

Factors that Influence Student Motivation in the Middle and High School French Language Classroom

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Abstract:

Lack of student motivation is a shared concern by teachers across all content areas, at all educational levels. Unmotivated students exhibit behaviors of being unengaged, distracted, and unwilling to put forth effort. Motivation has been shown to foster a strong sense of self-efficacy, which may lead to personal expectations of successful learning. The purpose of this research was to investigate the issue of student motivation, specifically in the high school subject area of French language. Through the use of a student questionnaire, the study investigated the factors that influence student motivation for learning French and how these influences relate to student ability and success in French. It is clear that the information gathered through this study will be of great value, not only for educators of French language, but also for educators of all content areas, as student motivation is a shared concern no matter the discipline.

Key words: *French, motivation, self efficacy, self perception, middle school, high school*

Language: *French, relevant to all languages*

Introduction

1.4 Identifying the Problem; Finding a purpose

Graham (2006) defines motivation as: “The choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect.” Motivation plays an important role in all types of learning, including language learning. Highly motivated students work hard, persevere through challenges and obstacles, and find satisfaction through the successful completion of a learning task. A considerable amount of research has been conducted into the role of self efficacy beliefs and perceived ability, and their effects on student motivation. Graham (2006), conducted a study of students' meta-cognitive beliefs about foreign language study and their impact on learning. Similarly, Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) investigated the roles of anxiety and self-efficacy in foreign language. High school students who are enrolled in French may often experience a lack of motivation and thus struggle to find meaning in their study of a second language. As a result, they become disengaged in lessons, demonstrate low ability, and in some cases display defiant attitude and/or disruptive behaviors. As an educator, I found it necessary to examine the factors that influence student motivation in the French classroom, in order to improve student success.

Strategies have been linked to motivation and to a sense of self efficacy which create expectations of success. Graham (2006) defines self efficacy as, “The belief in one’s ability to perform a task”. Similarly, Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) define self efficacy as, “personal beliefs in one’s capabilities”. A sense of achievement and understanding has been shown to influence student motivation. However, learners need to believe they are capable of performing a task in order to be willing to make an attempt. Meta-cognitive beliefs and self efficacy have

been shown to directly influence motivation and student effort, and the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies by highly motivated students will result in increased learning. With self efficacy at the root of self esteem and motivation, the purpose of my research was to further investigate the relation between self efficacy and the study of French language. While the use of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies by highly motivated students results in increased learning, students with low self efficacy view themselves as incapable, and are thus unwilling to make attempts because they believed doing so will reveal their lack of ability. As a New York State certified teacher of French, I sought to survey students and listen what they had to say about their experiences, frustrations, and successes with learning French. My research investigated a combination of the described factors, and how these factors influence student ability.

1.2 Personal Experiences

As I began to consider my research, I reflected on my experiences as a French student and how I became motivated to be successful in French. My first experience with French class was with an energetic, lively, determined teacher who held very high expectations for every student. She was passionate about what she taught. As a beginner French student, I struggled with the concepts and the novelty of the language. A responsible, conscientious and dedicated student throughout elementary and middle school, I had always earned high marks and awards. I began to feel intimidated about going to French class because in that class I felt like a failure. Although the teacher knew her content, she did not necessarily know her learners. After my parents explained my feelings to her, she began to let me redo assignments and helped me to raise my grade. I do not remember the exact moment, but I somehow began to understand the

French language. I began to enjoy the challenge, knowing that I did not have to be perfect and that I would be able to try again. I became motivated. The more new material my teacher introduced, the more I studied, and the more I felt empowered. I wanted to go to French class, and even stay there to complete practice quizzes, extra assignments, practice speaking, and my teacher responded to my efforts by telling me that she knew I would never accept anything less than perfect. My self-efficacy beliefs became strengthened by this and my success turned to excellence as I began to naturally excel in my work. After three years, I took the New York State Regents Exam in French. My teacher had set an expectation of 85% or better. I remember experiencing feelings of nervousness as a student that I might disappoint her, but early one Monday morning, she called me at home, thrilled, to inform me that I had earned a perfect score of 100%. I remember feeling motivated to do anything.

Although I had already fulfilled the New York State Requirements for graduation, the next year I would continue my study of French. That year I met my second French teacher. She was quieter and more reserved, yet equally passionate about what she taught. This teacher had some challenging freshmen classes that she was concerned about. I offered to help her if she ever needed anything. She accepted my offer and I began tutoring during my study hall. I would be assigned to one or two of the students who had a tendency to cause trouble in class, and we would go to the hallway where I would work with them for the period. I began to feel motivated, not only by my French abilities, but by my abilities to help others. My new teacher told me that I was a good teacher for those students, and that I would make a good French teacher one day. She motivated me even more by crediting their success on the Regents Examination to me alone.

During college, I tutored college students who were enrolled in French. They also credited me with their success, but what I had really done was to motivate them to learn. They alone were responsible for their own success. During my last semester in college, I completed my student teaching placements. Both placements taught me a lot about teaching and the reality of working with students. It was at this point that I found myself wondering what had motivated me to learn French and why the same had not happened for the students in my placement. When I began both placements, the students were disconnected from school in general. I worked diligently during my placements to connect with students, to encourage them, and to celebrate their successes so that they would experience the same feeling of fulfillment from learning as I had. Many students responded to this, yet there were still those who remained disengaged. My experiences as a student teacher left me with many observations: the negative effect on students when they are singled out for error or continuously corrected for everything, the positive effect of recognizing and celebrating success, and the importance of creating an environment of respect in which students are comfortable enough to take risks. These observations lead me to further investigate the factors that influence student motivation in the French classroom.

1.3 Forming my Inquiry; Dialoguing with Professionals

I began my inquiry by talking to my former teacher who was also my cooperating teacher. She was responsible for teaching French 1, 2 3, 4, and 5 and her classes included a wide array of personalities and differences in levels of student ability. Her days were full of challenges, successes, and opportunities. I talked to her about experiences with success with classroom management, delivery of content, and strategies to engage students and how she connected with students. I also asked her about challenges with which she was faced in terms of classroom

management, delivery of content, and strategies to engage students. She provided me with personal experience of unmotivated students and how although they may want to give up, it is not the job of a teacher to give up. This initial contact with my cooperating teacher reinforced my intended direction of research and helped me to solidify the purpose of my inquiry. The purpose of my study was to investigate students' self perceptions of their abilities and what factors influence these perceptions, so that I might identify strategies to implement within my classroom, which I would then be share with other foreign language educators.

Literature Review

2.1 An Overview of the Literature that Informed the Purpose of my Research

While a considerable amount of research has been conducted into the roles of self efficacy and perceived ability, and their effects on student motivation, questions remain to be addressed in the subject area of foreign language, specifically French. Graham (2006) points out the lack of research into motivation for language learning, both in the study of theories as well as in the field itself. Additionally, Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006) state that,

Research findings from several academic domains have demonstrated that students' judgments of their own academic capabilities or lack of self efficacy beliefs, influence their academic behaviors and performances. Absent from this body of research are studies assessing the self efficacy beliefs and their relation to foreign language proficiency.

(Mills, Parjares, Herron, 2006, p 276).

2.2 How do Self Efficacy Beliefs Affect Learning? An Explanation:

Mills, et al (2006), state that, “Self efficacy, construct grounded in social cognitive theory can be generally defined as personal beliefs in one’s capabilities.” (p 277). They explain that students’ sense of self efficacy affects their performance in various ways. A strong sense of self efficacy will foster: willingness to take on challenging tasks, increased effort, persistence despite obstacles, less anxiety, flexibility in learning strategies, and self monitoring. According to Mills et al (2006), although a great deal of research has been conducted in other academic areas, limited research has focused on the self efficacy beliefs of foreign language students.

2.3 Motivations to Pursue a Foreign Language; Explanation of Positive Self Concept

Graham (2006) theorizes that learners choose to pursue or continue pursuing a foreign language based on a feeling of personal enjoyment, or in my view, satisfaction. This sense of enjoyment goes beyond the trivial definition of “fun” and seems to be rooted more in a positive concept of self in relation to the process of language learning. This positive self concept is “Fostered by a sense of achievement in the subject, a belief in the possibility of continued achievement, a sense of control over one’s learning, and the capacity to overcome any difficulties experienced” (Graham 2006, p 9). “Such a feeling is likely to promote high levels of motivation for language learning” (Graham 2006, p 9). The examination of the connection between self concept and achievement is one of necessity, and is of particular importance in the subject area of French. Such an investigation hypothesizes that when students experience achievement, it will likely foster a positive self concept, which will then encourage continued success. Additionally, this suggests that when students experience a sense of satisfaction from

their learning and accomplishments, their satisfaction serves as a motivator of further accomplishments.

