDonogh and Polzer, 2012). Suzie's school staff seems to be experiencing less hysteresis than school leaders of single track or milieu French Immersion school as students with diverse learning needs are more present in the school. Joey shared that training for staff and more

experience were practices to counter hysteresis and support diversity student population in French Immersion settings.

Collective Efficacy

Hiring Bias

While student diversity is changing in French Immersion schools according to the interview participants, all six interviewees spoke about a lack of visible representation of diversity among teaching staff. Willy and Milly both expressed value in hiring teaching staff that represent the changing composition of French Immersion schools. Willy shared the intentional change he was able to make in the last six years, from a predominantly white, female staff, to a staff with increased male, diverse and linguistic representation, although this change was very nominal. Milly shared the same intention but noted the competing need to hire the most qualified staff versus the need to increase visible diversity. This perspective illustrates the idea whereby merit is still evaluated by notions of being most qualified. Linguistic and cultural capital play a large role in school leader perceptions of who is qualified.

Manon shared that the lack of diversity in her teaching staff positioned her teachers as learners. She mentioned that “when you don’t have a diverse staff that represents student cultural backgrounds there is an expectation from the school leader that we have a lot of learning to do as a staff.” Milly talked about the importance of partnership with community when school-based teaching staff did not represent the cultural groups in the school. She described working with an Indigenous divisional itinerant teacher, working towards incorporating Treaty Land acknowledgement, talking about why is that important, and bringing in smudging practice. This is an example of a practice whereby hiring diverse teachers have helped contribute to creating

culturally responsive institutional climate in schools. This partnership is helpful in shifting the habitus of the teaching community and building new practices for a field of educators.

Being mindful of hiring practices is something Willy also underlined. He noted that while the number of staff members representing minoritized groups and speaking multiple languages had increased, most of these staff members were not professional staff, however. Joey acknowledged her positionality as an educated white woman and that the diversity of her teaching staff has not kept up with the diversity of her school. She noticed that French Immersion graduates were becoming her teaching staff. Joey also reflected on the leadership community in her school division. She highlighted the inclusion of more women over the three decades of her career, but that cultural diversity in school leadership has not matched changing student population trends. Hiring the French Immersion graduates perpetuates whiteness and outdated habitus in professional staff. Intention hiring and supporting newcomer teachers is an essential leadership practice in dismantling barriers to inclusive French Immersion schools.

Suzie is a racialized woman in a school leadership role and from her position she shared feeling a sense of obligation to her students and to her racialized community. She felt that it made a difference to the students of seeing a racialized person to lead a school, building relationships and trust among the students. Her positional power and racialized representation are supportive of students seeing themselves in similar roles.

A School Culture of Collaboration: Mentorships

Teacher reluctance in being open to change and adapting to learner diversity in French Immersion schools is the challenge that the analysis has revealed. All participants clearly articulated the leadership practices that they felt were supportive to the goal of leading through a climate of change, and there were many similarities across participants reflections. For example,

strong school culture of professional collaboration was noted universally. Milly highlighted community and divisional partnerships as essential, as well as having a keen understanding of community needs. Willy prioritized building relationship with staff through open conversations and working within existing school structures toward a common goal. Leaning on school-based support teams to co-teach with teachers to build collective efficacy is key in supporting a learner-mindset, which Willy found essential as well. Milly highlighted a shared responsibility for student success and school functionality. A collaborative collegial culture was key to this goal in her eyes as well.

Fostering a strong sense of belonging amongst staff, building a culture of mentorship and positive leader-teacher relationships were identified as mitigating factors in staff resistance to change. Manon helped her teachers understand that they are not alone, that they are supported by a whole team approach. A strong belief in teacher collaboration drives Milly's leadership practice. Strong foundational relationships were key in her leadership practice, particularly when one was to approach somebody and question their beliefs or values, which may feel a bit judgemental. Strong foundational relationship would help in those conversations.

Willy prioritized open conversations to build shared understanding. He saw teachers as learners and gave lots of room for growth. Fostering relationships in a co-teaching model, where mentor teachers would alongside teachers to build capacity helps to enhance new learning. Willy noted: "You have to roll up your sleeves and work together." Willy also commented on the importance of understanding staff culture, the "subculture of the building and who the true leaders are."

