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The Fifth Competence:

Discovering the Self Through Intensive Second Language Immersion

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August, 1999**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
for the requirements of the degree of Master in Second Language Education.**

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Abstract

This inquiry examines observations made by nine former participants in the 1996 Dalhousie University Summer Language Bursary Program (SLBP) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The SLBP is a five-week residential total second language immersion characterized by its intensity. In individual interviews, the informants were encouraged to explore whether and to what extent they had perceived changes in themselves as a result of their participation in the immersion program. These changes were not related to target-language proficiency. Rather, they focused primarily on aspects of the informants' self-perceived or other-perceived identities, which are conceived of as contextual, multiple, fluid and dynamic. Analysis of these observations indicates that changes to identity may indeed be an important byproduct of intensive second language immersion. Elements of such personal growth include perceived increases in participants' senses of resourcefulness, self-confidence, wanderlust, autonomy, open-mindedness, and sociability. Informants also enumerate the SLBP's unique factors which promote changes in self-perception. Changes in participants' perspectives on identity are not viewed simply as incidental immersion outcomes. Rather, they are viewed as components of 'personal competence', both as factors in and results of successful participation in residential total second language immersion.

Résumé

Cette recherche présente des observations de neuf étudiants d'anglais langue seconde suite à leur participation au Programme de bourses d'été de langues (le PBEL) de 1996 à l'Université Dalhousie à Halifax, en Nouvelle-Écosse. Le PBEL est une immersion linguistique résidentielle qui se distingue par son intensité. Par le moyen de l'entrevue individuelle, les participants ont été amenés à explorer dans quelle mesure ils se sont aperçus des changements au niveau de la personne. Ces changements ne sont pas exclusivement reliés à la compétence linguistique dans la langue cible. Par contre, il s'axent surtout sur des aspects des identités des participants, telle qu'elles sont aperçues, tant par l'individu lui-même que par les autres. De plus, ces identités sont conçues comme étant contextualisées, multiples, fluides, et dynamiques. L'analyse des observations indique que des changements au niveau de la personne peuvent dériver de la participation dans l'immersion intensive. Parmi les facettes de ce développement personnel sont des gains aux niveaux de la débrouillardise, la confiance en soi, le goût de voyager, l'autonomie, l'ouverture d'esprit, et la sociabilité. Les changements aux perspectives des participants sur l'identité ne sont pas envisagés comme des résultats incidentels de l'immersion. Vus à la fois comme des facteurs et comme des résultats d'une participation réussie dans l'immersion linguistique résidentielle, ces changements sont plutôt envisagés comme des composantes d'une 'compétence personnelle'.

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Foreword

[I]t's hard to give the impression you want to give 'cause you're always *biaisé* [disadvantaged] by the fact that you're not yourself completely, you're somebody who's trying to, to learn something. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

To arrive at a better understanding of one's situation generally requires both critical awareness and a commitment to the values of self-reflection. This research presents the results of both of these undertakings, in a context which has been an important part of my professional development. As such, it represents a confirmation of my own perceptions of an immersion program to whose aims and values I remain committed. This research began with an offhand remark in a graduate seminar about my wondering whether the students before me for the duration of an immersion program were the 'same' people as they were in their prior and subsequent lives. It has ended by situating me in what is not, frankly, unfamiliar territory. Rather, I have concluded this research constantly reminded by the convictions expressed to me on more than several occasions by Louise Young, the academic director of the Dalhousie SLBP: beyond improving language proficiency, those who accept the challenge and responsibility of such a second language experience enable themselves to grow more self-aware and more self-confident. It reassures me to have had the opportunity to hear SLBP participants echo such ideas. I suggest that these ideas might also be seen as the true ideals of the Summer Language Bursary Program across the country.

Chapter 1: Contexts of the Dalhousie University SLBP

Overview

In this chapter I explore the contexts of the Dalhousie University Summer Language Bursary Program. After situating the immersion program both historically and geographically, I then consider factors within the program which are relevant to my research. In addition to the program's administrative structure, placement and testing procedures, staff and resources these factors also include an overview of the program's student participants as well as social and political realities which impinge on the program. Given the many facets of the Dalhousie SLBP, particularly its length, residential component and its target-language-only nature, I claim that it makes for a unique and intensive language and culture learning experience.

Situating the SLBP

Among the many contexts in which learning a second language may take place, immersion is seen by many to be an effective approach. This is the case whether it be at the beginning of one's learning, as is the case in early immersion programs in the Canadian public school system, or at a later point in one's learning, where the immersion is used to shore up oral proficiency skills and get a taste of the target culture. Both due to popular notions and a significant body of research which lend credence to the idea that language immersion is effective and efficient, it exists in many forms (Stern, 1984; Krashen, 1984; Genesee, 1987; MacFarlane & Wesche, 1995). Given the many forms that immersion takes, it thus becomes important to highlight the context-dependent components of individual programs before attempting to analyze them. Foremost among the contextualized factors to consider are: the length of the immersion; the relative homogeneity of the language backgrounds of participants; participant variables such as age and motivation; contextual variables such as instructional approach and

extracurricular exposure to the target language; and participants' knowledge of the target language prior to the immersion experience.

Furthering students' second language acquisition is, of course, a traditional *prima facie* goal of most immersion programs, and it is sometimes argued that augmenting the intensity of an immersion is one way in which to foster or even precipitate this goal. As a participant-observer of second language immersion, I hold that the identities of individual participants are personally and socially constructed. Individual identities do not remain static - beliefs, motivations, aptitudes and attitudes, for example, are all potential sites of change. Just as a pinprick is perceived differently than a kick in the shin, it stands to reason that the more intense an immersion experience is, the more dynamic the individual's experiencing of it should be.

My primary goal in this research was to investigate the extent to which students in a five-week residential English-as-a-second language immersion program (the 1996 Dalhousie University Summer Language Bursary Program, or SLBP, at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia) experienced changes in their self-perceived or other-perceived identities. Participation in the Dalhousie SLBP requires a great deal more from students than a typical period of second language instruction in their secondary schools. The immersion lasts for five weeks, takes place in a completely unfamiliar community, and demands a commitment to use the second language at all times. The residential aspect of the program also imposes standards of community living in an unfamiliar context among 200 other previously unknown co-participants.

The impetus for this inquiry, then, was an impression that intense second language immersion may in fact produce individual results which are not solely linguistic in nature. More specifically, I hypothesized that immersion participants might undergo a measure of personal growth in terms of their self-awareness. Thus, I undertook this research in order to explore questions related to self-perception and the extent to which one's participation in immersion played a role in such growth. Thus, in the exploration of the results of the research interviews considerable care has been made to allow the interview informants to speak on their own behalf. From the nine former participants interviewed, it can be seen that personal attributes other than those related to target-

language proficiency may indeed be an important byproduct of intensive second language immersion. My informants also suggest that these same attributes may even be prerequisites for successful residential immersion, an issue which to date has been the object of very scarce attention in the professional literature (Radnofsky & Spielmann, 1995).

The Dalhousie Summer Language Bursary Program represents a unique context in which second language immersion takes place. The university is a medium-sized institution with an enrolment of over ten thousand students in programs from the Bachelor to Doctoral levels. It is located in Halifax, the predominantly English-speaking capital city of the province of Nova Scotia, on Canada's Atlantic coast. The city is relatively small with approximately 300 000 inhabitants in its census area. However, as the regional centre, it is an important administrative, economic, academic, cultural and military centre (Nova Scotia Economic Development and Tourism, 1999). Dalhousie's campus is located in a residential neighbourhood a ten-minute walk from the downtown core.

Just as the larger context of the Dalhousie SLBP is unique in that it is one of several SLBPs which take place in various cities across Canada every summer, the SLBP which takes place at Dalhousie changes from year to year. In order to elucidate the context in which research participants framed their discussions in the research interviews, what follows is a brief outline of some of the 1996 program's relevant components. Keeping in mind that any institution or program presents its own unique set of nested layers of context (Maguire, 1994a), the following discussion should not be considered exhaustive. Rather, based on my experience in the Dalhousie SLBP, elements which I have been able to identify as relevant will be foregrounded (Meinke, 1990; Swales, 1990; Lynch, 1990b). Although this thesis does not undertake an evaluation per se of the SLBP, this section has been informed primarily by Lynch's (1990a) context-adaptive inventory which he proposes as a springboard from which to carry out program evaluation.

Administrative Structure, Perspective and Purpose

Funded by the Official Languages in Education Program of the Government of Canada's Department of Canadian Heritage, the Summer Language Bursary Program is coordinated by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). It is administered locally by the provincial and territorial departments of education. The CMEC is an interprovincial body charged with addressing issues of common relevance to the 12 (now 13 with the creation of the new Arctic territory of Nunavut in 1999) departments of education. The federal Department of Canadian Heritage funds the SLBP through its powers under the Official Languages Act (Government of Canada 1969, 1988) which provides for the equality of Canada's two official languages within areas of federal jurisdiction and makes financial resources available to promote the learning and use of the two languages. With a national budget of over \$10 million, 1996 was the SLBP's twenty-sixth year of operation (CMEC 1995, 1996). Provincial and territorial coordinators receive bursary applications and oversee their distribution to the 40 accredited institutions in the ten Canadian provinces. Because Dalhousie University does not recognize its bursary program for academic credit, its SLBP is administered by Henson College, the university's continuing education sub-unit.

The SLBP's aim is twofold: "to provide postsecondary students with the opportunity to learn one of Canada's official languages as their second official language and to broaden their knowledge of the culture associated with it" (CMEC 1995, p.1; 1996, p.1). It is assumed that accredited institutions who administer bursary programs concur with the national objective and that this serves as their overriding *raison d'être*. There is, however, no definition of specific goals at the curriculum level as such decisions are left to the discretion of individual programs. Curriculum development, then, varies from one institution to the other, often reflecting the approaches and philosophies of coordinators and the strengths and weaknesses of instructors. Given other administrative realities at the Dalhousie SLBP, this autonomy has allowed the program an inordinate amount of freedom to shape its own perspective and purpose.

In essence, language learning is viewed at the Dalhousie SLBP as an experiential process which is best facilitated by the total immersion approach promoted at the national level. Indeed, the case could be argued for calling the SLBP a submersion, since the students for the most part share the same first language/culture. However, I shall retain the terminology used by the SLBP itself. Students agree to adhere to an 'English-only' rule (complete with punitive measures as serious as expulsion from the program) and staff are committed to ensuring that - inasmuch as such things are possible - English be the only language used by participants. Moreover, instructors have for the most part been trained in the communicative approach to language learning and strive to create classrooms where the focus is not exclusively on grammatical analysis or the formal features of language but on communicating for real purposes. This is reinforced consistently in the time spent outside of the classroom since students effectively have no choice but to use their second language as a means of communicating their needs, wants, wishes and opinions, both with staff, members of the campus and local community, and each other.