2.4 Agency, Instrumentality, and Purpose; Explanation of Effects on Motivation

Graham (2006) describes three central dimensions to learners' beliefs: agency (learners' beliefs about their own abilities and competencies); instrumentality (learners' perceptions of the relationship between the learning strategies they employ on tasks and learning out comes); and purpose (learners' ability or inability to value success in the subject and to see a purpose in achieving such success). Ryan (2000), states that learners commonly ask themselves, "Can I do my homework?" (an example of agency and instrumentality), and, "Do I want to do my homework and why?", (an example of purpose) (Graham, 2006, p 10; Ryan 2000, p 102).

Graham (2006) defines self efficacy as "the belief in one's ability to perform a task" (Graham, 2006, p 10). Whether or not students will be motivated to seek improvements in their performance depends on their perception of their self efficacy as being sufficiently able to make improvement possible through effort. Through my research I proposed to relate this theory directly to high school French students with the purpose of investigating their perceptions of their abilities, and the influences of these perceptions, which in turn influence their motivation.

2.5 Anxiety and Foreign Language; Effect on Learners

Leger (2009), states that, "Anxiety was long ago identified as a major impediment to learning, particularly in its effects on learners' self efficacy". Leger (2009) conducted a study into how learners' perceptions of themselves as second language learners evolved over a period of 12 weeks. During the study, students self assessed their speaking skills and their level of

participation in French. The results of the study were that learners' self-perception increased over time; additionally participants began setting individual goals and demonstrating increased responsibility for their personal learning. The data collected through the study indicated that learner confidence increased in the two most difficult aspects of speaking: vocabulary and fluency.

2. 6 Motivation and Foreign Language; Success for Learners

Taguchi (2006), states that, "The importance of high motivation, which all educators wish to create in their students, has been closely linked with the need for achievement." He describes motivation as one of the basic human needs, in which an individual will make intense and prolonged efforts in order to accomplish something difficult, and reach achievement. Anxiety would directly impede the motivation that we as educators wish to create. As with the study conducted by Saint Leger (2009), my research sought to investigate learners' self perception and self efficacy.

"Motivation is among the most powerful determinants of students' success or failure in school" (Hardré Crowson, Debacker, and White 2007). This statement embodies the very purpose and focus of my research. Although this specific study intended to focus on the subject area of French, the intention was also that the information gathered would be informative and useful to educators across disciplines, for the very reason stated above by Hardre et al (2007). Through this study I have examined motivation of French students from multiple viewpoints so as to develop a well informed understanding. The two questions that form the basis of my

research are: 1) What are the factors that influence student motivation for learning French and 2) How do these influences relate to student ability, self efficacy, and success in French?

Method

3.1 Setting

My research was conducted within the French language classroom of a small rural middle school and high school, together serving approximately 800 students. French is offered at 4 levels: Eighth grade; Beginning French, ninth grade; Intermediate French, tenth grade; Regents French, and eleventh grade; Advanced French. The population targeted for my study was 65 current French students in middle school and high school classrooms.

3.2 Participants

Thirty eight (38) French students participated in this study. Student participants included beginning, intermediate, regents, and advanced French language learners in grades 8-11. Students who agreed to participate in the study were required to sign a personal informed consent letter. As they were minors, it was also required that a parent or guardian fill out a permission slip providing parental consent for their child to participate in the study. The personal consent and permission forms included information regarding the purpose of the study, highlighting the importance of examining students' self-efficacy beliefs and how these beliefs affect motivation within the French classroom. Participants and their parents were informed of the methods of data collection and that the participant could withdraw at any time, free of

penalty and without interference toward the student's grades. Participants were also informed that they would remain anonymous and that their participation was voluntary, and were fully and honestly informed of all intentions of the research. Thirty eight (38) of the sixty-five (65) targeted students returned signed copies of the personal consent and parental permission forms, representing 58% participation.

Written permission was also obtained from the district superintendent as well as from the principals of both buildings in which the research was conducted. Prior to implementing the study, the research design had been approved by the Human Subject Committee at SUNY-Oswego. The names used to refer to participants are pseudonyms in order that the participants remain anonymous.

Participants included 11 French 1 beginning students, 17 French 2 intermediate students, five French 3 regent's students, and five French 4 advanced students. Participants were from five classes of French students and included 13 boys and 25 girls. All participants were Caucasian adolescents. Students' academic grades ranged from A-E, providing a wide range of abilities as well as possibilities for differences in self perceptions of abilities. The participants in my study were my current French students. This was convenience sampling.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristic	Number	Percent
Gender		
Boy	13	
Girl	25	
Current Level of French Study		
Beginner French 1	11	24
Intermediate French 2	17	47
Regents French 3	5	14.5
Advanced French 4	5	14.5

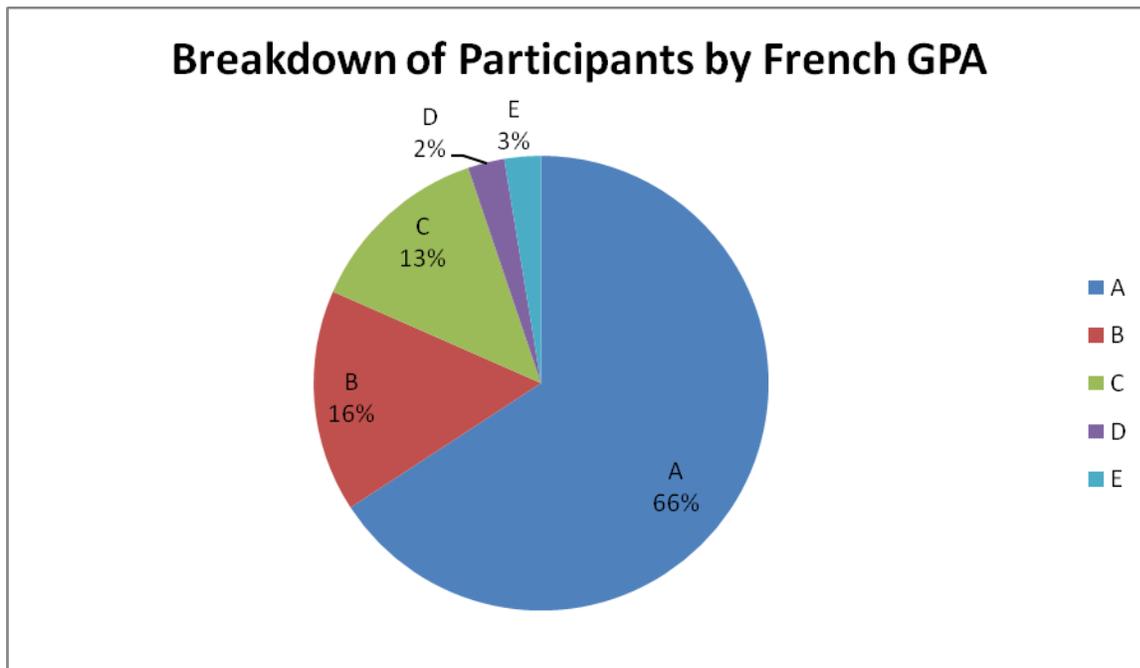


Figure 1. Breakdown of Participants by French GPA

3.3 Instruments

The data collection for this study was implemented through the use of a participant questionnaire. I adapted the content of questions from a questionnaire implemented by Graham (2006) in her study investigating student motivation for continuing to learn French. This 20 item questionnaire included a combination of multiple choice and open-ended items, asking specific questions about students' experiences with learning French, how they view their own abilities, and what they find most and least difficult about learning the French language. Participants were also asked to explain how they and the teacher influence their motivation to learn French.

Questions one and two asked participants to identify themselves by course level and approximate French GPA. Questions three through nine asked participants what aspects of French they enjoy the most and the least and why, as well as what kinds of activities they are the most and least comfortable with. Questions 10 through 16 focused on how participants view their own abilities in terms of their personal effort, the purposefulness/usefulness for learning French, how often they practice French outside of class, whether they would like to raise their grade, and what the teacher could do to help them to achieve their goals. Question 17 asked participants for additional information they felt would be useful to the study. Questions 18 and 19 asked participants whether they felt learning the French language had become easier or more difficult/less challenging/more challenging as they continued their learning experience. Question 20 was adjusted according to level of study, and asked participants the experiences having completed their current level of study, as well as what feelings they had about continuing their study of the French language (see Appendix D).

The combination of items made it possible to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, and then to organize the data by theme as well as by frequency. The open-ended items provided useful insight into personal struggles/triumphs, while the multiple choice items revealed patterns and themes. The multiple choice items yielded answers that were easy to record and summarize, while the open-ended items would collect data based on participants' true opinions or experiences, allowing subjects to expand on narrow topics, ensuring reliability and validity of the instrument.