Suzie talked about Elder and Knowledge Keeper relationships to support staff in embedding Indigenous way of knowing, being and doing. Indigenous perspectives were infused broadly in curriculum with teachers being supported in the planning and implementation from

Indigenous divisional itinerant teaching staff. Suzie shared that there is an expectation for continuous learning amongst staff and working in relationship with Indigenous community members. Mentorship models are in place so that staff can learn from and with each other. Suzie's comments regarding Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement were as follows: "I think it is essential because the kids really benefit from it, and it helps teachers feel more comfortable learning alongside their students." This speaks to the importance of working in relationship with community and community members in the context of Indigenous education and CRL.

For Milly, really knowing the community as a leader is essential. She emphasized the need for understanding the community needs of a school intimately by working in relationship with students and families. She felt that building relationships was the essential first step before planning forward in a collaborative way.

Principal Vision and Communication

The participants persistently elicited comments about the importance of clear vision and consistent articulation of the goals of the modern French Immersion program, and school beliefs regarding supporting diversity to staff and families. Milly expressed her strong belief in collaborative practice and fostering a sense of belonging for staff students and families. She felt it was important that no matter where the students come from, whatever their cultural background is, for students to feel like they belong. Milly also stressed the importance of involving the voice from the parent community in decision-making. She involved parents when seeking feedback in school planning, looking for diverse views in her approach moving forward.

Reese has made some changes to long-held school traditions such as the annual Christmas concert. As Christianity was no longer the central celebration of her school community, the annual music concert was moved to the spring, and now serves as a showcase of

a year's worth of learning in the creative arts. This leadership act now better reflect her current student population. She believed that any change in practice must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and the reasoning must be shared to be understood. "If rational is clear to staff than it makes staff reluctance less prevalent", she noted.

When Joey was asked to share leadership practices to support increasing diversity in French Immersion "clearly communicated beliefs" was her initial response. She shared with her whole dual track staff that they are all teachers of French Immersion. She would advise new leaders in French Immersion to just speak directly, naming French Immersion as an inclusive program where children can struggle, and where children will be supported.

These leader behaviours actively seek to disrupt the hysteresis present in the professional field. Making decisions to align school celebrations to represent current school populations, and then to support all stakeholders with clear communication, collaboration and support, is an example of leading with community for inclusive French Immersion schools. A highly effective culturally responsive school leader is said to emphasizes high expectations, incorporate cultural knowledge and creates structures that empower students and families Johnson (2014). Clearly communicated beliefs and practices will help positively implement change.

Findings and Answering the Research Questions

This case-study provided a rich data set to answer the three research questions for this study that seeks to uncover leadership practices in support of culturally responsive French Immersion schools in Manitoba.

RQ1. How has both teacher and student diversity changed in French Immersion schools in Manitoba in the past two decades?

Participants confirmed an historical demographic shift and that the Manitoba French Immersion schools are indeed in a time of change. The term ‘exponential growth’ described the increase of student population in French Immersion schools learning English language, a phenomenon historically absent. Students identifying as Indigenous represented 20% of the total student population in one participant’s school. Participants that described their schools as “not very diverse” still reported an increase in student diversity, particularly in kindergarten and grade 1 classroom settings. School leaders shared many markers of diversity in describing current student populations: race, language, gender and sexuality, and cognitive ability. This aligned with Gardiner and Enomoto’s (2016) description of diversity in Canadian schools. This is in sharp contrast to the student descriptors used by participants to describe early French Immersion classes: homogenous, white, middle class.

The question of who has traditionally had a place in French Immersion schools, and who has a place now, is worthy of discussion. Has the traditional notion of the French Immersion learner really changed? Invisible criteria of good behaviour and initial success in language learning traditionally forced a streaming effect from the early years, and an attrition effect over time (Blanchette, 2017). This continues in current practice with one participant using a metaphor

around a system of filters used to visualize and explain the barriers to the French Immersion program that may not exist in English programming. Parents often are choosing a school in a different neighbourhood, and when challenges present, or a natural transitional point in schools, such as moving from an elementary school to a middle years school, parents may disenroll their children.

Participants referred to the act of choice-making as an initial first step in gaining social capital. Choosing a school outside of a local catchment area forces parents to be more long-term focussed. The people that are drawn to FI are drawn for a multitude of reasons, not necessarily for the language, but the gifts of bilingual education itself, such as gaining access to a private high school, or into a sought-after university degree program.