Although the philosophy inherent in the Dalhousie SLBP is not out of step with the SLBP's national goals as they are enumerated in CMEC documentation, it is frequently made explicitly clear by the program's academic director that the program does serve another purpose which she sees as even more important than its linguistic and cultural goals. This goal is primarily concerned with enabling participants "[to] accept the challenge and responsibility of this language experience and overcome the initial frustration, fears, and confusion inherent in such an experience... to grow more proficient, more self-aware, and more self-confident" (Young, 1996). Indeed, this goal is held out both for students and for staff, both of whom are subject to the intensity of the program. More than just learning to know and appreciate one's strengths and weaknesses and one's limits (physical, emotional, academic, linguistic and social), it is also related to learning about one's ability to cope under pressure, express oneself articulately, live with others and understand another place and culture. Indeed, given the intense residential nature of the second language immersion with all of its psychologically and emotionally destabilizing factors, many students do observe that they learn more than language by

participating in the SLBP. Reiterated by the academic director on several occasions (L. Young, personal communication, July 1997) this firm and overarching belief that the SLBP is a learning experience about oneself is what most clearly defines the perspective and purpose of the SLBP at Dalhousie. When this paper later gives more voice to SLBP participants, it will be insightful to keep these principles in mind.

Student Selection and Characteristics

Through the CMEC, the provinces and territories annually negotiate the total number of bursaries to be awarded, their distribution across the country, and their value. Accredited participating institutions receive the bursaries on the students' behalf. The bursary is intended to cover the costs of tuition, mandatory instructional materials, compulsory extracurricular activities and room and board. Pocket money and travel to and from the institution is the responsibility of the student.

In 1996, Dalhousie University was initially allocated a bursary quota of 140 but 154 students had been awarded bursaries by program's end. In addition, 20 non-bursary students participated in the immersion. In 1996 each bursary was valued at \$1550. The fee for paying students was set at \$1650, which was equivalent to the bursary value and a non-refundable \$100 deposit asked of bursary students in order to confirm their registration status. All the bursary students came from Québec as did all but two of the non-bursary students (one Korean and one Corsican).

Other than a minimum age limit which may be set by the host institution, there are no eligibility requirements for non-bursary students. However, to be eligible for a bursary, applicants must have been pursuing full-time studies at the secondary, CÉGEP or university level in the current academic year (i.e. at the time of application). Language background, prior academic achievement, financial need, second language proficiency and other variables are not taken into consideration. Dalhousie sets an additional minimum age requirement, accepting only those students whose seventeenth birthday falls on or before the first day of the program (in 1996 this was June 30). Bursary applications, in which applicants select their first, second and third preferences from the

different immersion programs offered across the country, are sent to the provincial coordinator in the student's home province where they are awarded at random. Those applicants who are offered a bursary are then informed that a particular institution has been granted the bursary on their behalf and the students are directed to contact the host institution to confirm registration by a certain date.

Age, sex, socioeconomic status, previous education and experience with the target language and culture are all important factors to be considered in a program's catchment population (Skehan, 1991; Lynch, 1990a; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995). Such statistical information is compiled at the national level by the CMEC through questionnaires administered to bursary recipients. Although these statistics are not further broken down at the individual program level, since Québec distributes half the total number of bursaries and since the awarding of these bursaries is done randomly, the Québec portion of the national survey can to some extent be considered reflective of the Dalhousie program's population. As far as the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP is concerned, the information in Table 1 has been compiled from the program's registration records (Henson College, 1996a).

Table 1: Student Population

Total number of students enrolled at beginning of program (June 30):		174
Number of students who completed program, i.e. who were pre- and post-tested (2 students were dismissed from the program and 4 chose to leave early for personal reasons):		168
Male students:	48	Female students: 126
Students aged 17-18:	145	Students aged 19 and over: 29
Bursary students:	154	Non-bursary students: 20

Given the age of the students as well as the bursary requirement stipulating full-time student status, it is not surprising that all of the bursary students who had participated in this inquiry had just completed a session at the secondary, CÉGEP or university levels. Accordingly, most had had recent instruction in English as a second

language, although this varied according to field of study and interest. There is, however, no minimum language proficiency required on the part of participants in the awarding of bursaries. As a result, past success in learning English varies widely among SLBP participants, as does motivation for applying for a bursary. While some may foresee English as an important tool in their future careers, other students apply for the bursary hoping for a government-funded summer vacation in a different region of the country.

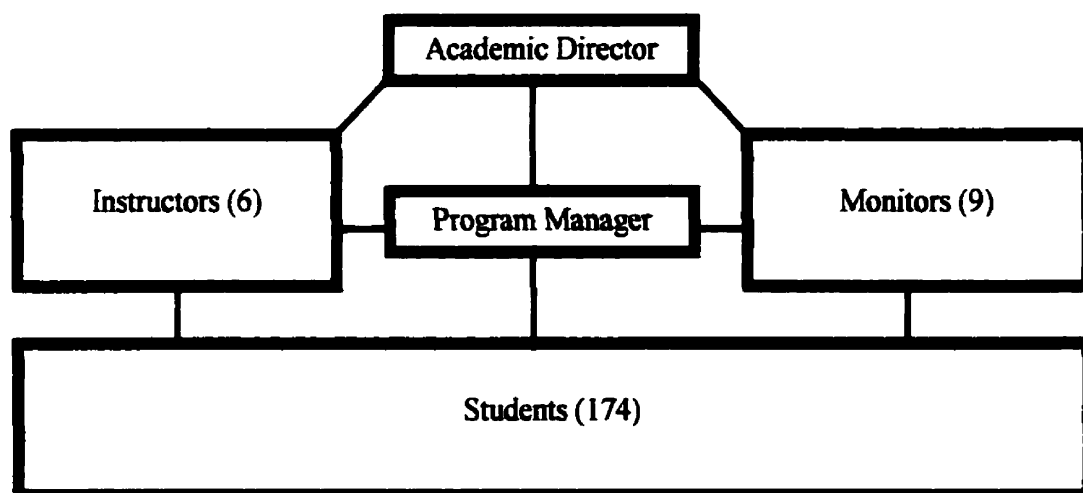
Instructional Resources, Curriculum and Staff

In the Dalhousie SLBP, the categories of instructional resources and curriculum are very limited in scope. The program manager is allotted temporary office space at Henson College from one month prior to the program until one week after it has ended. Apart from the most basic of teaching supplies such as overhead projectors and transparencies, cassette recorders, televisions and VCRs (all of which are available from the university's centralized audiovisual services department), SLBP staff are provided no additional material support. Textbooks are not required of students so that all handouts are photocopied by staff, many of which are made only as class sets in the interests of reducing budgetary expenses. Because the staff and students change from year to year, it is then incumbent on the instructors and monitors to design, develop and implement their own curricula using their own materials, resources and expertise, a fact which the staff have found to be both rewarding and frustrating. They clearly appreciate the professional freedom with which they are entrusted, but the resulting lack of consistency among teaching approaches and instructional content is noted by students and staff alike (K. Graves, personal communication, September 1996; C. McKay, personal communication, September 1996). Although some students appreciate the variety and certain innovative approaches which differ from their past second language learning experiences, the security and predictability of a textbook is initially missed by others. However, it is the clear philosophy of the academic director that staff are hired based on their originality, creativity, ability to innovate and openness to collaborate. In this vein, they are openly encouraged to seek help and advice from other staff members when the need arises.

Among other factors, Lynch (1990a, 1996) indicates the following to be relevant information concerning a program's staff: job descriptions, experience, availability, competence, attitude, native language, age, and sex. Although the last three factors are easily quantifiable, Lynch does not offer additional explanation regarding such complex issues as 'experience' and 'competence'. Nor are such determinations easily uncovered in the Dalhousie SLBP, given that the program does not have a recorded system of job descriptions. This is not to say that staff members are not able to find out information regarding their roles and responsibilities. However, this information is not contained in a booklet or manual, ostensibly due to the fact that staff members should enjoy a wide-ranging flexibility in how they design and conduct their classes or workshops in consultation with the academic director and more experienced colleagues. Before describing the staff members individually, it might be more suitable to address the organizational framework of the Dalhousie SLBP.

The Dalhousie Summer Language Bursary Program's staff organization is best described in terms of the model in Figure 1. As the organizational model illustrates, ultimate responsibility for the program lies with the academic director, for it is she who is in communication with the CMEC, the provincial coordinator and Henson College, the sub-unit of Dalhousie University which administers the funds for the Dalhousie SLBP.

Figure 1: 1996 Dalhousie SLBP Staff Structure



Moreover, she is responsible for the hiring of staff, which changes slightly from year to year as staff members find full-time work which does not enable them to return for the five-week period of the program. The instructors in 1996 (five women and one man) came from various backgrounds and had varying levels of experience in teaching English as a second or foreign language. All, however, were native speakers of English, all were originally from Canada's Maritime provinces, and all had extensive exposure to speakers of other languages and other cultures. Experience with the SLBP ranged from none to 13 years. Since the academic director has sole responsibility for hiring decisions, there is no external system of checks and balances which might lead to a more standardized or objective system of job descriptions or hiring practices.

While instructors are responsible for the classroom component of the program, the monitors are responsible both for special interest workshops, sociocultural and extracurricular activities and residence life. Accordingly, they are required (with one exception in 1996) to live in the university residence with the students and are asked to be available to the students at all times during the five-week period except for one weekend off. Again, there was a wide range of diversity in the 1996 staff: three women and six men from the age of 21 to 37. Five were native Nova Scotians and the others were originally from Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, Québec and Guyana/Ontario.

Again, experience working in such an intensive environment varied, but all were hired based on their enthusiasm, the knowledge they could bring to the special interest workshops for which they would be responsible, and for their ability to conduct a variety of extracurricular activities on a daily basis. I, as program manager, and formerly an instructor for five years, was responsible for the daily planning of extracurricular activities and was essentially viewed by the students as being in charge of the monitors since I also lived in the residence and coordinated their extracurricular activities. As noted above with regard to the instructors, hiring practices for residence staff are also the sole responsibility of the academic director and are not subject to any standard or formalized parameters.

Testing, Class Formation and Instructional Contact

Lynch (1990a, 1996) suggests that an important part of program evaluation may be the inclusion and analysis of measures of the language skills of the program's students. In the case of the SLBP, there are only two formal measures of language skills available: the first concerns the results of the pre-program placement test and the second is compiled from the end-of-program test (referred to within the program as the pre-test and post-test). The written component of the test which is currently in use at the Dalhousie SLBP is a version of the Government of Canada's Public Service Commission test of bilingualism which is designed for francophones. This written test contains 75 multiple-choice questions in four sections (see Table 2).