3.4 Procedure

The 38 student participants completed a questionnaire which was administered during class time to each group as a whole. Students were assigned a code based on their class period, which would be used to match their consent and permission forms with their questionnaires. All 65 French students in the district were surveyed, and those surveys without a matching encoded letter of consent and letter of permission at the end of the study were discarded. The administration of the questionnaire to the groups and the observations took place over a period of 4 weeks.

During week one, letters of informed consent (Appendix B) and parental permission (Appendix C) were distributed to each of the classes. A personal explanation was provided to each of the classes about the rights of a participant and how a participant's grade would in no way be affected should he/she choose to participate or not to participate; should he/she choose to express an honest opinion. It was also explained that the study had been approved by Health and Human Services (HHS), the Human Subjects Committee (HSC) at the State University of New

York at Oswego, the superintendent of schools, as well as the middle school and high school principals and that participants would remain anonymous. As previously noted, each of the students was assigned a code based on their class period to ensure anonymity, which was included on the letter and on the questionnaire. In this way, it was possible to survey the whole class, and discard the surveys which were without a matching letter of informed consent and permission. This method also made it possible to sort the results of the findings according to level of experience.

During the second week of the study, the survey was administered to level 3 regents and 4 advanced students during class time. This seemed to be the most effective way to ensure feasibility and to maximize participation. In this way, students were not burdened with the responsibility of finding the time.

In week three, the questionnaire originally scheduled to be administered to the beginners was postponed until the following week. As students remained apprehensive, this provided the students with adequate time to ask more questions about the nature of the research and its purpose, as well as to complete the survey at a later date without feeling pressured by exterior factors, thus ensuring the validity of the instrument.

By the fourth week, the survey was administered to level 1 and 2 French language students during class time. As previously noted, this alleviated the pressure of time constraints. Participants returned the questionnaire directly upon completion, rather than having to remember to return it at a later date, which maximized participation.

An important consideration in implementing the use of the student questionnaire was the population of subjects, which consisted of high school and middle school students. For this reason, the questions were designed to be at a level of comprehensibility equal to that of the subjects. In addition, rather than asking participants to participate in a long, drawn out and time consuming task, structured the questionnaire in such a way that it took no more than 15 minutes for participants to complete.

3.5 Data Analysis

Questionnaires were analyzed using an online program known as surveygizmo.com, which displayed the responses in graph form. In order to do this, data was entered from each individual questionnaire, question by question, after those questionnaires missing a signed letter of permission were discarded. Questionnaires were separated by class level as well, making it possible to sort the results of the findings according to level of experience.

Results

Specifically, two questions guided this research: (a) What are the factors that influence student motivation for learning French? And (b) How do these influences relate to student ability and success in French? Key findings of the current study are divided into three sections. The first section addresses participants' comfort levels with learning French. The second section examines participants' views of personal effort and dedication to grades. The final section compares participants' feelings of difficulty and challenge, by level of experience.

4.1 Examining Participants' Comfort Levels with Learning French

The 20 item questionnaire was given to the 38 student participants. After identifying the completed level of study and approximate French GPA, question three asked participants to rate themselves in terms of how they view their French abilities. When asked to rate how they view their overall performance in French as “poor”, “all right”, or “well”, 61 percent of participants responded that they felt they did “well”, while 39 percent responded that they felt they did “all right”, and 0% responded that they did “poorly”. Question four asked participants to rate how often they become frustrated with French, and 42 percent of participants responded sometimes they become frustrated, 34 percent responded that they rarely become frustrated with French, 13 percent responded that they often become frustrated with French, and 11 percent responded that they never become frustrated with French. One participant’s explanation to their response was, “I don’t like not knowing things. I feel stupid.”

Question five was an open-ended item and asked participants what aspects of French they enjoy the most. Responses included, “verbal and culture”, “interacting and understanding”, “fun”, “learning new words”, “partner activities”, and, “the teacher”. Question six asked participants what aspects of French they enjoy the least. Responses included, “homework”, “writing essays”, confusing vocabulary”, “verbals”, “oversized classes” and, “nothing”.

Question seven listed the following: Reading/reading activities, writing/writing activities, listening/listening activities/ and speaking/speaking activities and asked participants to select which kinds of activities they felt most comfortable with by choosing one of the four.

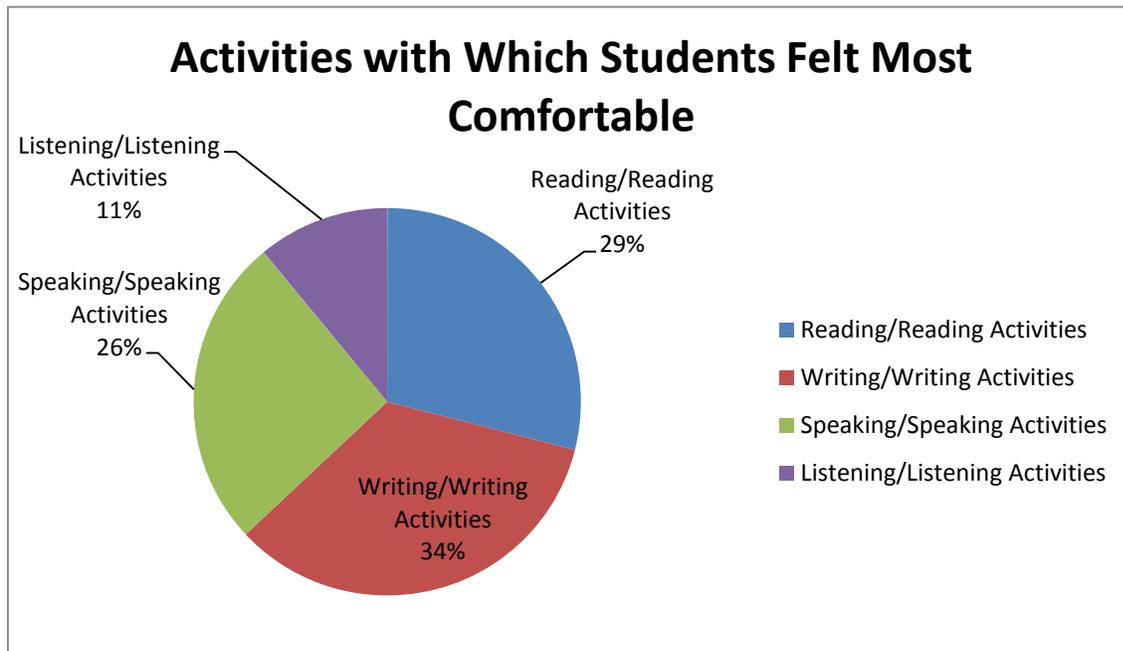


Figure 2. Activities with which Students Felt Most Comfortable

Figure 2 shows that 34 percent of participants felt most comfortable with writing/writing activities, while 29 percent felt most comfortable with reading/reading activities, 26 percent felt most comfortable with speaking/speaking activities, and 11 percent felt most comfortable with listening/listening activities.

Question eight listed again the following: Reading/reading activities, writing/writing activities, listening/listening activities/ and speaking/speaking activities and asked participants to select which kinds of activities they found the most challenging by choosing one of the four.