From a critical perspective, an accepted institutional attrition as points of filtration or streaming is an invisible barrier to inclusion in French Immersion. This is ‘invisible’ because there is implicit/tacit recognition that it isn’t a proper or received pedagogical approach to funnel diverse learners away from FI anymore. Participants spoke of an “underlying message” that families and staff still understood – that French Immersion is for the “better students”, and questions of suitability still commonly arise. Invisible criteria to gain access to French Immersion programs points to the Bourdieu’s notions of cultural capital. Linguistically diverse and newcomer families are faced with additional barriers such as settlement, learning language, learning a new education system, and lacking community relationships. These barriers may prevent access to French Immersion as families may not know about the program, or they may get a message that it is not for them. How does the French Immersion program welcome students and families who do not bring the cultural capital that matches the dominant culture? In thinking about the inequalities within the French Immersion system it is important that French

Immersion programs identify this bias to welcome students and families new to Canada and support continued success over time. The specific barrier of rigid entry points impact newcomer families disproportionately as they may arrive in Canada after kindergarten or grade 1 and must be reconsidered by systems and school leaders.

The literature suggests that teachers and principals seem theoretically supportive of the inclusion of newcomer students in French immersion programs, but the perceived lack of resources offered for student support led educators to consider pushing to exclude them using the assumption that English language learners require greater support than could be offered in French Immersion settings (Davis, 2019). The data in this study revealed the same beliefs, a worry about resources and support for newcomer students, particularly around entry points to the French Immersion program. Several principals interviewed spoke to the entry points for students in French Immersion programs. Some schools have strict entry points, and all French Immersion language learners learn French at the same rate of instruction. This practice caused newcomer families at one school to separate siblings. Younger children were enrolled in the French Immersion program, and as older siblings were not eligible, they registered at the English program school in the catchment area. Newcomer families expressed interest in joining the program at later grade levels. This caused questions to surface amongst school leaders around how these students would be supported. All administrators' interviews expressed openness to allowing greater access to the French Immersion program but were not sure how this would be supported in practice. Understanding the needs of diverse student groups and having supports in place is an identified challenge.

Principals all seemed to know that they need to support a shift in system and staff practice to adapt to changing student and family needs but were hesitant or unsure of how to

support current realities. This cultural inertia or the slow response to opportunities in the environment, enables school leaders to continue with status quo practices around student entry into the French Immersion program as they wait for the system to change (Campeau, 2019).

Participants expressed struggle in hiring teaching staff that represent the changing face of French Immersion schools as well. That poses a question of what form of capital do dominant-culture new-hire teachers possess that minority candidates do not? How does the notion of capital come into play in the area of hiring for increased staff diversity and representation of students in French Immersion schools? Principals expressed a wish to hire racialized staff and counter the statement with an expressed need for highly qualified staff. Principals themselves seem to grapple with their own cultural inertia as they express a desire to hire for diversity but continue with status-quo hiring practices (Campeau, 2019).

A new phenomenon that emerged from the data is that previous students of the French Immersion program are now entering schools as teachers. Just as students historically in French Immersion have been heterogeneous, this is now being reproduced in teaching staff as well. Another trend is that non-professional staff is increasing in diversity at a higher rate than professional staff. Finally, a near dearth of racialized staff in school leadership positions was found in the context of this study. This aligns with the literature review and the data out of Ontario reporting that increasing diversity in school leadership positions as a key recommendation in supporting French Immersion school principals as 90.4 % of Ontario principals were Caucasian at the time of publication (Pollock & Wang, 2019). Participants voiced a need to hire for diversity in schools but noted the competing need to hire the “most qualified staff”. Campeau’s (2019) concept of “cultural inertia” might explain participant reluctance to prioritize hiring for diversity. Participants acknowledged the need for better

representation of diversity within the field, but just chalk it up to being an ongoing challenge, because the strong and diverse candidates are not there. Principals expressed a wish to hire racialized staff and counter the statement with an expressed need for highly qualified staff. Principals themselves seem to grapple with their own cultural inertia as they express a desire to hire for diversity but continue with status-quo hiring practices (Campeau, 2019).