Table 2: Pre-test/Post-test Structure

Section 1: Grammatical Accuracy	Section 2: Vocabulary in Context	Section 3: Reading Comprehension	Section 4.1: Auditory Discrimination	Section 4.2: Listening Comprehension
27 points	16 points	13 points	7 points	12 points

The first three sections of the written test are timed (nine, eight and twelve minutes respectively) and is administered to half of the program's students at a time in a group session. Section 4 is conducted using a cassette, again in the group session. In addition to this test, students are also interviewed individually by SLBP teaching staff. During the interview, in which students are asked a series of 22 questions, instructors rate students' linguistic performance in terms of overall communicative ability. Pronunciation and grammatical accuracy are considered less important in the interview than whether the student understood the prompt and replied in a coherent and meaningful way. The first 21 questions are scored on a maximum of two points each whereas the final question (which requires a lengthier and more sustained response) is marked on a scale from zero to four. Accordingly, when the results of the written test and oral interview are combined, a student may receive a maximum of 121 points as a raw score. In 1996, the lowest pre-test score was 17/121 (14.0%) and the highest initial result was 100/121 (82.6%).

The pre-test is used with the sole purpose of placing students into twelve classes of approximately 15 students each. This test does not serve any specific diagnostic function but is seen as a way to group students into somewhat homogeneous global proficiency levels, even though individual group members may show differences in ability in any one of the four traditional language skills. As far as the rationale behind group post-testing is concerned, these procedures at the Dalhousie SLBP are viewed somewhat as a necessary evil. In order to maintain accreditation and receive the final installment of the bursary payment, individual programs must produce quantitatively tabulated testing data at the end of the immersion session, either in the form of a pre-test/post-test comparison or of a grade assigned by teaching staff. In addition, it has been the experience of the Dalhousie SLBP that final marks are expected by students both as a result of prior school learning experiences and so that students might attempt to receive exemption credits at their CÉGEPs or universities based on their successful completion of the program. From a philosophical point of view, the expectations regarding grades and the importance which students attach to them frequently run counter to the perspective held by SLBP staff members. Since the SLBP is not recognized for credit at Dalhousie, the post-test (which is conducted on the penultimate day of the five-week program in order to allow results to be printed on individualized completion certificates), is identical to the pre-test and, from the standpoint of Dalhousie program staff, is to be used only as a comparison so that students might be able to note their progress over five weeks in terms of the same testing procedure. Clearly, there is the danger of practice effects which could compromise the validity of the final results, but since the results are meaningless for further academic study at Dalhousie, the practice of using the same battery of test questions for the two tests remains. The results of the 1996 pre-test for the Dalhousie SLBP are summarized in Table 3 (Henson College, 1996b).

Table 3: 1996 Pre-test Scores

Score range	beginner 0-49%	intermediate 50-79%	advanced 80-100%
Number of students	118	52	4
Range mean score	33%	63%	82%

Even though instructors claim not to develop their curriculum or gear their teaching to this standardized test, and the staff consider the pre-/post-tests only in comparative terms, it is worth noting that significant progress measured in terms of linguistic achievement scores is made. The results of the 1996 post-test are summarized in Table 4 (Henson College, 1996b).

Table 4: 1996 Post-test Scores

Score range	beginner 0-49%	intermediate 50-79%	advanced 80-100%
Number of students	54	98	16
Range mean score	39%	62%	85%

Having been placed into class groupings of 15 students, each group remains intact for three periods of classroom instruction per day for a total of 22 teaching days in the five-week program (the three other weekdays are devoted to pre-testing, post-testing, and final workshop presentations), with each group spending equal time with three different instructors. Each instructor is responsible for one of reading, composition, or listening/speaking, but this nomenclature is not intended to preclude an instructor from delving into the other skill areas. Indeed, since no document exists to dictate to instructors the language or content upon which they are to focus their instruction, there is a great deal of collaborative work and team teaching done by the instructors, who are each responsible for six classes per day (D. Buck, personal communication, July 1996; N. LeBlanc, personal communication, July 1996).

Essentially, then, curriculum decisions lie nearly exclusively in the hands of the instructors. Much of the collaboration occurs either within the instructor's 'vertical' or 'horizontal', terms adopted by some program teaching staff to designate respectively the two other instructors who teach the same groups of students and the one other instructor who focuses on the same skill area. In other words, the 'vertical' grouping refers to the three instructors who are responsible for teaching the same six groups of students for the duration of the program, either the odd- or even-numbered levels. An instructor's 'horizontal' teaching partner is responsible for the same teaching focus, one of

composition, reading, or listening/speaking. 'Vertical' collaboration, then, occurs among the three instructors who are responsible for teaching the six same class groupings, while 'horizontal' collaboration takes place with another instructor by virtue of focusing on the same language skill area(s), but with different students. This is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Dalhousie SLBP Teaching Staff

‘Vertical a’ - Levels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11	
Instructor	Skill Area
A	composition
B	reading
C	listening/speaking

‘Vertical b’ - Levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12	
Instructor	Skill Area
D	composition
E	reading
F	listening/speaking

	Instructors	Skill Area
‘Horizontal a’	A and D	composition
‘Horizontal b’	B and E	reading
‘Horizontal c’	C and F	listening/speaking

In addition to the time spent in the language class, students spend an additional equal amount of time participating in a special interest workshop of their choice (some, however, may be placed in their second choice of workshop due to the limited number of places available in certain workshops). In 1996 these workshops were: science, journalism, theatre, history and culture of Nova Scotia, and volunteer service. All the workshops are conducted by two of the monitors, apart from the volunteer workshop whose members are placed at various community agencies and institutions in the city, thus requiring only one monitor to coordinate and supervise. Although the monitors are generally not trained teachers nor are they expected to conduct their sessions similar to the language classes, the time spent in the workshops is considered an important opportunity for students to practice, develop and perfect the language skills which they are acquiring in their more formal classes. In total, instructional time for the combined blocks of time spent in workshop and classes is approximately 135 hours. In addition,

several optional activities are provided at minimal or no cost every evening and on the weekends to provide students the opportunity not only to practice their second language skills but to experience local culture.

Social and Political Contexts

As Maguire (1994a, 1994b) points out, language learning is positioned within nested layers of context which are particularly unique in the situation of Québec. The uses of English and French, as well as the relationship between Canada's two official languages have been bound to historical, political and economic factors since the beginnings of European colonization. Instances of language conflict continue today, particularly with respect to language use in public life, the language of work and in the workplace, and the language of instruction in the public education system. Both Lightbown (1988) and Schecter (1988) have discussed the politics and policy of second language instruction in the province's schools, particularly with regard to institutionalized ambivalence vis-à-vis English second language instruction. As a result, SLBP participants must be considered in light of these factors. For the most part, the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP participants come from areas where they are a part of the linguistic majority, to find themselves in a minority-language context for the duration of their stay in Halifax. Moreover, the value and respect accorded the second language and Canada's dominant English-speaking culture varies among participants. Views regarding language are often intertwined with political beliefs, as well as one's perceptions of historical events and current realities. Although most of the participants had been educated in Québec's educational system, the influence of views of family members and friends must also be considered, accounting for variation. The fact that a sovereignty referendum was only narrowly defeated in October 1995 also meant that Canada's linguistic tensions and political future remained in the public consciousness in the summer of 1996. Given the complex nature of the political and sociocultural relationship of Canada's two official languages, then, it would be naïve to believe that this relationship does not somehow play a role in the SLBP immersion experience.

Although it is implicit in the national mandate, especially given the nature of the funding of the SLBP, that there are broader political interests at stake, these are not easily addressed here. A legacy of the more centralist federal policies of the Liberal Party governments of the era of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, the SLBP's sociocultural component is worth examining. Although the national mandate does not explicitly state such a goal, it may be presumed that the objective of 'broadening participants' knowledge of the culture associated with their second official language' is meant to reduce levels of misunderstanding and linguistic intolerance and concomitantly engender support for the continuation of federal official languages programs and policies, and perhaps federalism itself. Although instructors are free to broach whatever topics they choose in their classes, such objectives do not form part of the curriculum discourse at the Dalhousie SLBP. In fact, staff at Dalhousie and other English-language SLBPs frequently avoid the broader issues of language and politics, recognizing that young adults' opinions are often steadfast and strident. The best that can be expected is to present the host community in as favorable and hospitable a light as possible (K. Rockwell, personal communication, July 1996; A. Corbett, personal communication, August 1996; G. Young, personal communication, July 1997; P. Gowdy, personal communication, May 1999).

There are, in addition to broader contexts, more mundane issues at the program level which do affect the daily functioning of the program, including the program's relationship with various units at Dalhousie University and its relationship with campus neighbours (residents and businesses). On the one hand, some local businesses, the campus housing and conference service, and other units at Dalhousie are pleased to collaborate with the SLBP, many viewing it as a welcome influx of revenue which provides needed employment opportunities during what would normally be a slow season without the university's full-time student population. On the other hand, homeowners near the residence where SLBP participants are lodged, some academic departments near classrooms used by the program, and some members of the campus security detail consider the program's ongoing existence as something of a nuisance. The primary reason for this sentiment is that the program often causes extra noise (the homeowners'

complaint) and extra work (the campus security force's complaint) during the normally slower summer season. Staff in certain academic departments seem to resent that classrooms which they perceive to be meant exclusively for their use are opened up to students whom they view as too immature. Suffice to say that the workplace-oriented social and political issues surrounding the Dalhousie SLBP are as complex and detailed as any organization of a similar size but are compressed into a time period of very short duration, thus adding to its very intense nature. These local factors, combined with the political and linguistic climate in which the students have been raised and taught, then make it necessary for the program's administration and staff to cooperate with other members of the host community - particularly the campus community - to ensure the program's success each year.

Summary

Through the many unique features of the 1996 Dalhousie University Summer Language Bursary Program, it presents itself as a complex context for language and culture learning. Each component of this context is interconnected, creating a dynamic interplay of individuals in a temporary and distinct learning community. By examining the salient features of the immersion experience, I have intended to underscore the importance of contexts. More importantly, I have also intended to bring out the intensity of the SLBP experience, for it is this intensity which makes it a set of contexts in which questions of identity come alive. In the next chapter I will discuss the interrelated dynamics of context and identity.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Positionings

Overview

In this chapter I relate my own theoretical positionings as they have been refined through this inquiry. I begin by supporting a contextualist perspective on identity, recognizing the importance of context in understanding the issue. I also argue for a perspective which treats the notions of context, community, discourse and identity in a similar fashion. That is, each of them must be viewed as multiple, fluid and dynamic. Identity, one's sense of self, may thus change according to a task, a situation, community membership, and language of interaction. Moreover, identity may change across time and space, enabling the individual to maintain multiple identities in different contexts. This then creates a view of the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP as a living speech community, a site of dynamic multiplicity. Through this perspective I note the importance of encouraging such a critical awareness of the dynamics of change on the part of the informants who participated in the research interviews.

Investing in a Contextualist Perspective

At the core of this investigation is the question of self-perceived identity, its permanence and permutations, and the effects of intensive second language immersion on these constructs. Clearly, then, it is imperative to examine the nature of the SLBP experience from the perspective of its participants. Although the program, through its contextual factors, influences the ways in which the individual students live the immersion experience, it was also imperative to solicit insights from the participants themselves. By asking them to reflect on how the immersion experience has affected them, I hoped to explore the common themes which might emerge in our conversations.