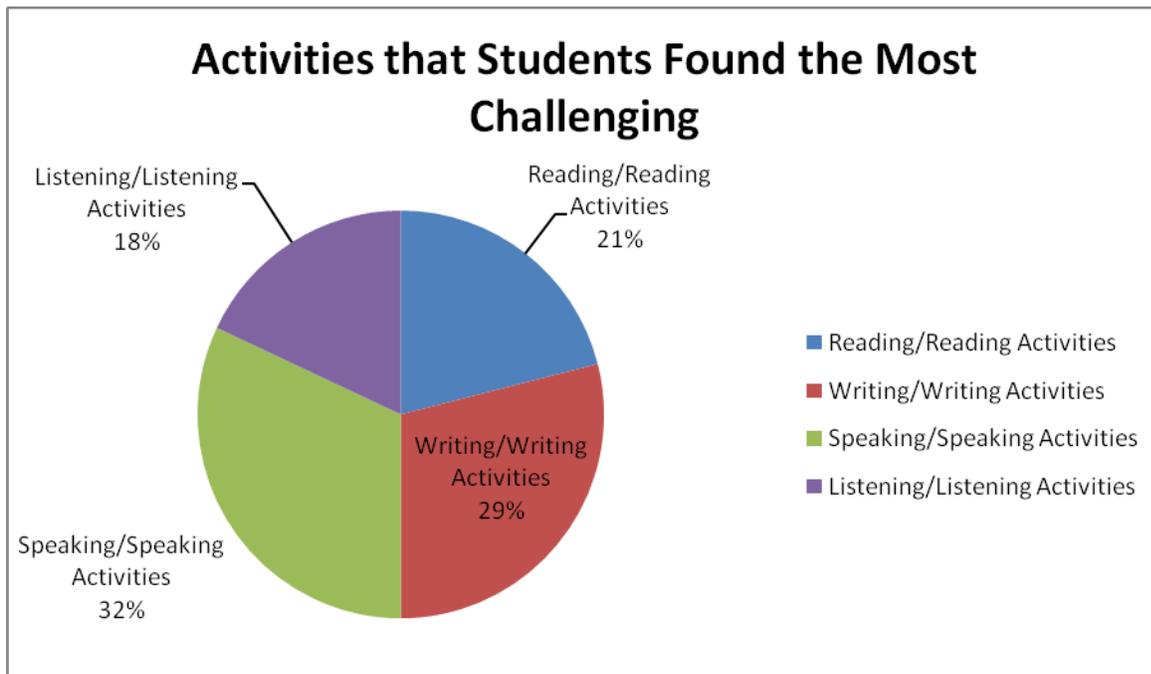


Figure 3. Activities that Students Found the Most Challenging

As demonstrated in figure 3, a major theme emerged from this question. A large percentage of participants selected writing/writing activities and speaking/speaking activities as the most challenging, while a smaller percentage which selected reading/reading activities and listening/listening activities as the most challenging.

Question nine asked participants to explain what they considered to be the best part of learning the French language. Common themes included, “learning a new language”, “being able to teach it to others”, “knowledge and understanding”, and “learning new words”.

4.2 Participants' Views of Personal Effort and Dedication to Grades

As previously stated, questions 10 through 16 were designed to determine how participants view their own abilities in terms of their personal effort, the purposefulness/usefulness for learning French, how often they practice French outside of class, whether they would like to raise their grade, and what the teacher could do to help them to achieve their goals. Question 10 asked participants to rate whether they practice French outside of French class. Fifty-nine percent of participants responded that outside of French class they practice French sometimes, 30 % responded that they often practice French outside of class, eight percent responded that they rarely practice French outside of class, and three percent responded that they never practice French outside of French class. Question 11 asked participants if they felt French is a useful language to learn, to which 78 % responded “absolutely” while 22 % responded “neutral” and 0 % responded “not at all”. When asked to explain their response to question 11, participants provided reasons to study French including, “travel”, “communication possibilities/opportunities”, the fact that “many countries speak French”, and personal experience with a “family member who speaks or has studied French”.

Question 12 asked participants to rate the importance of their grade in French class by choosing from one of the following: Not at all/I don't care, somewhat important/it sort of matters to me, important/I care, and very important/ it means a lot to me.

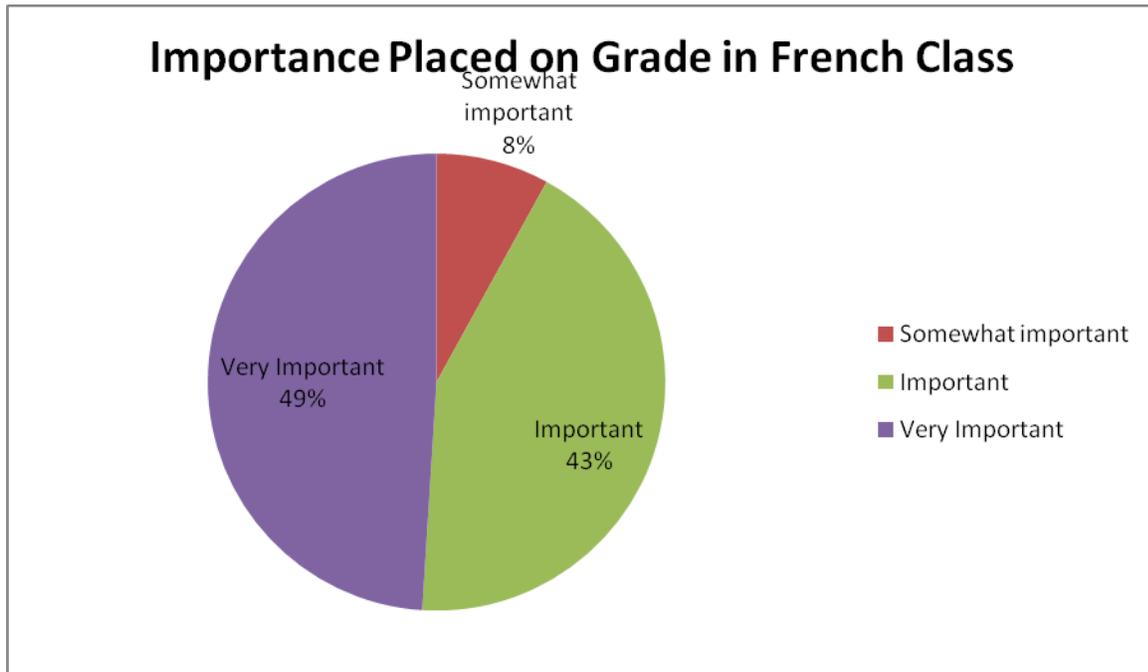


Figure 4. Importance Placed on Grade in French Class

As figure 4 indicates, forty nine percent of participants responded that their grade was very important, 43 percent responded that their grade was important, while 8 percent responded that their grade was somewhat important.

Question 13 asked participants to reflect on how much effort they put forth toward French class according to the following options: 1=none/I don't care, 2=some/when I feel like it, 3=a lot/I try, and 4= all my effort/I do my best. The breakdown of responses was as follows: 43 percent said they put a lot of effort into French and always try, 41 percent said they put all their effort into French class and do their best, and 16 percent said they put some effort into French class when they feel like it.

Question 14 asked participants to consider whether they would be interested in raising their grade in French class. Participants selected one of the four responses: 1) No, 2) Maybe, 3) I think so, 4) Certainly. Question 15 then also asked participants what they would need to do raise their grade. The following graph displays the breakdown of student interest level toward raising their grades in French class. Responses to question 15 fell into one of four common themes, “doing homework”, “improving quiz grades”, “working harder”, and, “studying more”.

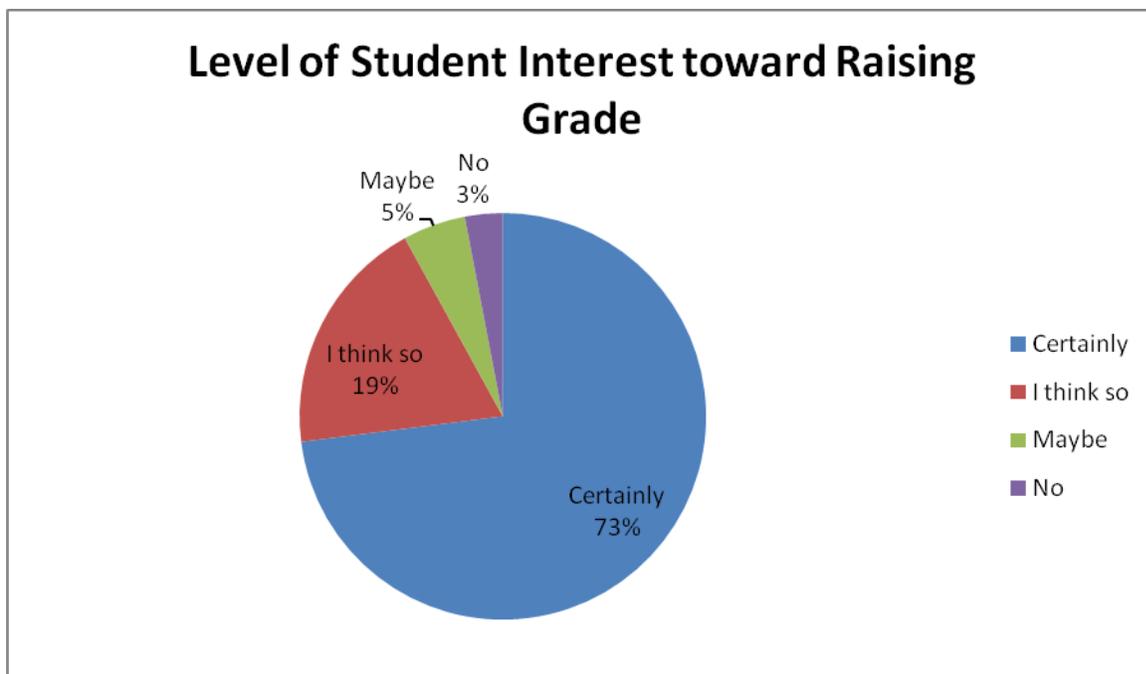


Figure 5. Level of Student Interest toward Raising Grade

Question 16 went on to ask Participants in what ways would they like their teacher to help raise their grade. Within the 36 percent response rate to this question, responses were categorized according to theme: “nothing” (18 %), “she [the teacher] does enough” (6%), “not sure” (6%), and, “extra credit” (6%).