The data revealed that staff is much more diverse in the lower ranks of the field (crossing guards, educational assistants, and lunch program supervisors), where pay, status, and educational capital is lowest. This aligns with the researcher that tells us that change is much slower in the professional ranks (Government of Canada, 2023). In terms of staffing, the field most readily diversifies where it is easiest and least consequential, it would seem, in the part-time, low-status, and low-paying jobs (Government of Canada, 2023). Statistics Canada reported that racialized people in Canada were more likely than non-racialized, non-Indigenous peers to earn bachelor and graduate university degrees, but less likely to find jobs that earn the same pay as these same peers in the years after (Government of Canada, 2023). Morcom and Freedman (2018) underscored that that the principal must prioritize recruitment and sustainment of culturally responsive teachers who are prepared to work in inclusive spaces. School leaders in this study countered the lack of staff representation for students by partnering with community and working in relationship. Principals partnered with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous divisional itinerant teachers, as well as parents and community members. They acknowledged that they must lead professional development that is constantly evolving to meet the changing community needs and that is in accordance with the “Calls to Action” from the TRC (Morcom & Freeman, 2018, p. 808). An expectation of continuous learning for all staff,

and working in relationship with Indigenous community members is specific to Reconciliation in the Canadian context as well.

Participants also highlighted their responsibility as leaders to hold the expectation for staff learning in the area cultural responsiveness. This aligns with Gay (2010) and Khalifa et al. (2016) in that, culturally responsive practices and the inclusion of varied approaches must be amplified and prioritized by the school leader. Cazden and Leggett (1976) stated long ago that all schools must bring the invisible culture of the community into the school through parent participation, hiring, promotion of minority group staff, and professional learning opportunities. Schools must respond to culturally unique contexts, just as they require teachers to respond to diverse students.

Khalifa (2010) asserted that in the case of those in authority roles such as principals or teachers, some are simply not willing to validate non-traditional capital. In this thesis, all participants interviewed acknowledged their own positional power and personal social capital, but did not articulate specific leadership practices to mitigate inequity. When teachers possess cultural or social capital associated with the dominant culture, but the students do not—it is again the school leader who plays the key role in initiating change (Khalifa, 2010). FI school leaders must act as a buffer in the protection of children and their families from missed opportunity or even discipline-based on the type of capital they possessed. The school leaders must also act as a bridge between students and their families, the teachers, and community, with the goal of developing a space from which they could access opportunities that dominant-culture students took for granted (Khalifa, 2010).

The following points offer a summary to the first research question, *How has both teacher and student diversity changed in French Immersion schools in Manitoba in the past two decades according to school leaders:*

1. Increase among students whose first language is not English.
2. Increase among Indigenous students.
3. Increase among racialized individuals.

RQ2. What factors may play a role in enhancing and /or hindering the school leader's efforts to facilitate culturally responsive school environments in French Immersion schools?

The field of French Immersion education has its own unique habitus, like any field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The field of French Immersion in Manitoba is changing to include more linguistically diverse, Indigenous and racialized students. One participant shared that her community is growing in diversity. Three years ago, she welcomed one newcomer family in the year, two years ago she welcomed 8, and at the time of the interviewed, she had already welcomed 12 newcomer families to her school community, and that was early in the school year. Participants described their staffs in unison as “not very diverse” in their makeup, with a Franco- Manitoban linguistic majority, or Manitoba French Immersion program graduates. Feelings of frustration amongst staff were commonly shared by participants around newcomers students arriving mid-year without French language skills. Sometimes staff attitudes can be unsaid, according to one participant. “Some folks continued to feel that the program is just too hard for certain students and encouraged them to move to the English program

inadvertently. They do not overtly say anything, but the message comes across to students and families.” The leadership community in Manitoba French Immersion schools continues to lack the diversity in relation to student populations. When reflecting on diversity in the leadership community of other principals in her school division, another participant spoke about change in the inclusion towards more women, but that cultural diversity in school leadership has not kept up with changing student populations. Thoughtful hiring and promoting practices have included women, but the student population has changed much faster than the staff, in her observation.

The analysis revealed that staff feelings of professional efficacy had a role in enhancing or hindering leader efforts to facilitate culturally responsive schools. Educators that see themselves as learners did not experience anxiety for diversity in the same way that teachers who are attached to student performance for their own professional self-worth. This aspect of staff mindset and adaptability is worth exploring further. What a teacher knows to be true as far as experiences in their habitus are challenged by change. This struggle is very real to an experienced teacher focussed on teacher performance. As a result, teachers require leadership support to move through this change effectively. School leaders identified building staff capacity in their ability to differentiate instruction and focussing on strategies that allow teachers to build confidence and believe in the own capacity to support diverse student needs (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

Teacher reluctance to change was expressed as anxiety by participants in this study. The concept of ‘cultural inertia’ can be applied and is certainly a factor that hinders school leader efforts in leading culturally responsive schools (Campeau, 2019). The binary of being open to diversity clashed against the practical application of supporting students with a variety of

learning needs. Fear or resistance from educators or school leaders was attributed to not knowing what to do. Campeau (2019) introduced the concept of institutional myths in her work in understanding organizations and reluctance to change. “Widespread understandings of social reality which possess an intrinsic quality of ‘truth’ about them and are often used to justify ways of doing things” (Campeau, 2019, p. 72). Teacher and leader notions of lack of supports for students justified inaction in the data. Broadly, teaching staff loved the idea of being inclusive and opening French Immersion access beyond grade 1, but they wondered what supports would be in place. In practice this manifests as a want to welcome diverse learners, but resistance due to perceived or real lack of supports in place.