Keeping in mind that the stated goals of the program are, on the one hand, to improve second language proficiency and, on the other, to foster an appreciation of the realities of Canada's other dominant linguistic community, it follows that the overall

objectives of the program aim to a certain extent to equip participants with a secondary discourse identity, a level of ease and functioning and perhaps even a sense of membership in the country's other broadly defined speech community. On another level, the SLBP also constitutes a speech community in and of itself, distinct and separate from the larger second language community of English speakers. It is this sense of community, the identities which participants brought to it, and the changes which occurred within participants' identities which form the basis of the theoretical approach to this inquiry.

One of the initial theoretical questions, then, concerns the processes by which SLBP participants are able to describe their motivations to identify with the SLBP community/identity, either prior or subsequent to the program's completion. Motivation, however, is clearly not a unidimensional phenomenon (Dörnyei, 1998). That is, although it might appear to be a trait which resides within the individual, its roots can also be found in the individual's social environment. Considering motivation from this social psychological point of view, Gardner (1985), Gardner, Lalonde and MacPherson (1985), Gardner, Lalonde and Moorcroft (1985), and Genesee, Rogers and Holobow (1983) have all provided interesting insights into the attitudinal, motivational, and social factors which influence language learning, loss and retention.

In addition, given that the population in question is overwhelmingly a group of late adolescents/young adults, the adult education literature offers pertinent discussions on the myriad factors which impinge on the individual's decision to take advantage of learning opportunities. Of particular interest are Henry and Basile's (1994) model of participation where the individual is seen to choose to participate based on perceived maximization of utility value, and Stalker's (1993) provocative and persuasive claim that participation (in formal learning, at least) can in fact rarely be seen to be purely voluntary. More often than not extrinsic factors are what lead adults to take part in learning activities. Similarly, motivation in second language learning contexts has recently undergone a thorough reexamination. Peirce (1995) has been instrumental in recasting the notion of motivation into one of 'investment'. In doing so, the language learner is seen as presenting a complex social being with multiple identities and multiple desires. In a second language context such as the SLBP, participants' investment in the

learning and social enterprises of the immersion must thus be understood analyzed through the lens of the ongoing and dynamic process of their production and maintenance of their social identities.

In another bid to expand the motivation construct, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) have called for the introduction of additional facets of motivation into the equation. Persistence, goal setting, self-confidence, self-efficacy, attitudes, and proficiency are all seen as playing central roles in second language learning. Tremblay and Gardner highlight the need for studies which address these issues, but through the investigation of contextual factors that influence these attributes. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) have taken the motivational literature in yet another direction by positing that linguistic, communicative, and social psychological variables are contextually mediated to affect one's willingness to communicate (WTC) in the second language. By representing motivation in such a way, MacIntyre and his colleagues suggest that increasing learners' willingness to communicate might be seen as the primary goal of second language instruction.

Repositioning the focus of second language learning research has also been addressed by McKay and Wong (1996). Adopting Peirce's (1995) concept of investment, McKay and Wong argue for the establishment of a contextualist perspective, foregrounding the multiplicity of discourses and of learner identities in students' negotiation of the learning situation. Although they acknowledge that learners may be positioned by context, their focus expands the notions of strategic competence, motivation and investment, highlighting the learners' exercise of personal agency. This is done within a dynamic and multiple perspective on discourse, but also on power relations within the learners' multiple identity contexts.

The Power to Express Identity in Second Language Immersion

Adopting such a contextualist perspective, this issue of power becomes especially relevant in second language immersion as it is practiced in the Dalhousie SLBP. What distinguishes the SLBP instructional environment from most others is the formal

prohibition (albeit voluntarily agreed to as a condition of bursary acceptance) of the use of the students' mother tongues. Issues of power have recently been the subject of a great deal of research, from investigations into bilingual education programs in the United States to more sociopolitical discussions of language policy and planning at governmental levels. Skutnabb-Kangas (1990), for example, provides thorough analyses of linguistic rights around the world. Phillipson (1992) has also explored the inherent 'linguistic imperialism' of the English-as-a-second-language industry worldwide. Cummins (1989; 1996) has also added to the debate regarding power relationships, arguing that learners' negotiation of their identities is key to their empowerment and eventual flourishing as individuals. Although I intuitively felt that the second-language-only policy enforced in the SLBP must influence to a great degree the way in which learning and the negotiation of one's identities are able to take place, there have to date been few inquiries which have looked into issues of power and identity in an environment similar to the SLBP.

Ferdman (1990) sees literacy as a way of carrying out social transactions. He posits that "people's perceptions of themselves in relationship to their ethnic group and the larger society, as reflected in [their] cultural identity, can change, and in turn be changed, by the process of becoming and being literate" (p. 199). If this is the case, then surely the ramifications for the individual in becoming or being biliterate or bilingual in the SLBP context must be palpable. If, as Gee (1989) contends, literacy (and by extension biliteracy and bilingualism) are socially defined, does then the process of becoming bilingual/biliterate affect one's self-perception? The power over this process, however, is in the hands of those who define literacy, i.e. those who master the primary discourse. That is, participants in intensive immersions such as the SLBP are operating in a community whose primary discourse (the second language) is mastered by none of the participants, thus creating a dichotomy of power between the students and the host culture. Not only may this create practical problems for everyday communicative purposes, it also slots the participants to a certain extent in the role of less-proficient language user. The effects of language use policy espoused by the SLBP on participants' identities thus becomes an interesting area of investigation.

One discussion which closely touches upon language use policy in the Dalhousie SLBP is Auerbach's (1993) discussion of the implications of enforcing English only in the ESL classroom. She claims that such practices undermine first-language vitality and contribute to macro-level English hegemony. Given this 'monolingual myopia on the part of the ESL industry' (Phillipson, 1996), and given that the research participants in this investigation are from Québec, it would be naïve to think that language learning in an immersion context like the SLBP would not need to take such factors into account. However, SLBP participants have chosen to participate in its English-only instructional environment. This can, at least to some degree, be assumed; pressure from parents and future academic and professional requirements can not be ignored. Lightbown (1988) has already provided a brief discussion of the state of ESL instruction in Québec's elementary and secondary public schools. Although much has changed in the education system in Québec since 1988, she noted how policies appeared ambivalent towards English-language education. Québécois do, however, recognize the importance of English-language abilities both in the North American and global contexts. Despite this recognition, Schecter (1988) succinctly outlines the broader historical context, tracing the political genesis of such ambivalence. Nevertheless, the second-language-only environment of the Dalhousie SLBP is known by all involved to be temporary. Yet, in exploring participants' perceptions of their immersion identities and changes to them, I still felt that the notion of power must play a role. That is, through my own participation in the SLBP, I felt certain that the expression of one's identity is affected by one's power to do so in the second language, a requirement mandated by the SLBP's internal policies and regulations.

Support for my intuitions came from Radnofsky and Spielmann (1995), who have been able to demonstrate the important role played by a target-language-only pledge in an intensive residential immersion. Developing a grounded theory through their ethnographic account as participant-observers in a French-language immersion, they explored the roles of euphoric and dysphoric tension in a seven-week summer immersion program. They conceived of tension as a continuum between that which was perceived as stimulating (euphoric) and that which was perceived as discouraging and demotivating

(dysphoric). Mediated through contextual factors such as the target-language-only pledge, communal living, the curriculum and the 'pericurriculum' (the immersion's extracurricular and sociocultural activities), identity formation was seen by their informants to be affected by considerable euphoric tension. Experienced particularly by beginner students, linguistic limitations hindered the ability to project what these participants viewed as their 'true personalities', in turn hindering their full participation in the immersion's discourse communities. Examining a related summer immersion program from the students' perspectives, Liskin-Gasparro (1998) also found that the intense and complex linguistic and social environment created by a residential target-language-only immersion gave rise to regular crises in linguistic and personal confidence. The Dalhousie SLBP is similar in that it also promotes an interweave of instructional curriculum, residential life and sociocultural programming. An understanding that successful immersion participants must experience communicative interactions where their identities are successfully projected thus became an integral part of the theoretical positioning of this inquiry.

In addition to the important notions of power mentioned above, any exploration of identity must also consider the power of language itself. The power to define outwardly who we are, what we do and what we think is inherent in language use (Lockwood, 1994). That is, without the power of words, we would be hard pressed to describe ourselves and our aspirations to others. As Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) point out, the language we speak is indeed part of our self-ascription, part of what and who we say we are. In addition, patterns of language use, as sociolinguistics has informed us, help to mark us socially, varying by context and depending on our interlocutors. Morgan (1997), Duff and Uchida (1997), Thesen (1997), and Schecter and Bayley (1997), also agree that language serves to construct identity. The central role played by language in human interaction indisputably situates language at the focal point of our acts of identity. The way in which we go about defining ourselves to others, mediated by our linguistic and language-related behaviours, thus highlights the centrality of language in identity-formation. With particular regard to second language learners, Norton (1997) concurs. As she puts it, when learners interact with others, they must constantly

reorganize their sense of who they are and the ways in which they relate to the social world.

In an incisive article on social identity, investment and language learning, Peirce (1995) stresses that relations of power affect interaction between language learners and target language speakers. Her construct of investment in the second language context and in the target language is also seen as an investment in the learner's own social identity (Norton, 1997). Social identity, however, is subject to change, giving rise to multiple identities which vary according to the demands and nature of the social context. Not only does this concur with McKay and Wong (1996), it also reflects the work undertaken by MacIntyre et al. (1998) on willingness to communicate, and complements findings in the adult education participation literature. Successful participation in the Dalhousie SLBP must then be seen as more than a simple dichotomous distinction along the lines of being more or less motivated. A major tenet of the SLBP is that learning the target language requires practice in using it for real communicative purposes and exposure to situations which require such use. Because practicing the target language places the learner in social contexts where power and the right to speak are real issues, negotiation of the language must then also imply a negotiation of the communicative context and of the individual's identity. It is the learner's willingness to invest in negotiating the terms of these interactions which will influence his or her opportunities to learn.

Investment in the language-learning experience also comprises understanding rules of target language use and the interests these rules serve, a notion echoed in Albertini's (1993) discussion of critical literacy. Power relations and their role in the construction of social identities can also be read into the work of Gee (1989) whereby one's skill in various social literacies entitles the individual to membership in socially meaningful groups. Clearly then, conclusions made by Peirce (1995) and McKay and Wong (1996) in which social identity can be seen as multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change, must somehow be manifest in the context of the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP. The intensive nature of the second language community and culture created by the Dalhousie SLBP should surely make it a context rich with opportunities for participants' identities to change. In encouraging informants to explore their experience in the SLBP, I

was thus in part seeking to investigate such conceptual issues, especially in terms of their perceived abilities to negotiate the formation of their identities.