Question 17 asked participants whether there was any additional information they would like to include about their experiences learning French. Three themes which evolved from this question are outlined below. These themes are based on written quotes by participants, taken from multiple questionnaires.

Motivation resulting from being able to help others

Karen: *“The more French I learn, the more I can help my friends understand their French homework.”*

Michael: *“I feel it’s helpful when I help others because not only does it help them, it helps me because I have to dig deeper into the concept, so it makes more sense.”*

Motivation resulting from finding purpose and usefulness in the language

Louise: *“I think French class takes a lot of focus and commitment. You really need to do your best and if you’re going to learn another language you might as well learn it to an extent where you can use it in the future.”*

Hannah: *“I think that French class is a good class because not only does it teach you useful things, it makes you use a different part of your brain. My experiences with learning French have been great.”*

Leila: *“Eventually you start speaking it [French] outside of class and use French in your everyday life”.*

Motivation from comfort with learning French in a safe and welcoming environment

Lana: *“French is an easy language when you put forth your best effort.”*

John: *“I think it is great that I have been taught so well how to speak such an interesting language.”*

Alyssa: *“I enjoy when we do and brainstorm fun activities.”*

Lynn: *“Class size has made this a very difficult year”. (Compared to last year)*

Mark: *“My experience in learning French is great. My teacher is always here and has a great attitude and always has a nice smile”.*

Brianna *“French with “mon professeur” is really fun because she always tries to make it that way for **everyone.**”*

In general, participants expressed feelings of increased confidence in their abilities due to positive experiences fostered by the teacher, being able to teach others, being able to use the language, and being a member of a close-knit learning community where each member is valued and recognized for their abilities.

4.3 Feelings of Difficulty and Challenge, by Level of Experience

Questions 18, 19, and 20 were separated according to level of experience with learning the French language. The purpose of this was to compare or contrast possible trends or patterns, according to how much time students had spent learning the French language and whether their views varied according to level of experience.

Question 18 asked participants to select whether they felt French had become easier or more difficult as they had continued their studies. Similarly, question 19 asked students to select whether they felt French had become less challenging or more challenging with time. When surveyed, students expressed a significant overall attitude that French had become easier with time. Out of 11 French 1 students who were surveyed, 60 percent felt that as they continued learning French, it had become more difficult since the beginning of their first year, while 40 percent felt it had become easier. Out of 17 French 2 students who were surveyed, 44 percent felt that it had become more difficult felt that as they had continued learning French, while 56 percent felt it had become less difficult since the beginning of their first year. Out of 5 French students surveyed, 40 percent felt that it had become more difficult, while 60 percent felt that as they continued learning French, it had become less difficult over the course of three years. Finally, and out of five level 4 students surveyed, 33 percent felt that it had become more difficult, while 67 percent felt that as they continued learning French, it had become less difficult over the course of 4 years. This increase in the percentage of students whose overall attitude toward the difficulty level of learning the French language was that the difficulty level had decreased with time suggests that perhaps students' self efficacy beliefs had been strengthened over time, as they grew more familiar with the language. Similarly, participants' responses revealed an overall decrease in feelings that French was challenging, according to years of experience, as supported by figures 6 and 7. (Below)

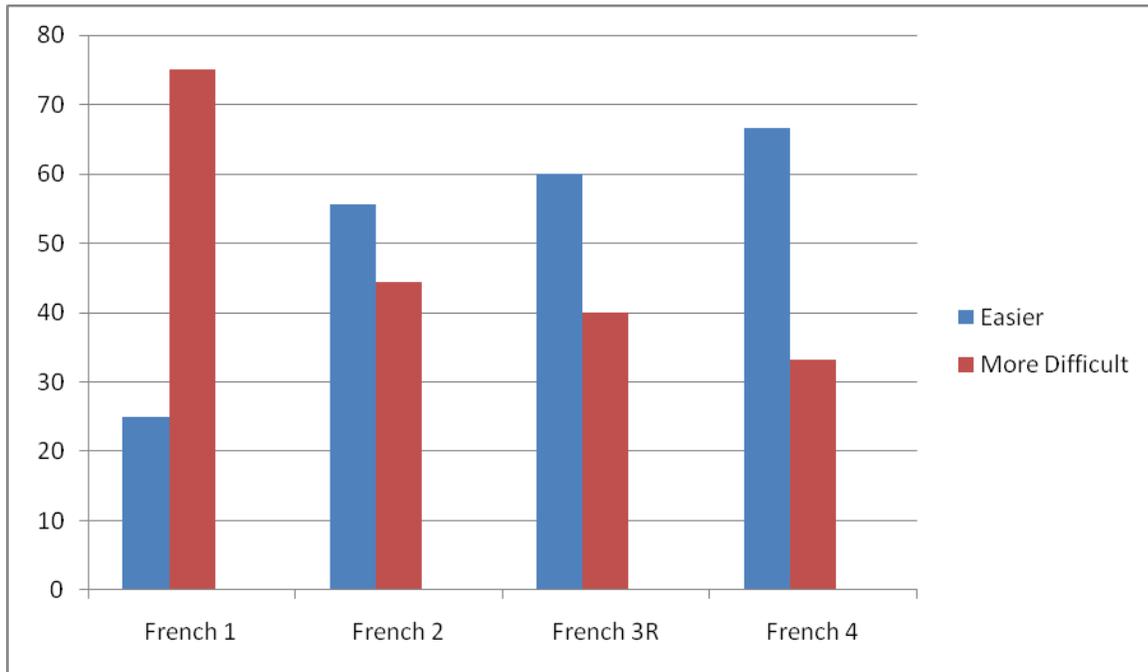


Figure 6. Overall Attitude toward Difficulty in Learning French by Years of Experience

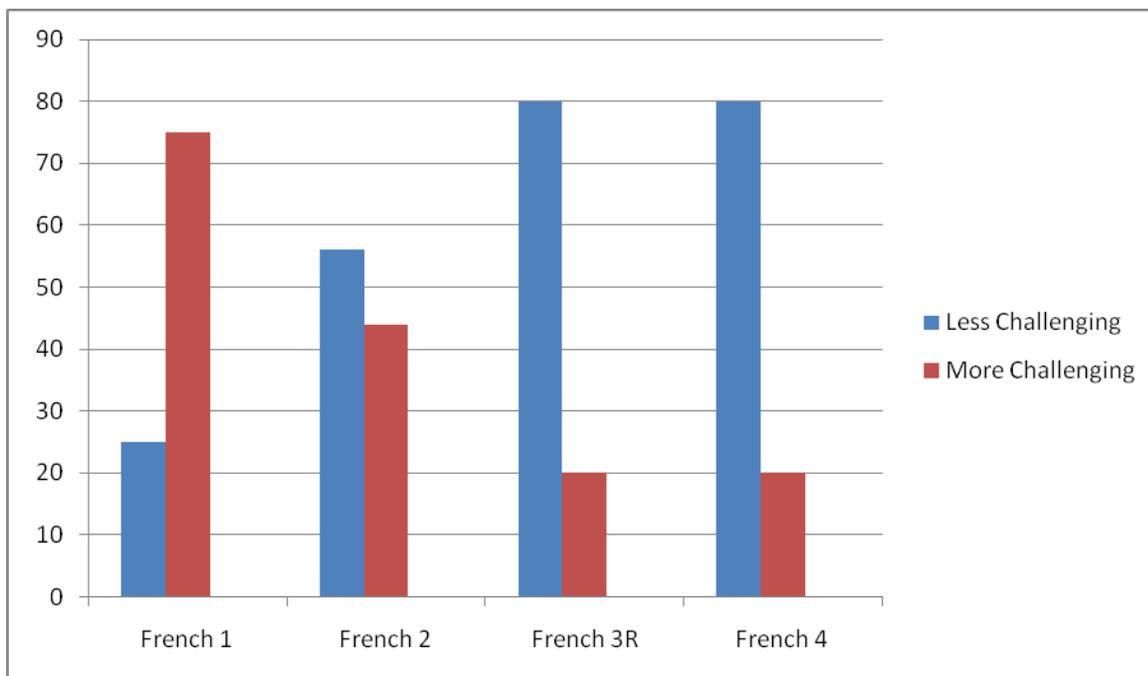


Figure 7. Overall Attitude toward Challenge of Learning French, by Years of Experience

The contents of question 20 varied according to the level of experience. French 1 students were asked to explain their responses to questions 18 and 19. Common themes that emerged from participant responses included:

- Too many new and difficult words
- Taking a while to “catch on”
- Difficulty with remembering
- The teacher is helpful

The following is a small collection of quotes by level one participants:

Paul: *“There are many new words and they are difficult to pronounce.”*

Meg: *“It is difficult because you have to try to remember everything from class.”*

Marie: *“Once I know the important words, it is easier to read and write things in French”.*

Liz: *“As French goes on it gets easier; I believe I can follow along well enough”.*

Jack: *“I take a while to catch on sometimes so when we progress, things get more difficult and I have a tougher time.”*

Grace: *“It doesn’t exactly get more difficult if you continue to study and practice, but it doesn’t get easier either.”*

Ella: *“As we go on it gets easier because she [the teacher] makes helps make it fun, so I like it more.”*

French 2 students were also asked to explain their responses to questions 18 and 19.