Another key factor that played a role in school leaders practice was acknowledging the previous professional experiences of teaching staff. Bourdieu’s concept of hysteresis, of course, speaks to the issue of a ‘lag’, when perhaps the habitus doesn’t keep up with the changing nature of the field, society, or external pressures that direct the field to change, like French Immersion provincial or divisional policy directives (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Quickly changing student demographics, and staff need for training made one school leader feel like they were playing “catch up” with professional learning, in comparison to the training other divisional staff members had received. The field in which educators find themselves, and the experience of the specific players in their environment had an impact on teacher attitude. Teachers in dual-track schools had more natural exposure to student diversity. This was felt to have an impact on French Immersion teacher openness to increasing diversity in student learning needs.

Another factor that played a role in school leaders' practice was acknowledging the previous personal experiences of staff. Principals noted that previous exposure to diverse learning needs, student diversity and training had an impact on staff attitude and were more

important than age. Some long-time staff were described as “eager change-makers”, while some younger staff members could hold more traditional notions of “streaming”, for example. The habitus of the staff members in relation to the field of practice has an impact and is important for the school leader to consider in thinking about changing attitudes towards a more inclusive French Immersion program. Intentional mentorship, with structures like teacher-led leadership in schools, should amplify the voices of staff that hold influence, and are open to learning and supporting diversity in French Immersion.

The second research question, *what factors may play a role in enhancing and /or hindering the school leader’s efforts to facilitate culturally responsive school environments in French Immersion schools*, can be summarized by the following factors that play a role for school leaders:

1. Positive Teacher Efficacy
2. Cultural Inertia:
 - Invisible criteria currently in place for restricting student access
 - Inflexible student entry points
3. Professional and Personal Experiences of School Staff: Cultural Capital
4. Lack of staff diversity among teachers.
5. Inequity in social capital among students and families

RQ3. What leadership practices are perceived to be essential in leading change towards culturally responsive French Immersion schools?

The first leadership practice identified as essential in leading change is relationship. Kiiniwi, “You and us (together),” the Anishinaabemowin phrase used to portray

the partnership between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators is alive in participant work in schools (Morcom & Freeman, 2019, p. 808). Beyond partnerships with Indigenous itinerant teachers, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders, principals in this study worked with their parent groups to understand the needs of community. Taking time to talk with community groups, students, and parents was deemed as essential in building the relationship that will later provide the basis for moving forward together. This manifested as a sense of belonging that is fostered through community connectedness as the student populations has changed. There is a strong belief in collaborative practice and fostering a sense of belonging for all staff, students, and families.

School leaders shared examples of school structures that have been put into practice so that students feel interconnectedness to each other, to staff and to the community as a whole. Universal supports such as breakfast programs and walking school buses that all students can access allows school to work with community members and groups to support student needs in a safe and honouring way. Normalizing support was named as important to community building, Culturally responsive practices and the inclusion of varied approaches are amplified and prioritized by the school leader here (Gay, 2010). As population demographics evolve, so too must leadership practices. Culturally responsive leadership promotes a school climate that is inclusive of all students (Khalifa et al., 2016). Leaders interviewed sought to embed student support practices that are non-judgmental and engaged community members to share voice and presence.

Clear vision and communication is the second leadership practice identified in the research. Study participants understood their role in clearly communicating the current values of the French Immersion program. Speaking directly and naming the inclusive vision of French

Immersion was a leadership practice held by all leaders. In response to shifts in French Immersion student populations, Manitoba Education and Training (2017) has recently declared that the “goal of the French Immersion Program is to develop proud, confident, engaged, plurilingual global citizens” (p. 5). As school leadership should be a disruptive practice, not simply a role characterized by tasks that might be described as management or administration, school leaders must push back against teacher reluctance (Eacott, 2013). If culturally responsive school leaders are defined as a public intellectual, curriculum innovator and a social activist, then they must be clear in communicating inclusive beliefs and values (Johnson, 1996). The *Manitoba Public Schools Act* mandates that public schools welcome and support all learners who enter their classrooms with appropriate educational programming (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2022). The school leaders in this study voiced that they must therefore think critically about and confront teacher reluctance to accommodate increased racialized and Indigenous students, employing leadership practices to support this change. Participants shared the opinion that the field of French Immersion can be a place of struggle and not just a place for students where success comes easily. If rational is made clear to staff, then it makes staff reluctance less prevalent.