Identities and Contexts: Multiple, Fluid and Dynamic

Indeed, although some psychologists would like to think of the process of identity formation as a terminal construct, ending somewhere within the transition from adolescence to adulthood, this can not be considered accurate. Rather, identity formation must be seen as a lifelong process. Although I might intuitively feel that my identity is fixed and permanent, it may be that it has simply plateaued during a life period. If I am to consider my identity as dynamic, fluid, and multiple, then my sense of self, my self-perception, my self-ascription must always be standing by for refinement, confirmation and even radical deconstruction as life events act as militating forces. These events may be related to my relationship with the physical world, such as when I am led to reconsider my confidence in my sense of direction after having gotten lost. Of particular relevance to this inquiry are those life events which are mediated through interpersonal contact in the social world. Regardless, such events are replete with possibility, potentially leading or forcing me to reconsider myself, either recasting or reaffirming my understanding of myself as an individual acting within a number of various roles and communities (Erikson, 1959).

Fluidity of identity, however, is a notion exacerbated by fluidity of context. Vygotskian theorist John-Steiner (1985) also recognizes the importance of the changing social environment in second language learning. Indeed, her investigation into the different ways in which several adult learners perceived their second language learning experiences is very pertinent, for it highlights individual differences in approaching a learning task in a particular context. Directly relevant to my inquiry, however, is her discussion of the problem of superficiality of contact with target language speakers in many situations. This is a problem which the Dalhousie SLBP works hard to overcome in its overall concept and in its day-to-day programming. As John-Steiner notes, adults already have ways of expressing themselves in their first language and have a stronger

reliance than children on presenting their personalities through words. Radnofsky and Spielmann (1995) found this same problem among the university-aged students who participated in their study. Beginner students in particular felt infantilized by their limited productive abilities in the second language, unable to communicate at their usual level of sophistication.

Frustration with one's limited abilities to negotiate one's second language identity arises both in and out of the immersion classroom. In the SLBP classroom, this is mitigated to some degree by the fact that one's classmates are also at a similar proficiency level. In such an intensive immersion program, however, the non-classroom component of the program (Radnofsky and Spielmann's 'pericurriculum') is viewed as the primary locus of authentic communication, accounting for the bulk of interpersonal interactions and complementing the instructional time spent in class. As Young-Sturans (1997) argues, the so-called sociocultural component of the SLBP plays a crucial role (perhaps more important than the time spent in the classroom) in creating contexts where students can showcase their personalities (i.e. aspects of their identity) and practice their second language in any number of extracurricular settings. Using children in an ESL classroom as her example, Willett (1995) has also demonstrated that participating in social activity allows learners to develop social relationships and construct social identities. Aware of the potential juxtapositions of participants' classroom identities and those which arise in the more casual atmosphere of social relationships, I decided that this notion of multiple identities and the varying degrees of difficulty inherent in negotiating them should become an integral element in the research interviews.

I wanted to encourage the informants in this inquiry to explore the issue of identities, the ways in which they are perceived, and the ways in which they change. The notion of identity, however, is wide-ranging, encompassing a number of different fields of study. Identity, of course, can only be considered a fluid notion, involving one's own perceptions and intentions and underlying motivations as well as the differing shades - if not wholly contradictory perspectives - of others' perceptions. This has been made clear in the field of second language learning and teaching as researchers have recently begun to explore the issue in second language contexts. Norton (1997), for example, focuses on

'social identity', referring to the individual's relationship to the larger social world as identity is mediated through social affiliations and interpersonal relationships. Moreover, her interest in social investment introduces the notions of power and the (in)ability to participate in such relationships, thus underlining the individual's desire and agency.

Morgan (1997) also stresses the concept of social needs and aspirations, demonstrating how linguistic needs are interconnected with social ones. Duff and Uchida (1997) discuss 'sociocultural identities', underscoring cultural assumptions and the negotiated nature of relationships. In her approach to social identity, Ochs (1993) highlights the stances of individuals and the social meaning which is inferred by the interlocutor. She further explains how one's projected social identity is dependent on the interlocutor's level of competence in interpreting the stance which is projected. Schecter and Bayley (1997), meanwhile, frame their analysis in terms of socialization practices, showing how individuals' self-ascriptions relate to family and cultural values. All, however, reflect a valid concern within the field of second language learning and teaching with the social dimension of the learner's experience (McNamara, 1997). Moreover, regardless of researchers' conceptualizations of identity or the theoretical foundations on which their research is based, the dynamism and multiplicity of identity, as well as the central role played by language in negotiating identity, have been consistently acknowledged.

Part of the reason for the variation in conceptualizations of identity arises from the wide variety of second language contexts. In the research interviews, then, I hoped to encourage informants to consider their identities in the contextualized sphere of their participation in the Dalhousie SLBP immersion experience, which is also multiple and dynamic. For five weeks, SLBP students form part of a definable, albeit temporary, linguistic community. Although all of the participants in the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP did not share a common mother tongue, the vast majority shared a common language affiliation (Rampton, 1990; Leung, Rampton and Harris, 1997). Moreover, apart from the two non-Canadian participants, they were mostly members of a common cultural community by virtue of their educational background, age, and residency in Québec. In addition to their shared backgrounds, however, all of the participants were actively

involved in creating a 'program culture' which would be unique to the 1996 version of Dalhousie's SLBP. Created, modified and recreated with each day of the program through shared events and common experiences, each participant's unique experiencing of the layers of context presented by the SLBP attests to its multiple and dynamic nature.

The Living Speech Community

In effect, when discussing the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP, it is important to take the view that it is in and of itself a unique and living set of speech communities (Hymes, 1964; Gumperz, 1968). By speech community I refer to a socially constituted context whose linguistic phenomena are specific, characterized by shared experiences and language use which is significantly different from other contexts. Notably, Gumperz is clear in pointing out that the permanence of a given speech community - or lack thereof - is not a requirement for the establishment of the parameters of a speech community. Rather, it is the situated behavioral phenomena associated with a group's language use which determines whether we can refer to one group as a speech community and not another.

The Summer Language Bursary Program at the national level is arguably a string of speech communities, united in purpose but vastly different in the ways in which they operate, each bounded by its own contextual variables and its own set of participants. Moreover, each SLBP can also be viewed as a successive series of speech communities, with each year's new group of participants creating its own shared knowledge and shared experiences by virtue of its own shared body of verbal signs and language use. Although some of the behavioral and linguistic code of each program may represent something of an inheritance from its predecessor programs, the very newness of each year's group of participants ensures that a new, temporary speech community will be forged only to disintegrate at the end of the five-week immersion. In this sense the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP represents a culture in and of itself, one whose structure Scollon and Scollon (1995) might qualify as an overtly goal-directed discourse system which is not in the truest sense naturally occurring. It is true, however, that there are equally numerous and

perhaps more important elements involved in the SLBP culture which would make it more organic in that the social structure of the SLBP outside the classroom allows for highly autonomous social group development, unhindered by previously existing hierarchical structures.

The notion of speech community, however, is not without its pitfalls. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) warn that the idea of a strict correlation existing between monolingual language use and univocal identity can not be a foregone conclusion. Like Gumperz, their focus is more on social organization and the interrelationships between two languages or varieties of the same language. The SLBP, on the other hand, presents a rather unique and quite different model of language use. It is not a bilingual community, as is the case for the Acadians in many parts of Nova Scotia and in anglophone parts of Québec. Nor is it an instance where two varieties of a language coexist under a set of socially regulated practices, as is the case with dialectical and standard variations of certain languages. This notwithstanding, it can not be claimed that the SLBP brand of immersion creates a unilingual society either. The SLBP, inasmuch as it attempts to promote a unilingual community negotiated through the use of the second language, is in fact a bilingual situation. Given that it is an artificially constructed scenario, it lacks the historically established norms of communication and language choice usually found in historically bilingual/bidialectical situations. Participants have a natural tendency to do away with their commitment to using the immersion language with each other when off campus or in the privacy of their residence rooms. As a participant-observer in the SLBP, particularly in my role as program manager, I have been able to witness this phenomenon firsthand. From a point of view which conceives of identity as a site of struggle (Peirce, 1995), this unique feature of the program is one of its most salient. With this knowledge that the SLBP speech community is characterized for the most part by dual language use, I thus hoped that informants would illuminate the social dynamics which regulate the patterns of first versus second language use.

Another caveat regarding speech communities is equally important. Despite all of the shared features of experience which make a speech community a bona fide social structure, each one does not necessarily speak with a united voice. This univocal identity

(Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985) is in fact a sort of sociolinguistic red herring. Norton (1997), Peirce (1995), McKay and Wong (1996), Maguire and McAlpine (1996), Schecter and Bayley (1997) and others have all demonstrated the importance of giving voice to individual participants, their experiences, and their perceptions of their experiences. Purporting to impose an interpretation which aims to diminish the full spectrum of voices within a given community would only do that community an injustice, underscoring the place of the informants' voices in this inquiry.

Multiple Communities, Multiple Discourses, Multiple Identities

Having somewhat deconstructed the ready assumptions we are prone to make about the unity of a speech community, it is now necessary to go one step beyond that. As just described, the speech community is rather more like a web of intertwining and intersecting parts, which may often be made to project an image of singularity for the sake of convenience. To further complicate our understanding of such a community, we must also consider the notion of discourse identity. For my purposes in this research, Gee's (1989) understanding of discourse seems best suited. He defines discourse as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network'" (p. 18). I see here a very distinct parallel between the notions of speech community and social network. Both constructs stress the importance of shared norms, shared signs, shared usage, associated behaviors, common ways of thinking and so on, all for the social and psychological purposes of group identification. Indeed, it is by appropriating, understanding, and putting into practice the social 'rules of engagement' that both the individual and his or her interlocutors are able to assign membership to a given community or network.

Gee's important contribution to my understanding of such communities and the identities which are represented within them is the reminder that each discourse is inherently ideological. By this it should be understood that each discourse involves and presents a set of values, viewpoints and standpoints to which the individual member of

the group must substantially subscribe in order to be considered an integral and identifiable member. Although this certainly has implications at higher social levels for our understanding and interpretation of the distribution of power relations and the edification of social hierarchies, what concerns me more in this discussion are the implications at the level of the individual. Valuing and maintaining membership within such a discourse group must to a certain degree imply an acceptance of the group's standards of behaviour and social practices, an integral part of the formation of one's own identity structures. This valuing dimension of identity may be particularly relevant in the SLBP context in that negotiating the terms of membership in the community implies a degree of willingness. This willingness may be a motor of interaction similar to the 'willingness to communicate' construct of MacIntyre et al. (1998) or perhaps it may be more of an outcome of immersion in the sense of Ciarain's (1984) 'extralinguistic competence'. The SLBP as it is practiced at Dalhousie certainly places a high value on its social components. Thus the extent to which participants adopted this value and its role in their successful negotiation of the immersion became further elements to incorporate in the research interviews.

The notion of discourse identity is further distorted in a context such as the Summer Language Bursary Program. An integral part of Gee's notion of discourse is its power to ascribe elements of one's identity; in his terms, discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' (Gee, 1989, p.1). The individual, however, can maintain membership in any number of discourses and communities, and in varying degrees. Indeed, as short-lived as the SLBP may be, under Gee's model of discourse it can be viewed as a context promoting membership in its community and requiring negotiation of its secondary discourse. Secondary discourses, however, can not be controlled in the same way as one's initial discourse, which is part of one's enculturation process. Rather, individuals come by their secondary discourses through a process of learning and socialization, thus foregrounding the social aspect of identity within the SLBP context.