Common themes emerging from participant responses included:

- Having already learned a lot in level 1
- The “pieces of the puzzle” beginning to fit together more easily
- French starting to make more sense, but also, becoming more work

Participants shared the following statements:

Denise: *“The more you get used to the language the more familiar you’ll be with it and the more you practice it, the better you will do with it.”*

Renée: *“As I continue, things start to “fit together” and the language makes more and more sense.”*

Michael: *“I feel my skills are somewhat developed so it is not as challenging as it was.”*

Mitchell: *“In French 1, it was quite difficult. But now in French 2, it is less challenging because I know or already learned enough to help me figure out the rest.”*

Mark: *“It gets easier because she [the teacher] takes us from the “baby” stage and brings us to the next stage and never gives us tasks that we can’t do.”*

George: *“It is more difficult this year now that we are getting into the details of the language.”*

Louise: *“It is still challenging because I am still getting used to things but the activities we do, help me, and make it easier.”*

Ann: *“As I learn more, the words, concepts and meanings get bigger and more confusing.”*

Hannah: *“There are more challenging concepts, like the past tense.”*

Silas: *“I checked that French is easier, but I also checked that it is more challenging because while it is easier this year, there are also new things which make it more challenging.”*

Question 20 asked French 3R participants how they felt about the New York State Regents Examination that they will take at the end of this year. Participants admitted feelings of nervousness about the test, confidence in their abilities, and thankfulness that they had been with the same teacher the whole experience. One participant stated, *“Having the same teacher for the past three years has been wonderful because I am used to her teaching style and her as a person.”* Another participant stated, *“While French can be difficult, it is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together, and the more pieces you can fit together, the easier it [French] gets. My teacher has helped me see that.”*

Question 20 asked level 4 participants the reason for their choice to continue the study of French beyond the Regents requirement. Participants explained that they would rather take French in school with the same teacher they had been with for the past several years, rather than

take it in college with a professor with whom they would be unfamiliar. They also explained that they enjoy being able to help other French students with their learning experiences, they want to improve their French-speaking abilities, and they actually enjoy learning the language.

Discussion and Interpretation

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influence student motivation in the French classroom. Based upon the data I collected through the study, I was able to draw several conclusions: (a) a balance between the kinds of activities with which participants felt the most and least confident may be more likely to improve a student's motivation, thus increasing grades, which may be directly connected to motivation, (b) participants' feelings of confidence in their own abilities increased due to positive experiences with being able to teach others, being able to use the language, and being a member of a learning community where members are valued and recognized for their individual abilities, and (c) the perception of French as a challenge decreased over time; French grew more enjoyable as participants continued their learning.

5.2 Discussion

Creating a balance in activities to increase comfort levels and motivation

My research revealed many implications about the various factors that influence student motivation in the French classroom. First, the questionnaire collected data about students' feelings toward what they perceived as challenges and obstacles in learning French, and how these perceived obstacles related to students' self perceptions of their own abilities.

The low level at which participants rated how they view their overall performance in French revealed a theme of frustration. One participant's explanation to their response was, "I don't like not knowing things. I feel stupid." This theme of becoming frustrated, whether sometimes, often, or rarely, and this comment of "not knowing" suggests that students lose motivation and lack effort because they view themselves as incapable. Saint Leger (2009) states that anxiety in a second language is associated with deficits in listening comprehension, impaired with vocabulary learning, reduced word production, and low grades, all of which my study shows result from "not knowing", and all of which further increase an underestimation of the learner of his/her abilities.

My research also supports the educational concept that self efficacy and language anxiety are conceptually related and that for learning to take place, anxiety levels need to be decreased and self efficacy increased. My research also implies that motivation in the French classroom needs to be increased so that achievement can take place, and continue the cycle.

Participants selected the aspects of French they enjoy the most as, "verbals and culture", "interacting and understanding", "fun", "learning new words", "partner activities", and, "the

teacher”. Conversely, participants associated their least enjoyable experiences with “homework”, “writing essays”, “confusing vocabulary”, “verbals”, and “oversized classes, all of which involve a theme of “not knowing” directly leading to frustration, and which implies an effect on self efficacy beliefs. This combination of factors would most likely result in decreased motivation. The fact that speaking was viewed as challenging can be further explained: in a foreign language context, the development of learners’ speaking skills may be particularly challenging, due to the fact that learners often develop different speaking abilities because differences in exposure and experiences. A number of studies have shown that speaking is the skill which is most likely to result in foreign language anxiety. Saint Leger (2009) states that, “Speaking is the one skill that involves a public display of abilities in the classroom, and anxiety has been shown to be more related to speaking than any other skill.” As a result, motivation likely decreases, thus implying a need for strategies to increase confidence in this skill area.

Due to the large percentage of participants who selected writing/writing activities and speaking/speaking activities as the most challenging, and the smaller percentage which selected reading/reading activities and listening/listening activities as the most challenging, an interpretation would suggest that participants are more comfortable with comprehension activities. Such comprehension activities would involve being able to grasp meaning of the language through listening or reading, rather than activities in which students are required to produce written or verbal responses. Participants explained what they considered to be the best part of learning the French language, which also revealed common themes which included “knowledge and understanding” and, “learning new words”. These themes suggest that students rely on understanding, which needs to be strengthened, before students are able to move on to

application of the language. This also lends itself directly to the idea of self efficacy beliefs, and whether a student views his/her abilities as being able to understand the language when he/she struggles with understanding. If this is the case, the process of being able to apply their knowledge becomes impeded by both the lack of understanding and the self perception of lack of abilities.

My research supports Saint Leger (2009), who states that instructors need to help learners develop greater self-confidence (self efficacy) and by doing so, reduce their language learning anxiety. A suggestion from both my research as well as the study conducted by Saint Leger (2009) would be to encourage learners set realistic goals and find out what strategies work best for them individually, to help them become more proactive about their learning. Through the use of goal setting and strategies, learners would be able to attribute success to their own level of effort, rather than task difficulty. This would motivate learners to develop a greater sense of achievement, thus increasing motivation.

Participants rated the importance of their grade in French class. Due to the fact that 49 percent of participants responded that their grade was very important, 43 percent responded that their grade was important, and 8 percent responded that their grade was somewhat important, clearly, the majority of students placed importance on their grade. This lends itself to the idea that students view their grade as a measure of their ability, and a reflection of them as a learner. When their grade is elevated, they may view themselves as capable and be motivated to work to keep their grade elevated. When their grade drops, they may view themselves as less capable, when this may not in fact be an accurate reflection of their abilities. Rather than becoming

motivated to raise their grade, students may tend to give up or feel defeated, thus decreasing motivation.

Participants reflected upon their personal effort toward French class. Forty three percent of participants said they put a lot of effort into French and always try, 41 percent said they put all their effort into French class and do their best, and 16 percent said they put some effort into French class when they “feel like it”. This leads to the question, does this “feeling like it” directly related to their grade and how they view their abilities as a learner?

Ninety-seven percent of participants responded with interest in raising their grade. When asked what would be involved in pursuing a higher grade, four common themes emerged: “doing homework”, “improving quiz grades”, “working harder”, and, “studying more”. These four themes reinforce already obvious concepts. However, when these themes are tied to the previously discussed concept of frustration resulting from “not knowing”, a possible cycle is revealed, in which grades, struggles and motivation all have a direct effect one another. This cycle needs to be broken for those students who are putting in all their effort, yet are experiencing difficulty, decreased grades, and as a result, lack of motivation. When asked in what ways would they like their teacher to help raise their grade, participants responded “nothing”, “she [the teacher] does enough”, “not sure” and, “extra credit”. This implies that the problem of lack of motivation may not necessarily result from the teacher or the student, but from frustration directly resulting from personal perception of abilities. Clearly, this concept requires further examination.