A third leadership practice identified as essential in leading change is a school culture of collaboration. School culture is defined in the Manitoba School Leadership Framework. A school culture is seen in the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates (Government of Manitoba, 2024). A strong school culture of professional collaboration, and a shared responsibility for the success of all students was noted. Building a culture of mentorship, where teachers with a strong sense of teacher efficacy, and inclusive practices mentor colleagues. A strong foundation relationship was indicated as important in these partnerships. Mentorship

structures were mentioned in all participant interviews as integral practices to support whole staff belonging and student learning. Ensuring that new staff were mentored by established staff with inclusive practices to share and model was mentioned by multiple participants.

The third research question, *What leadership practices are perceived to be essential in leading change towards culturally responsive French Immersion schools*, can be summarized by the following significant practices for school leaders:

1. Building relationships with staff and students.
2. Vision and Communication
3. School Culture of Collaboration

These three sub-questions have provided different aspects that help to answer the main research question: What is the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools?

Overall, the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment is crucial. Considering the changing landscape of French Immersion classrooms in Manitoba, French Immersion school leaders are tasked to clearly lead and communicate the current values of the French Immersion program: plurilingual and inclusive. Fostering a healthy school culture of collaboration and mentorship amongst school staff, with specific attention to professional learning opportunities that seek to bolster the social and cultural capital of staff, will help to build teacher and staff efficacy and confidence amidst change. School principals must work in relationship with Indigenous and racialized community members to understand community needs and move forward in a good way. Principals who hold the power to hire must think about the representation of racialized and Indigenous staff, particularly in professional

roles and actively work to increase diversity in their teams. Finally, understanding the historical landscape of unique student populations is important as school principals tune into changing demographics. This allows the school leader to look for teaching and leadership practices in place that may be upholding the status quo, rather than meeting the needs of the current community.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that Manitoba French Immersion schools are the site of rapid demographic change. The purpose of this study was to interview current French Immersion school leaders to uncover the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools. The main research problem that this thesis set to address was the inquiry into limited responsiveness towards cultural diversity in French Immersion schools in Manitoba. Central to this research was the question of *what is the role of the school leader in facilitating a culturally responsive school environment in the context of the increasing diversity in Manitoba's French Immersion schools?* The six participant interviews gave insight into this question and the subsequent analysis provided many provocations to consider.

Common barriers to increasing diversity in the French Immersion program are “invisible.” The term invisible is appropriate as there is a collective understanding amongst teachers and leaders that it is not pedagogically current to funnel students away from the program. These are barriers systemic in nature, such as access to the program in kindergarten and grade 1 only, and a streaming affect along the way as students filter out before graduation (Blanchette, 2017; Keep, 1993; Mady & Masson, 2018). Institutional myths remain around course suitability, and access to supports. Leaders identify these myths as a cause for students to shift to English programming and the cultural inertia in the system seems to slow leader impact in the face of change (Campeau, 2019). School leaders must mitigate active cultural inertia and be more reflexive of the cultural capital that empowers some groups over others. The reproduction of dominant cultural identity through school-organized celebrations that make some families feel more at home than others, Christmas concerts, for example (Yoon & Gulson, 2010).

As schools French Immersion schools operate under a status quo operational mindset regarding student entry points, and attrition rates of students, school leaders must understand the needs of different groups and address the perceived lack of supports to support and inclusive program for all groups. French Immersion schools must be open systems that support newcomer students into the program beyond grade one, and school principals must direct student services teachers to plan for these students and support teachers in inclusive practices, just as they would newcomer English language learners to English only programs. This ensures that cultural groups are not at different levels of social advantage in accessing the French Immersion programme.