Again the notions of power, dysphoria, and second language ability come into play. In Gee's argumentation, literacy is control over secondary discourses, and powerful literacy is control over the uses of secondary discourses, as in the case of the SLBP.

Control or proficiency over secondary discourses (and by extension, one's secondary identities), is in turn amenable to the service of criticism of the primary and dominant discourses. And meta-level knowledge of the discourse, which is key to being able to attain powerful literacy, must to some degree be developed through learning, i.e. teaching. In the context of the SLBP immersion and others (Radnofsky and Spielmann, 1995; Liskin-Gasparro, 1998), the belief is often put forth that the immersion approach is superior to other forms of second language learning because it better approximates natural language acquisition through complete linguistic and cultural immersion. However, given the artificiality of the context, the brevity of its duration, the value placed on the classroom setting, and the fact that students are not fully 'immersed' but are in a way relegated to a linguistic ghetto of their own within the permanent dominant second language culture, the case for viewing the SLBP as a naturalistic language learning context is not strong. As a result, I was uncertain whether or to what degree SLBP participants might be able to truly control or critique their secondary SLBP discourses and was conscious of the need to provide a reflective atmosphere in the interviews which would be conducive to engaging a critical perspective.

Another component of Gee's treatment of discourse that is highly pertinent to this investigation is the notion of multiplicity taken up by Goffman (1959, 1981), Ivanic (1984), Peirce (1995), McKay and Wong (1996) and others. An individual can possess any number of discourse identities, at different levels of control or mastery. I stress again this notion of multiplicity because, although the notion of secondary discourse has been discussed, it must follow that one can function concurrently in several secondary discourses as social groupings and requirements dictate. Indeed, the SLBP is undoubtedly a context for the potential establishment of multiple discourse identities, wherein the individual participants may demonstrate membership at various levels. First, there is the larger group of Québécois teenagers living in a second culture. There are also the smaller groupings of the classes and workshops, and the social cliques which establish themselves through the course of natural human dynamics outside of the structured curricular component of the immersion. It was important then in the research interviews to explore how this second language environment distorts, affects, recreates or reaffirms

one's identities, either as they are perceived by oneself or by others, in the various settings and subsettings the immersion program creates.

Yet the fact remains that the formal, temporary, instructional nature of the immersion setting is not the same as when seeking membership in a secondary discourse community for more integral reasons as is the case of emigration and eventual assimilation into the target language and culture. How then can the various perspectives on identity formation in second language settings such as the SLBP immersion be reconciled, where the struggle to form and preserve one's self-perception is so hindered by unfamiliar social groupings and enforced second language use? It is perhaps by returning to Gee (1989) that the related notions of motivation, power, social groupings, social interaction, language use and multiplicity of identity can best be woven together within the residential immersion context. 'Discourse' involves socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group. Because the individual has recourse to multiple discourses, which change according to one's membership and status within socially meaningful groups, the reality of multiple affiliations to discourse identities can not be discounted. The SLBP's crucial second language factor clearly makes it a very unique context for secondary discourses to manifest themselves and change regularly and thus makes it a unique venue for the co-construction of multiple discourse identities.

Changes in Positioning and Critical Awareness

I have already mentioned the variety of ways in which researchers have looked at issues of identity in second language contexts (Ochs, 1993; Peirce, 1995; Radnofsky and Spielmann, 1995; Cummins, 1996; McKay and Wong, 1996; Duff and Uchida, 1997; Hansen and Liu, 1997; McNamara, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Norton, 1997; Schecter and Bayley, 1997; Thesen, 1997; Liskin-Gasparro, 1998). Despite their differences, all implicitly or explicitly acknowledge the crucial role played by affect in negotiating multiple identities. A genesis for this can be found in Ferdman's (1990) concept of

cultural identity. He distinguishes cultural identity from social or ethnic identity as including ethnic and social categorizations as well as the internalized views and affective notions which relate to these attributes. In other words, while both ethnic and social identities help to define the individual and place values on such memberships, cultural identity is the way in which the individual enacts his or her identity with reference to that of the group, allowing not just for group identification but for individual variation within a given group. The importance of individual variation has already been established. It is the inclusion of the affective domain which I consider important. H. Gardner (1983; 1993) has elaborated extensively his notions of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, and I locate these constructs in this affective domain. Intrapersonal intelligence relates to one's knowledge of one's self, while interpersonal intelligence allows one to understand and work with others towards shared goals. They both, however, belie a certain measure of empathy, the ability to understand the affective and emotional lives of others and of oneself. The emotional engagement which is involved in the intensive residential, instructional and extracurricular context of the SLBP is then another one of the facets of the program experience, thus permitting even more fluidity in our understanding of identity.

Ivanic (1994) presents another important perspective on language and its role in identity issues. Although she focuses on the discoursal construction of writer identities in the first language, her remarks can also be applied in second language contexts. With regard to the positioning of the writer, it is important to see this process as one which is in part his or her responsibility but which is also in the domains of the reader and of the context. Moreover, Ivanic holds that the writer - and the writer's subsequent identity - is a construct of the discourse choices which the writer makes or is led to make. This interpersonal construction of social identity is also taken up by Halliday (1984) and Fairclough (1992). The writer's co-constructed identity may or may not reflect the writer's reported intentions. Since, however, it is partly the product of the context and partly of the writer's interlocutors, a considerable measure of his or her identity is not, in essence, self-created. Given the roles played by factors outside the writer's control, this then puts into question whether the construction and maintenance of one's social identity

is a wholly volitional act. I have already presented discourse as a broader contextualized phenomenon than exclusively written text in the mother tongue. Thus by expanding Ivanic's notion into acts of speaking and acting, we can also see that SLBP participants are positioned by their discourse choices (Maguire, 1994a).

Building on Goffman's (1959, 1981) framework for self-representation through social action and language use, Ivanic further argues that identity is plural and complex. The individual creates and manages impressions of himself or herself, taking stances and being positioned within and by discourse choices. Although Goffman's original (1959) discussion on the presentation of self overemphasizes theatrical metaphors, his elaboration of the art of impression management is also pertinent to the SLBP experience. This is not to say that participants may necessarily be spin-doctoring their images but that we are instinctively led to want to be aware of how our identities are being perceived by various groups. With these considerations in mind in tandem with Ferdman's cultural identity, Ivanic's notion of critical language awareness is also an important theoretical component in the research interview process. That is, the interview dynamic would have to evolve in such a way that former SLBP participants could critically and reflectively elaborate their discourse choices during the SLBP, how the factors presented by the SLBP culture positioned these choices, and whether the principal character (to use Goffman's term), or underlying identity was changed as a result of participation in the SLBP.

Summary

In this chapter I have considered my own theoretical positionings and adopted a contextualist perspective. I argue that multiplicity, fluidity and dynamism characterize the important notions underlying this inquiry. Contexts, communities, discourses, and identities are all subject to the dynamic processes of change. Having considered the ways in which such change has been viewed in a variety of contexts, I will now examine how best to go about eliciting the perspectives of former SLBP participants on changes within their own identities.

Chapter 3: Methodological Considerations

Overview

In this chapter I elaborate the methodological choices which I had to make in this inquiry. Beginning with the recognition of informants as privileged sources of information and understanding, I then discuss the importance of critical reflection in the interview process. I then review the ways in which informants were selected and the ways in which the interviews were structured and carried out.

The Privileged Source

It is apparent that there are many pre-existing theoretical parameters by which a second language environment can be seen to foster conditions for change in one's identity. The challenge for this research, however, was in investigating whether and to what extent participants in the intensive immersion environment of the SLBP were able to report and explore changes in their self-perception. Because I was also a participant in the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP (in the role of program manager), it was my intention to design the interviews within the paradigm of teacher research (Huberman, 1996). Within this paradigm researchers - in concert with their students - attempts to forge a deeper understanding of the processes of teaching and learning by investigating such factors as the instructional context and individual differences which impinge on these processes. In this research I do not, however, focus on the process of second language learning; rather, I attempt to explore the nature of learning about oneself which I felt accompanied the second language learning which occurred within the SLBP immersion context.

Although critical reflection may not be equipped to take into account all the pertinent intervening variables which play a role in a given situation, the teacher-researcher is a 'privileged source' of information (Huberman, 1996). Accordingly, as a participant-observer in this research, I have attempted to use my privileged role to interpret the results of the interviews in a meaningful way. Naturally, this question of

representing others in qualitative research is a difficult issue (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Fine, 1994). Indeed, given that the interview data used to support the (albeit localized and context-specific) findings in this research may be difficult to validate through the traditional quantitative tools of empirical research, what will be seen from the interview data is essentially a complex series of interpretations, perceptions, and common threads. On the other hand, there is strong ecological validity in observing and interviewing in authentic situations (Maguire 1997), in wanting to observe and question the intersecting contexts in which teaching and learning take place (Cochran-Smith, 1995). Moreover, the participant observer benefits from an intuitive understanding of a context and is better positioned to choose competent informants (Bernard, 1988). In this sense the teacher-researcher is unquestionably a 'privileged source' of information; I suggest that the informants interviewed for this inquiry are as well, perhaps even more so. Furthermore, I argue that this research meets the fourth and most meaningful challenge held out by Huberman (1996) to the teacher-research agenda: that of interpreting and explaining both the visible and unseen processes that account for learning, whether it be of the second language or about oneself.

Critical Reflection and Interviewing

Clearly, encouraging individuals to reflect on a multidimensional phenomenon such as identity is an enterprise fraught with difficulties, many of which have to do with the research process, its design and the subsequent interpretation of the data. Asking former SLBP participants to reflect on their personal development is to ask them to contemplate an exercise in introspection clouded by memory which is subsequently filtered through the researcher and the reporting of this research. Accordingly, managing the interview in such a way as to put the participants at ease was an important consideration in the research process. As Hansen and Liu (1997) point out, the methodological choices which are made in an inquiry must allow for the dynamism of identity, giving participants the opportunity to clarify their positioning by contributing to the research on more than one occasion. Moreover, Peirce (1995) has noted both the

importance of the social context outside the classroom in the formation of identity, and has also highlighted the changing and dynamic nature of identity and how it is perceived. As McNamara (1997) makes clear, not only does the research process filter the notion of identity through a particular theoretical and research lens, the salience of any of an individual's set of identities is a function of context.