A strategy for increasing motivation due to grades may be one that was mentioned from the study conducted by Saint Leger (2009). In the study, self-assessment was introduced as a response to the problematic situation of lack of motivation due to students' low self-efficacy beliefs. Similarly, an article published by the National Foreign Language Resource Center suggests that having access to appropriate strategies will lead students to higher expectations of learning and success, both crucial factors influencing motivation. Learners will begin to view themselves as being in control of their learning, which can strengthen motivation. As a result, they will become aware of the similarities between a new learning task and previous tasks, and create problem solving strategies.

Creating meaning as a member of a learning community

Another factor explored by the study which directly relates to student motivation is the kinds of non-skill related activities and experiences participants' find to be the most helpful or meaningful about learning French. Common themes included "being able to teach it [French] to others", "being glad to have the opportunity to learn a second language in a safe and welcoming environment", and "finding the purpose or use in learning".

Participants expressed a feeling of accomplishment and personal value from being able to share their knowledge with others and contribute to other members in the learning community. They also expressed feeling more willing to take risks in an environment where the teacher is welcoming and every member is valued for his or her contributions, as well as a feeling of satisfaction in realizing they were able to use French outside of class. When asked if they felt

French is a useful language to learn, 78 percent of participants responded “absolutely” while 22 percent responded “neutral” and 0 percent responded “not at all”. When asked to explain their response participants provided reasons to study French including, “travel”, “communication possibilities/opportunities”, the fact that “many countries speak French”, and personal experience with a “family member who speaks or has studied French”. Both concepts, being able to contribute to a learning community and being able to use French, provide purpose for learning.

Graham (2006) conducted a study into motivation for language learning, focusing on the three areas of meta-cognitive belief: (1) agency and self efficacy, (2) instrumentality and attribution, and (3) purpose. In the study conducted by Graham, the four most common reasons that students gave for wishing to drop French were: (1) French was not enjoyable, (2) French was difficult, (3) French was of no use to a future career, and (4) they were not good at it. The study by Graham (2006) found that attributions for lack of success in French included blaming low ability and task difficulty. In addition to attributions for lack of success, my study sought to provide possible attributions for success, directly related to motivation, revealing that purpose is a major factor for increasing motivation.

Increase in self efficacy based on years of experience with learning the French language

Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006), found that while there is abundant research on the topic of student motivation in general; questions remain to be answered concerning the role of self efficacy in the subject area of French. The focus of their study was students’ sense of self efficacy and how it affects their performance in various ways. My study sought to examine the

role of self efficacy in foreign language, and to collect data to determine possible ways in which to foster this sense of self efficacy, in order to improve student motivation in French.

A significant pattern resulted from my study, based on how participants viewed challenges and successes with French after the amount of time they had spent learning the language. Years of experience ranged from 1-4 years. A major theme revealed by the study was that participants viewed French as less challenging the longer they pursued it.

It is necessary to interpret the theme revealed about participants' perceptions over time. Sixty percent of level 1 participants felt that as they continued learning French, it had become more difficult since the beginning of their first year, while 40 percent felt it had become easier. Out of the second group of participants, who were enrolled in French 2, 44 percent felt that it had become more difficult felt that as they had continued learning French, while 56 percent felt it had become less difficult since the beginning of their first year. Out of the third group of participants, who were enrolled in French 3R, 40 percent felt that it had become more difficult, while 60 percent felt that as they continued learning French, it had become less difficult over the course of three years. Out of the fourth group of participants surveyed, who were enrolled in French 4, 33 percent felt that it had become more difficult, while 67 percent felt that as they continued learning French, it had become less difficult over the course of 4 years. This increase in the percentage of participants whose overall attitude toward the difficulty level of learning the French language was that the difficulty level had decreased with time suggests that perhaps students' self efficacy beliefs had been strengthened over time, as they grew more familiar with the language. Similarly, participants' responses revealed an overall decrease in feelings that French was challenging, according to years of experience.

Common themes that emerged from level 1 participants included: (a) too many new and difficult words, (b) taking a while to “catch on”, and (c) difficulty with recall. This suggests that the learning style of a beginner tends to be based on survival and comprehension strategies. As a beginner, perhaps motivation is based more on simple recall. A learner’s self efficacy beliefs may be affected by being able to remember simple rules and comprehend words, and perhaps too much information at once overwhelms the learner, thus decreasing motivation. To increase motivation at the beginner level, an effective strategy for the teacher might be to balance the learning activities with familiarity and practice strategies, in order to familiarize the learner with the content and basics of the language. This concept is further supported by comments by level 2 participants, to be discussed below.

Common themes emerging from level 2 participants included: (a) having already learned a lot in level 1, (b) the “pieces of the puzzle” beginning to fit together more easily, (c) French starting to make more sense, but also, requiring more work as concepts grow larger. These themes support the previous suggestion that student motivation with learning French improved over time as students grew more experienced. The theme also implies a transition from level 1 to level 2 in the learning style of an intermediate student, from basic beginner recall and comprehension strategies to expansion strategies, as French becomes more familiar to the learner. Self efficacy beliefs may improve as students progress, thus improving student motivation.

Level 3 participants described how they felt about the New York State Regents Examination that they will take at the end of this year, admitting mixed feelings of nervousness about the test, confidence in their abilities, and comfort that they had been with the same teacher the whole experience. A contrast presents itself in level three, with the increase in the self

efficacy beliefs of the level 3R learner about his/her abilities in French, and the decrease in self efficacy beliefs of the level 3R learner as a result of a standardized test. French 3R participants expressed nervousness and fear about taking a New York State Regents Examination in French, and view the exam as a measure of their abilities, due to the fact that it determines whether they are qualified to earn credit for the course and credit toward graduation. Participants in French 3R expressed how much they enjoy learning French, yet are tempted to drop out of the program due to the intimidating nature of the Regent's Examination. Participants raised a valid point and that is: how can a three hour exam measure three years of learning, and what they as French learners are truly capable of? Feelings of frustration were expressed by participants for not being allowed to demonstrate what they know or enjoy (a language), but rather being forced to demonstrate what they know through test-taking skills. As an educator, I have been trained to teach higher taxonomy skills; the Regents Examination contradicts those skills and abilities, measuring only comprehension. When, as the data indicates, student motivation is based so heavily on finding meaning in learning the language, and students place importance on their abilities as being able to demonstrate what they know, it is significant that motivation also decreases at the idea of a single exam serving as an indicator of what students know and what type of diploma (Regents or Regents of Distinction) they will receive at graduation. In turn, feelings of nervousness and anxiety may also affect overall performance on the exam, thus determining whether students find purpose in pursuing their study of French beyond level three.

The explanation of level 4 participants for their choice to continue the study of French beyond the Regents requirement fell into three themes: (a) they would rather take it in school with the same teacher they had been with for the past several years, than take it in college with a

professor with whom they would be unfamiliar, (b) they enjoy being able to help other French students with their learning experiences, and (c) they want to improve their French-speaking abilities because they actually enjoy learning the language at this stage. These themes further support the suggestion that student motivation improves over time as a learner grows more familiar with content, and the learning is in fact less rigid due to standardized testing and other outside factors. It is necessary to point out that directly related to this concept is the fact that students completing French 3R expressed hesitation in continuing their study of the French language beyond the Regents Examination, until they were informed that there was no state test, only a local final. They expressed being comfortable with completing a final portfolio and project. The portfolio would showcase what they know/have learned, and the final project would showcase what they are able to do with the language.

5. 3 Limitations

While the data provided through my study proves it to be worthwhile, the study did also have its limitations. One of the greatest limitations to the study was time. A four week time period for data collection is limiting, especially when the dates scheduled for the study are impacted by holidays and unforeseen circumstances that limit the amount of time participants are available to complete the survey.

Another limitation would be my sample of convenience. Because I used only my own classes of students in French 1-4, research was limited to experiences with a single teacher and population of students, rather than multiple teachers and populations of students. I did, however, attempt to vary the population of participant groups by years of experience with learning French,

by including students in French 1, 2, 3R, and 4. While this did provide a rather significant trend in the decrease of participants' perceptions toward the French language as challenging, the advanced students who participated have already met the high school requirement for study of the language. These students are motivated to stay in French for reasons such as future study of the language or merely personal appreciation.

Motivated participants and motivated students; are they the same?

It is necessary to take into consideration whether only the motivated or semi-motivated students participated in the study, thus providing data that may not directly reflect the feelings and experiences of unmotivated students. This raises the question: does the term "motivated" refer to students who have the motivation to remain in the course, while the term "un-motivated" students refers to students who have discontinued their study of the language? Or, does "motivation" occur on a day to day basis for each student within the course? The research did not include former French students who had for whatever reason, discontinued their study of French in school.