In addressing staff diversity and representation, participants all named the need for better representation of diversity within French Immersion schools, especially amongst professional staff. Schools are now often hiring previous French Immersion system graduates, perpetuating a lack of representation amongst teaching staff. Participants acknowledged a need for a change in hiring practices but did not name strategies to mitigate the problem. Staff diversity in French Immersion schools was seen in higher rates in roles with low pay, or social status, such as lunch monitors and crossing guards. In term of hiring practice, system change comes slow but seems to diversify more quickly in roles with less education is required. To actively address the lack of diversity of French Immersion staff, school leaders must prioritize the recruitment and retention of racialized and Indigenous professional staff members. French Immersion school leaders must acknowledge the linguistic and cultural capital of their teaching staff and actively reduce barriers to the success of racialized French Immersion teachers. Pre-service teachers are often asked where they would like to complete their practicum teaching by their universities. This can create a barrier for newcomer university students, and a cycle of French Immersion high school graduates returning to teach at their neighbourhood high schools. This social capital prioritizes

the experience and relationships of the high school graduates over the newcomer pre-service teacher. French Immersion school leaders must observe this practice and ask universities to stop this system as it reproducing inequity.

Adaptability to change was identified by research participants as factor in educator openness to increasing diversity in student needs in the French Immersion program. Staff who did not attach their own sense of teacher-efficacy to student success fared better at trying new approaches and adapting to student learning needs. Anxiety was identified by participants in staff who expressed significant reluctance to change. Teachers and school leaders both displayed cultural inertia when faced with the duality of wanting to be inclusive to diversity, and the practical work of supporting diverse learning needs. Feeling a lack of system supports, inclusion in French Immersion is implemented at a slower rate. French Immersion teachers require school leadership support to adapt to change. Recommendations including supporting staff capacity in their ability to differentiate instruction and focussing on strategies that allow teachers to build confidence and believe in the own capacity to support diverse student needs. French Immersion school leaders must understand the field of staff in their buildings and recognize the habitus of their teaching practice, then act to actively disrupt. A staff that collectively feels that French immersion students are learning French, and therefore should not speak their first language in the classroom disadvantages language learners over English speaking peers. Newcomer students who are seeking safety and belonging as they interact with students who share their first language, for example, are corrected at a higher rate and may be deemed as not suitable for the program. Teacher beliefs that language learners should focus on English, rather than first language communication, to be successful in French Immersion, drive this teacher behaviour

Mady, 2016). The school leader must learn the long-standing beliefs of their staff and make professional learning plans to support teachers in changing practice.

Previous professional experience played a role in staff openness to diversity in their classrooms. Staff age or years in the profession were less of a factor than positive peer mentorship. School principal participants also named a lag in staff professional training and are working to bring up-to-date learning opportunities in supporting diverse student needs to their school teams. Thoughtful mentorship structures put in place by school leaders to position the voices of staff that hold influence are open to learning and supporting diversity in French Immersion was a strategy shared by participant. French Immersion school principals must prioritize continuous professional learning, and mentorship structures that amplify inclusive practices as they acknowledge the habitus present in their fields.

Participants mitigated lack of staff diversity by building close relationships with community, working closely with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and parent groups. A strong sense of shared responsibility helped educators feel they are not alone in the work of adapting to change. School principals interviewed understood their role as culturally responsive leaders; championing inclusive schools and clearly articulating and supporting the current vision of the French Immersion program, “The goal of the French Immersion Program is to develop proud, confident, engaged, plurilingual global citizens” (Manitoba Education and Training, year, p. 5). Working closely with Indigenous relationships and diverse community groups is an essential recommendation in culturally responsive leadership practice for school principals. School leaders must actively build balanced relationship, where leaders recognize and amplify the gifts and strengths of the members of their community (Ladner, 2023). Principals must know the Indigenous and newcomer families in their parent communities and create authentic invitations

for engagement with school life. Specific actions such as providing interpreter services and reducing formality at school events reduce barriers to community partnership with the school.

The *Manitoba Public Schools Act* mandates that public schools welcome and support all learners who enter their classrooms with appropriate educational programming (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2022). The role of the school leader in culturally responsive education is to think critically about and confront barriers to system inclusion, teacher reluctance to accommodate increased racialized and Indigenous students in French Immersion classrooms and employing leadership practices to support this change. Working in relationship with community, amplifying change-makers on staff, and acknowledging and confronting system-lags are all practices that support the changing landscape in French Immersion education in Manitoba.