Questions of identity have not been as significantly addressed in the second language context as in the rich tradition of interviewing and of personality assessment in the wider fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology and in clinical settings. Interviewing is, of course, one of the most efficient ways to give voice to key informants (Burnside, 1982). Moreover, the question of identity in second language contexts has only recently begun to focus on individual accounts (Norton, 1997). On the other hand, one of the disadvantages in conducting interview-based research is gathering conflicting data, as reported by Craig-Bray and Adams (1986), whereby self-report and interview techniques measuring ego identity were found to display little convergence. One of the hypotheses which might explain such unclear results on identity issues comes from Erikson (1959), who posited that, since the process of identity formation is central to adolescence, self-definition is by its very nature fluid during this portion of the life span. As Craig-Bray and Adams elaborate, it may be possible that the adolescent's understanding of self-identity issues is not yet consciously organized, and ensuring construct validity in either self-report questionnaires or interviewing protocols has not yet been sufficiently addressed. Given that most of the informants in this inquiry are on the cusp of adolescence and adulthood, this issue must be kept in mind.

Surveys and interviews are, however, the most commonly used approaches for gathering subjective feedback from individuals, with the interview showing a distinct advantage in terms of allowing more in-depth responses (Burnside, 1982; Glaser, 1983). Mail-in surveys have unpredictable response rates, and do not allow for the face-to-face interaction provided by an interview where the interviewer may take up at length certain topics which seem pertinent to the research question. The methodological problem inherent in an interview, however, is in arranging a suitable context in which it may take

place, and the subsequent transcribing and interpreting of the interview data (Bruner, 1986; Crawford, 1990; Green, Franquiz & Dixon, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Roberts, 1997).

During the interviews, I was thus mindful of the need to frame the process as a conversation in order to occasion more in-depth description of the SLBP context (Maguire, 1995). This so-called depth interview permits more exploration of views and behaviour patterns as each interview is allowed a certain leeway to be adapted to the individual informant (Powney & Watts, 1987). Creating and maintaining rapport (Burgess, 1984), phrasing questions in such a way as to gather relevant impressions (Spradley, 1979), and focusing on one issue at a time (Merriam, 1988) were all facets of the interview which I took into account. In terms of the larger organization of the interview, I felt that the semi-structured interview would be the best way to explore the question of identity and self-presentation relative to one's participation in the SLBP (Hamid, 1994; Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1988). I thus prepared a sequence of themes to be covered, and these themes were dealt with by each of the informants interviewed. This was done primarily to ensure that the same themes would be addressed by each participant. On the other hand, no time limits or particular order for the themes were set so that the interview conversations might flow more naturally; if an informant covered a topic out of sequence, this was noted. The thread of the conversation, however, was not disrupted, and the informants could treat the themes as they came up, and to the extent that they were able or willing to do so. I defined the situation, introducing each topic in turn and asking for more detail when necessary, but the informants were generally able to explore each theme on their own until I would ask for more concrete details or examples. Heeding the advice of Seidman (1991, p. 62), I was mindful to 'listen more, talk less, and ask real questions'. I shall now turn to the steps which led to the interview process.

Choosing Informants

The structure of the data collection process is best described as a series of case studies involving SLBP participants chosen from the larger group. The choice of informants was not, however, arbitrary, as I sought out what Bernard (1988) refers to as

'competent informants', selecting potential informants for their ability to provide adequate information on the SLBP culture. More specifically, they were chosen based on their ability (in written responses to the initial contact letter) to demonstrate the principles of critical self-reflection and the extent to which they were able to elaborate whether their participation in the Dalhousie SLBP did affect aspects of their self-perceived identity, in either the short or long term. The subsequent interview was used as a tool to determine more fully whether these individuals were able to express the sociological phenomena which comprise the framework of dynamic social interaction elaborated by Goffman (1959, 1981) and Ivancic (1994), but in the unique context of the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP. Potential informants who appeared particularly interesting were those who alluded to personality changes and/or coping strategies as described by Radnofsky and Spielmann (1995) and those who touched on issues related to Gardner's (1983, 1993) notions of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. I then transcribed and analyzed the interviews in order to identify and examine trends and common themes among the informants in order to provide insights into how the Dalhousie SLBP's second language immersion environment might inhibit, contribute to, or change an individual's perceived presentation of self. Table 5 presents an overview of the steps through which the nine final interview informants were selected.

Table 5: Stages in Informant Selection

Date(s)	Stage	Number of Students
31-07-96	- Request forms consenting to post-immersion contact distributed and collected in last week of immersion.	Participants who consent: 132 out of 168
12-12-96	- Bilingual 'questions for reflection', including pre-addressed stamped envelope, mailed to 132 consenting students.	Participants who respond: 48
interim	- Responses sorted through, categorized and ranked by depth of reflection, thought-provoking comments etc.	Respondents willing to participate: 37
19-05-97 to 28-05-97	- Interviews conducted with first tier of students.	Informants interviewed: 9
post-interview stage	- Interviews transcribed, data analyzed, results compiled and reported.	

From a total of 168 potential informants, nine were eventually chosen as informants, representing 5.2 percent of the original 1996 Dalhousie SLBP population. The first step in narrowing down the selection occurred during the last of week of the immersion experience, where permission was obtained from the academic director to distribute a form requesting consent to post-immersion contact for the purposes of conducting the research. This was done at the time of the post-test since this was the only occasion that the entire group of students would be together in one sitting. Oral explanations regarding my expectations and timetable were given and questions were fielded. Although I considered providing the form in French, the academic director and I agreed that this could have been viewed as contradictory to the spirit of the immersion. Furthermore, since I was also responsible for disciplinary measures involving language use infractions, I decided a straightforward form combined with oral instructions would be sufficient for students to make an informed decision (see Appendix A for the consent form). Of the 168 students present, 132 consented to be contacted at a later juncture.

Five months later, the 132 SLBP participants who had agreed to be contacted were sent a bilingual letter reminding them of the nature of my research and offering them an opportunity to respond to three questions (see Appendix B). These questions were designed to encourage reflection on the experience of having participated in the Dalhousie SLBP and to elicit respondents' impressions of the experience some five months after it had been completed. Although the time frame which had been initially mentioned to the students had changed, this was not considered detrimental to the goals of the inquiry. On the contrary, having had more time lapse between the end of the experience and responding to reflective questions, I hoped to gain a less reflexively nostalgic response to the immersion experience. In this way, students would have had the time to get over the initial euphoria which accompanies the sense of having completed the program successfully.

This follow-up letter was sent in English and in French for two reasons. First, the disclaimers regarding the voluntary nature of participation in the research had not been made in French during the immersion, for the pedagogical reasons already noted. Secondly, I felt that communicating with potential informants in their first language

would ease any anxiety that might have arisen were they to think that their participation would require working in the second language. The same principles were adhered to with respect to the responses returned by the participants as well as in the subsequent interviews, where the questions were asked in the language in which the informants felt most comfortable. In order to increase the likelihood that the participants would respond, a pre-addressed stamped envelope was included.

I should reiterate that, by virtue of my position as SLBP program manager, I was well-known to each of the participants. Although meaningful daily contact with each of them was not probable, the program manager is in a position of high visibility within the SLBP structure. And although this relationship may engender certain risks in terms of the validity of the data collected (e.g. some students opting not to participate because of a personal animosity; others not being completely forthright in their opinions in order not to displease or offend, etc.), I hoped that this would not negatively affect the interviews in that participants could expect that I would understand their meanings and references given our common experience and shared discourse of the SLBP.

The response rate to the mail-in questions for reflection was 36.4 percent. Of the 132 letters sent out, three were undelivered by the postal service and returned to sender, and nine of the respondents declined further participation in the research, leaving 39 affirmative responses and 84 non-replies. Two of the affirmative responses provided consent but neglected to respond to the questions, and were thus disqualified from further consideration. The remaining 37 (28.0 percent of the pool who had been sent letters; 21.3 percent of the original number of program students) were then separated into three broad groups: 1) those whose responses to the questions for reflection contained comments which appeared more relevant to the question of change in self-perception; 2) those whose responses did not touch on the research question in a meaningful way; and 3) those falling somewhere in between. Those who were identified as less desirable potential interview informants were generally set aside because their comments were either too vague or were too brief as to give an impression of the magnitude of their perceptions. For example, some did not discuss changes other than in their linguistic abilities or the organizational differences between their high school English language

classes and those in the SLBP, while others simply remarked on impressions relating to having had the opportunity to see a new part of the country.

The 37 responses were thus sorted into three lots according to their relevance to the research questions. The responses were then given to two 1996 SLBP monitors who were briefed on the goals of the research. Each of these former staff members was then asked separately to conduct the same sorting procedure in order to compare the three perspectives on the potential richness of data which would be provided by interviewing the various respondents. Based on their written comments, 11 respondents were eventually ranked as highly promising for providing interesting perspectives on the research questions. Due to travel limitations, however, two (one in Chicoutimi, the other in Corsica) had to be excluded because of their distance from the researcher.

Before moving on to the interview portion of the data collection, I will briefly discuss the elaboration of the questions for reflection which were mailed to former SLBP participants. The questions were phrased as follows (see Appendix B for the bilingual versions):

1. In what ways did your experience in the SLBP differ from previous experiences in your life? Do you attribute these differences to any specific factors or combination of factors in the SLBP?
2. Do you believe that you were changed in any way by your experience in the SLBP? If so, were these changes noticeable only for the duration of the program or have they been more permanent?
3. By comparing the person you were before the SLBP to the person you are now, identify and elaborate any important differences. How are any of these differences attributed to your experience in the SLBP?

At first glance, it is apparent that the notion of identity per se is conspicuously absent from the questions. In effect, operationalizing the notion of identity proved to be a very difficult component of the data collection, because of the desire not to phrase the questions in a leading manner. Rather, I decided it was preferable to introduce the notion of 'change', a concept which was left deliberately vague so as to allow respondents to interpret this notion in any number of ways. As previously mentioned, some respondents took this simply to mean 'change in linguistic abilities'. Indeed, increased second

language proficiency is the first objective of the SLBP, and there already exists a measure of this success in the pre-test/post-test comparisons. In order to illustrate the differences between responses which were rated more or less relevant, I will comment briefly on the two responses which follow. It is important to note that all comments made by respondents will be reproduced exactly as written (with errors intact, whether in English or French) or transcribed verbatim from interview tapes, and in the original language. All English translations (which appear in square brackets) are my own, and all respondents have been assigned pseudonyms.

The first response is among those ranked as a low priority for interviewing, primarily due to the rather unidimensional interpretation of the written questions.

1. It was different from my previous experiences to learn english because we had three different types of classes (reading, writing and speaking) very specialised. We also had activities with english monitors, english T.V. programs, shopping centers...
2. Yes. I believe that I've been changed for a permanent duration. Now I can answer in english by my own without any fear (I've never spoken english before).
3. I know, I'm not perfectly bilingual, but now I feel more free. I mean, now I can watch movies in english (original version), I can travel everywhere I want to in North America. The SLBP was probably one of the most important steps of my learning. (Respondent #33 - Jacob, letter, January 1997)

As can be seen, Jacob alludes at several points to progress made at the linguistic level. For him, participation in the SLBP resulted most noticeably in changes to his confidence level in English. Having treated the questions from a relatively singular point of view, Jacob seems to have understood 'change' to refer primarily to his progress in his second language.