5.4 Implications

There were several implications of my research. For the students, the results provided concrete evidence from other students relating to their experiences with motivation, or lack thereof, with learning French, rather than mere claims by a teacher. As an educator, I believe implementation of the questionnaire on a yearly basis followed by a printout of the results for students may be an effective strategy to involve students in how they view their own abilities, in

comparison with other students who share their struggles and successes. This may also be way to engage them in tracking how their French abilities have evolved/may evolve over time.

The study itself provided me, as an educator, the opportunity to “listen” to student voices in a safe, non-threatening atmosphere, where students feel free to express their true feelings and honest opinions. The information shared by participants through the study has already become influential in planning curricula. I have seen the importance in maintaining balance in the activities with which students are most and least comfortable, to strengthen their self efficacy beliefs. I am also able to evaluate the skill areas which the majority of students find most challenging and implement strategies to strengthen skills in these areas. As an educator, I am now able to appeal to apprehensive beginners through concrete evidence, and encourage other educators, no matter the content, to do the same. Within the school setting common themes have already emerged. Students’ helping other students has already begun to improve personal perceptions of abilities. Within the community, students feel as though they have personal success stories to share with family.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

This research has been the first step in identifying learner frustrations in the content area of French. However, this is not the ending point. The data collected by this study alone recommends further research be conducted into the issues raised by this study. Closer examination of specific frustrations of French language learners is required, as well as what strategies may be useful in dealing with these frustrations. One recommendation for further research would also be the implementation of specific strategies, followed by questionnaires measuring participants’ feelings over time.

A second recommendation for further research would be to investigate the influences of parents on student motivation and self efficacy beliefs, and the impacts students' experiences with French. It would be worth the time to poll parents on their beliefs for the child, as well as the meaning they see in their child's learning French. Additionally, it would be useful to ask students what their parents think of their abilities and whether the child feels that the parents value the choice to learn French.

A third recommendation for further research would be to investigate the influence of peers on student self perceptions. Although this study indicates that the instructor plays a large role in student motivation and creating an environment in which learners feel safe enough to take risks, it would be useful to examine the role of peer influence, both positive and negative. While this study indicates that students feel confident as members of a learning community; however, it would be worthwhile to investigate the reasons for students to discontinue their study of French.

Whether peer influence, or any of the three possible factors stated previously played a role, it would be useful to investigate a student's decision to discontinue their study of the French language. Further research would also require identification of the steps to be taken to motivate students, and thus help to prevent that decision.

Conclusion

The data collected from the questionnaire gives rise to two additional questions: (a) What causes certain students to be self motivated, with high self efficacy beliefs, allowing them to effectively engage in the language without hesitation and thus strengthening their skills? (b) What causes other students feel defeated when they haven't even made an attempt? An effective

teacher looks to find ways to strengthen these students' self perceptions so they become self-motivated to make an effort and therefore become active participants in learning, both the French language, and throughout their learning experience.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Appendix B. Letter of Parental Consent

Appendix C. Letter of Permission

Appendix D Student Survey

Appendix A. Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Dear Student,

My name is Kathleen Laing and I have teacher certification to teach French 7-12. I am currently a graduate student at Oswego State University. For my graduate thesis project, I am conducting research into the factors influencing the motivation of students in the French classroom.

You have the option of choosing whether or not to participate. If you choose to participate, the survey you will complete is based on your attitudes and perceptions toward learning French. This survey has been approved by the Faculty Research Committee on Human Subjects at the State University of New York at Oswego.

The survey is approximately three pages consisting of multiple choice, open ended, and personal response questions. The responses provided by every student participant in this study will be kept confidential. Your name will not be reported; you will remain anonymous. You may withdraw at any time from the study without penalty.

By participating in this survey, you will contribute valuable information based on your personal experiences as a French student. I intend to distribute a summary of the results of this study to participants. It is my hope that this information will help French teachers to understand how to improve the experiences of their students and future students.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you wish to participate, please submit parental and personal consent. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Kathleen Laing by email, kstryker@oswego.edu . If you have any questions about your rights as a subject, please contact Dr Link or Dr Friedman, (312-3474) chairs of the Human Subjects Committee, SUNY Oswego.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Laing

State University of New York at Oswego

kstryker@oswego.edu

I have read the above statement about the purpose and the nature of the study, and freely consent to participate.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date	Experimenter's Signature	Date

Appendix B. Letter of Parental Consent

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Kathleen Laing and I teach French 1, 2, 3R and 4. I am currently a graduate student at Oswego State University, working on my thesis. In order to complete my thesis, I am conducting research into the factors influencing the motivation of students in the French classroom. My research involves surveying middle school and high school students who are either currently enrolled in French or are former French students who have discontinued their study of the language. In order to be able to better understand and more effectively work with students, I have generated a survey for students to complete. The survey includes questions about areas of frustration in learning French, how your child views his/her abilities, and what influences their motivation. Your child's name is not required to participate. The questionnaire is strictly for my use. The results of the survey will be included in my thesis in order to provide educators with a better understanding of students' feeling towards their abilities in learning French.

I understand it is not possible to identify all the potential risks to participants in the completion of this survey, and it is my belief that reasonable measures have been taken to minimize both the known and the unknown potential risks.

I authorize the participation of _____ (child's name) as a subject in the research investigation.

Signed _____

(Parent or Guardian)

Date _____

Appendix C. Letter of Permission

September 25, 2010

Dear Mr. _____ and whom it may concern,

I am currently completing my master's degree at SUNY Oswego. This semester I am enrolled in Education 508, "Research for Classroom Practitioners". As part of my graduate thesis I have been assigned to conduct a study within my classroom. The research topic I have selected investigates the factors that influence student motivation in the French classroom. My research proposal will be reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at SUNY Oswego and I have also completed the mandatory HHS training. I am now seeking permission from yourself and _____ School District to carry out my research using my middle school and high school students and subjects. The research will involve student surveys. Participation will be voluntary and participants will remain anonymous. Documentation of parental permission and student consent will be required in order to participate. Participants will be informed that they are free to withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. I have enclosed a copy of my research protocol narrative, as well as a copy of my HHS certificate. A timely written response would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Laing

French Instructor

_____ School

Appendix D. Student Survey

Student Participant Questionnaire

1. Please indicate your current French class

French 1

French 2

French 3R

French 4

2. What is your approximate grade? A / B / C / D / F

3. How would you rate yourself at French, overall?

1=worst/I can't do anything 2= 2=all right/I get by 3=good/I do well

Please briefly explain (10-20 words or less)

4. Do you become frustrated with French?

1= never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=often 5= always

5. What aspects of French class do you enjoy most? (5-10 words or

6. What aspects of French class do you not enjoy at all? (5-10 words or less)

7. As you learn French, what kinds of activities do you feel most comfortable with? Please circle one choice.

a.) reading/reading activities

b.) writing/writing activities

c.) listening/listening activities

d.) speaking/speaking activities

8. As you learn French, what kinds of activities do you find the most challenging?

1=never

2=rarely

3=sometimes

4=often

5= always

9. What do you consider to be the best part of learning French, what is most interesting and exciting for you? Please be as specific as possible.

10. Do you practice French outside of French class?

1=never

2=rarely

3=sometimes

4=often

5=never

11. Do you think French is a useful language to learn?

1=not at all 2=neutral 3=absolutely

Please briefly explain your choice.

12. How important is your grade in French class?

1=not at all/I don't care 2=somewhat important/it sort of matters to me.

3=important/I care about it. 4=very important/it means a lot to me.

13. How much effort do you put into French class?

1=none/I don't care 2=some/when I feel like it

3=a lot/I try 4= all my effort/I do my best

14. If you could raise your grade, would you be interested?

1= no 2=maybe 3=I think so 4= certainly

15. What would you need to do to raise your grade?

16. In what ways would you like your teacher to help you raise your grade?

17. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with learning French?

Please continue to the second part of the survey to respond to the final question. Thank you.

PART II: FRENCH1

18. As you continue learning French, do you feel:

____ More frustrated ____ Less frustrated

19. As you continue learning French , do you find it:

____ Less challenging ____ More challenging

20. Please explain and be as specific as possible.

PART II: FRENCH 2

18. As you continue learning French, do you feel:

____ More frustrated ____ Less frustrated

19. As you continue learning French, do you find it:

____ Less challenging ____ More challenging

20. Please explain and be as specific as possible.

Thank you for your participation!

PART II: FRENCH 3R

18. As you continue learning French, do you feel:

____ More frustrated _____ Less frustrated

19. As you continue learning French , do you find it:

____ Less challenging _____ More challenging

20. How do you feel about the regent's exam that you will take at the end of this year?

PART II: FRENCH 4

18. As you continue learning French, do you feel:

____ More frustrated _____ Less frustrated

19. As you continue learning French , do you find it:

____ Less challenging _____ More challenging

20. Why did you continue taking French after the regents exam?

Thank you for your participation !