Appendix A: School Principal Interview Protocol

Culturally Responsive Leadership: School Leader Perspectives of Increasing Diversity in French Immersion Schools

Participant: _____ Pseudonym: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Start Time: _____

Interview Procedure:

Good morning/afternoon/evening, _____ (Participant's name). Thank you for agreeing to speak with me about your work in Manitoba's French Immersion schools. The purpose of this case study is to gain further insight and understanding into how French Immersion schools have adapted to change as student demographics evolve to include more cultural diversity. I am hoping to interview administrators to gain a better understanding of this issue. My rationale for exploring this topic is to deepen my understanding of the role of the school leader in effective change leadership towards culturally responsive schools in French Immersion.

My hope is that this will provide insight for other educational leaders and educators seeking to lead inclusive French Immersion schools.

As per the consent form, you are under no obligation to participate and if you choose to participate, you do not need to respond to any questions that make you uncomfortable. You can withdraw your information anytime up until data analysis begins which will be after July 20, 2022. The information shared will not be judged or evaluated in anyway but used only to deepen the understanding of this phenomena and for analysis purposes. Please feel free to ask questions at any time during the interview process and if you wish to receive a final copy of the research, please indicate on your consent form. All data will be kept confidential and only seen by the researcher as I transcribe.

Consent form

Before we start, I want to ensure that you have an opportunity to review the consent form. The consent form is important to help you understand what your participation in this study involves and the steps I will take to ensure the confidentiality of your information. Please take a moment to review the consent form which includes many of the informational items I already mentioned. When you are comfortable with the information and if you don't have any further questions, please sign both copies, before we begin the interview. (Take a few minutes to have them read and sign the consent. Keep one copy of the consent form and give them one copy for their files). Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Process

We have scheduled 75 minutes for the interview, but it should take approximately 60

minutes. During this time, I will be asking questions and prompts designed to guide this one-hour audio recorded session to deepen my understanding of leader perceptions of increasing diversity in French Immersion. During the interview, I will also be taking notes to assist with the analysis. I will transcribe the audio-recording of the interview and the transcription will be sent to you for review. This will allow you to make any corrections, additions or deletions. You will have 7 days after receiving the information to review and return it to me with changes. If after 7 days there has not been any changes sent, I will assume that you agree that the transcript is accurate. You can opt out any time prior to November 20. A date will be indicated on the email of the opt out date and indicate when the analysis will begin.

(Turn on the two recorders)

Research Question	Interview Questions/Prompts	Answers	Field Notes
Bio	<p>Tell me about your educational experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time in education? • Roles in education? • Other schools? • Grade levels? • Current role? • How long in current school? • Have you worked in other schools? <p>Admin question: How would you describe yourself as an educational leader? Approaches, etc.</p>		
School Info	<p>Tell me about your current school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you worked here? • Demographics? • Strengths? Proud of...Areas working on • Culture? 		
RQ	<p>1: How do school leaders understand diversity in French Immersion schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language diversity • Cultural diversity • Indigenous students 		

<p>2: How has learner diversity changed in French Immersion in your career? Describe this phenomenon from your perspective.</p>		
<p>3: How would you describe school leaders and staff attitudes around increasing diversity in French Immersion?</p>		
<p>1. What types of leadership practices, supports or structures have been helpful in supporting increased diversity within your school building?</p> <p>What have been the main hindrances?</p> <p>Why do you think that is?</p>		
<p>5. How do you create trust and staff buy in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to develop trust? • Collaboration? • How to address resistance? • How do new staff embrace this practice? Supports? 		
<p>6. If you had to provide advice or suggestions to a new administrator who would like to support increased diversity in French Immersion what would you say?</p>		
<p>7. Are there any additional thoughts, experiences, suggestions that you feel need to be considered or reviewed at a school level to support the further developing of inclusion in French Immersion?</p>		
<p>8. Was there anything you would like to add or clarify or review before we finish?</p>		

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I appreciated your time. Your thoughts were very insightful and provided rich information for me to better understand leader response to increasing learner diversity in French Immersion schools.

As I read through the data, I will be reflecting and analyzing your information along with the other participants' information. After I collect further data, should I have additional questions, would it be possible to contact you to follow up with some additional questions? (Yes/No)

Closing

Thank you very much for sending time with me today and answering my questions and providing additional documents/artifact as to your work within in French Immersion Schools. Your responses will provide insight to both teachers and educational leaders of how to support increasing learner diversity. Please don't hesitate to contact me either by phone or email if you have any questions about today's interview or my research. I will be happy to answer them.

Ethics Study ID Number: REB

Interview Completed at _____
Transcript sent _____ Return date: _____ Feedback from transcripts received _____

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