Respondents who viewed 'change' from a broader perspective were given higher priority on the potential interview list. Most of these individuals also made reference to their second language proficiency, as well as a more tourism-oriented appreciation of Halifax and its residents. Comments which touched on notions related to personal development (attitudes, self-perceptions, so-called life skills) placed these individuals

closer to the domain of the research question, as can be seen in the following response from Kathleen:

1. *Cette expérience c'est énormément distinguée de mes expériences antérieures. Ce qui personifie selon moi cette expérience est le fait que l'individu arrive dans un environnement nouveau où il doit faire preuve de confiance et d'audace... car il doit s'intégrer avec d'autres jeunes qui proviennent de différents endroits du pays et ce dans une autre langue. Donc, comme facteurs précis j'évoquerais le pot-pourri d'un voyage, de l'apprentissage de notre langue seconde, de la fantastique découverte d'une nouvelle province ainsi que la vie de pensionnaire ce qui d'après mon expérience personnelle est quelque chose de très agréable que chaque adolescent devrait vivre... ***J'aimerais aussi vous faire part que j'ai auparavant fait quelques voyages sans mes parents mais celui-ci était bel et bien unique car je suis partie seule avec moi-même!* [This experience differed enormously from my previous experiences. What characterizes this experience for me is the fact that an individual arrives in a new environment where he or she has to demonstrate confidence and boldness... because he or she has to integrate with other young people who come from different places around the country, and this in another language. Therefore, as specific factors I would evoke the mixture of travel, learning our second language, the fantastic discovery of a new province as well as residence life which, based on my personal experience, is something very pleasant that every teenager should live through... ***I would also like to tell you that I had taken a few trips before without my parents but this one was truly unique since I went all by myself!]
2. *Oui, et ce sont des changements de longue durée.* [Yes, and they are longlasting changes.]
3. *Je suis maintenant plus aisée lorsque je dois parler ou écrire en anglais. De plus cela m'a apporté un meilleur sens des responsabilités ainsi qu'une prise en charge de mes véritables besoins, cela m'a permise de mieux me connaître. Je crois que la formation m'a permise de prendre du recul par rapport à la vie que je mène à Chicoutimi. Également, maintenant je connais des jeunes dans différent coin du Québec à qui je peux aller rendre visite à l'occasion ou encore je peux leurs écrire en Anglais ou en français. Je me considère différente car j'ai en moi une forme de souvenir d'un très bel été passé à Halifax, une ville que je n'aurais pu contempler sans l'existence du PBEL. Finalement c'est une expérience très enrichissante!... Merci!* [I'm now more comfortable when I have to speak or write in English. It also gave me a better sense of responsibility as well as more power over my true needs, it allowed me to know myself better. I think that the program enabled me to step back from the life I lead in Chicoutimi. Also, I now know young people from different parts of Québec who I can visit from time to time or else I can write to them in English or in French. I consider myself different because I have in

me a sort of memory of a very beautiful summer spent in Halifax, a city I would never have thought about without the existence of the SLBP. Lastly, it was a very rewarding experience.] (Respondent #13 - Kathleen, letter, January 1997)

Kathleen's response, which was ranked as significantly more reflective than Jacob's, is clearly closer to the research questions of identity and self-perception. In addition to improving her language skills, she also mentions having to demonstrate confidence and daring or boldness (*faire preuve de confiance et d'audace*), notions which we can situate in the realm of self-concept and identity. Moreover, she stipulates that her participation in the SLBP has enabled her to know herself better, a comment which made her a very interesting candidate for interviewing, more so than Jacob.

Based on their written responses and their accessibility (all lived within 300 kilometres from McGill University), nine respondents were thus assigned priority for participation in interviews. Again in order to put informants more at ease and to minimize the possible inconvenience of participating in an interview, it was decided to conduct interviews either in their homes or at a place of their choosing, such as their CÉGEP. The interviews were conducted in May 1997. In the interests of formulating a general profile of the interview informants, Table 6 presents an overview of the informants, including their hometowns, ages, and their SLBP language levels and workshops. Although these were not factors in deciding on whom to interview, it is interesting to note that the nine represent only four of the 12 language levels, and three of the five workshop choices. When I first realized this, I wondered if it had something to do with the quality of instruction or the group dynamics of certain classes and workshops, but nothing substantial emerged in the analysis of the tapescripts. This overrepresentation of intermediate- and upper-level classes does remain an interesting issue, however, and further research accounting for the experience of beginner students - particularly along the lines of Radnofsky & Spielmann's (1995) study - would certainly complement the findings of this inquiry.

Table 6: Interview Informants

<i>Pseudonym assigned</i>	<i>Date interviewed</i>	<i>Home</i>	<i>Age during 1996 SLBP</i>	<i>Level (1-12)</i>	<i>Workshop</i>
Annie	19-05-97	Anjou	17	10	Volunteer service
Benoît	21-05-97	Rosemère	19	12	History & culture of Nova Scotia
Chantale	22-05-97	Sorel	18	10	Volunteer service
David	24-05-97	Saint-Romuald	17	12	Journalism
Elizabeth	24-05-97	Cap-Rouge	17	12	Journalism
Francine	27-05-97	Trois-Rivières	17	7	Volunteer service
Guylaine	28-05-97	Victoriaville	17	7	History & culture of Nova Scotia
Hugo	28-05-97	Thetford-Mines	17	7	Journalism
Isabelle	29-05-97	St-Justin-de-Berthierville	17	5	History & culture of Nova Scotia

Structuring the Interviews

The Dalhousie SLBP is indeed a unique example of intersecting variables, intertwined contexts, and interpersonal dynamics, where environmental and individual factors interact in a second language instructional setting unlike the typical high school. The first factor is temporal: students have (in theory) voluntarily applied to be accepted into the bursary program or have paid, and they spend the majority of their days in an instructional environment. Indeed, they have effectively given up what for most amounts to the short summer vacation falling between their last year of high school (Secondary V) and the first year of CÉGEP. The discourse community of the SLBP is very unique for a number of other reasons, most of which have to do with certain elements of newness or difference vis-à-vis the participants' previous second language learning experiences. As Otte (1993) points out, students need to experience in concrete terms what it means to be socially constituted (i.e. to maintain an identity within a particular discourse community) in order to appreciate the multiplicity of labels which apply to any individual. I prepared the interviews expecting that these elements of newness would be those which SLBP

participants would deem to have some effect on their self-perceived or other-perceived identities, either for the duration of the SLBP or beyond.

Specific to the Dalhousie SLBP are several contextual factors which contribute to identity, albeit in the short term: (a) for most participants it is their first time in Halifax - a new city and, arguably, a new 'country'; (b) for many of the participants it is their first extended period of time away from home alone; (c) residential life is often a new experience, and this is compounded by the interpersonal dynamics connected to having a roommate and floormates whom one has never before met; (d) the instructional environment is also new in terms of its design and its content; (e) the workshops too are a new experience; and (f) not only do extracurricular activities take place in new surroundings, but the participants themselves are new and social relationships must be forged in a fairly short time. Those contextual factors particular to the Dalhousie SLBP which were hypothesized to be the most salient are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Contextual Factors Impinging on Identity

Factors which might have influenced the way in which students experience the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP: contextual factors.
• The second language milieu.
• 'Country' and 'culture' in the broad sense.
• The city and region.
• Residential living, including roommates.
• The program structure (classes, workshops and other organized activities).
• The formal prohibition of first-language use, including punitive measures.

The question of language use is an additional intersecting feature which must also be taken into consideration and which I have added to the list of contextual factors. Within the SLBP is a formal agreement on the part of the participants, conditional to the award of the bursary, to adhere to the exclusive use of the second language. This is difficult to enforce when a staff member is not present, since students are often reluctant to self-regulate their use of English in outside social settings. Indeed, this is a well-documented phenomenon in the French immersion literature; see Tarone and Swain (1995) for a provocative discussion on the issue in which they claim it to be inevitable.

Nevertheless, a great deal of the five-week period is spent knowing that using the first language will result in punitive measures being taken, the most severe of which is to be sent home. Although Auerbach (1993) would surely disagree with such a policy, this is one of the overarching principles of the federal program and it is not soon going to be modified. This artificially constructed contextual factor was of particular interest in the research interview, with the hypothesis that this one more than any other might have been perceived by SLBP participants to have an effect on their abilities of presentation of self.

The contextual factors outlined in Table 7 surely play a role in creating frameworks for social interaction, but it is the students themselves in tandem with staff members who dictate the dynamics of group interactions within the new discourse community. Accordingly, if participation in social interaction is to influence the presentation of self and the construction of identity, albeit for five weeks, the individuals who form the group will determine the nature of the social interactions.

Table 8: Individual Factors Impinging on Identity

Factors which might have influenced the way in which students experience the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP: individual factors.
• Language ability.
• Age.
• Place of origin in Québec.
• Family and social background.
• Past instructional experiences.
• Motivation and expectations.
• World view - particularly with regard to learning and to the second language/culture.
• Gender and sexuality.
• Critical self-awareness and maturity.

Some of the more pertinent individual factors are enumerated in Table 8. Age is an obvious one, as is everything which is related to age such as maturity, life experience, education and the like; it is important to note too, for example, that from a 20-year-old's perspective, the differences between being 17 and 20 are quite vast. Another is place of origin in Québec, which includes socioeconomic status issues, quality of life, and so on; a difference is often anecdotally noted by staff between students who come from rural

Québec or strongly sovereignist regions and those who come from the more cosmopolitan Montréal area. Language ability also impinges on social interaction and identity in that shy students of low proficiency often risk, for example, being unintentionally marginalized or forgotten in group activities. Motivation and attitude also vary widely - although participation is voluntary, some students are there at their parents' behest; some others may have eagerly applied yet are disappointed to discover that it is not a free summer vacation. Past instruction - including past successes and failures and expectations vis-à-vis appropriate teaching and learning methods - must also be considered. Additional factors include: (a) political and world views (often a product of age, education and place of origin); (b) sexuality (including gender, sexual history/maturity and sexual identity); and (c) critical self-awareness.

Because these factors are central to the formation of identity, they should be considered in terms of fluidity, i.e. they may change but rarely do they do so drastically or suddenly. In essence, these are variables which SLBP participants bring to the SLBP culture. The contextual factors, on the other hand, might best be seen as temporary and environmental; attendance in classes and workshops is not negotiable, nor are features of the residence and the city. These factors then, including the structure and timetables of the SLBP, are rather immutable and form the framework within which the individual factors may act with or against one another and with or against the contextual factors to bring about change in aspects of one's perceived identity.

Interview Themes

In addition to Gardner's (1993) notions of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, both Ferdman's (1990) notion of cultural identity and Ivanic's (1995) notion of critical language awareness underpinned the theoretical framework for the research interview and its analysis. Of particular importance in the interview phase was an adaptation of Ivanic's (1994) framework regarding the discursal construction of identity. She posits that the identity which emerges or is projected within, throughout and as a result of interaction is the responsibility of both the participants and the sociocultural

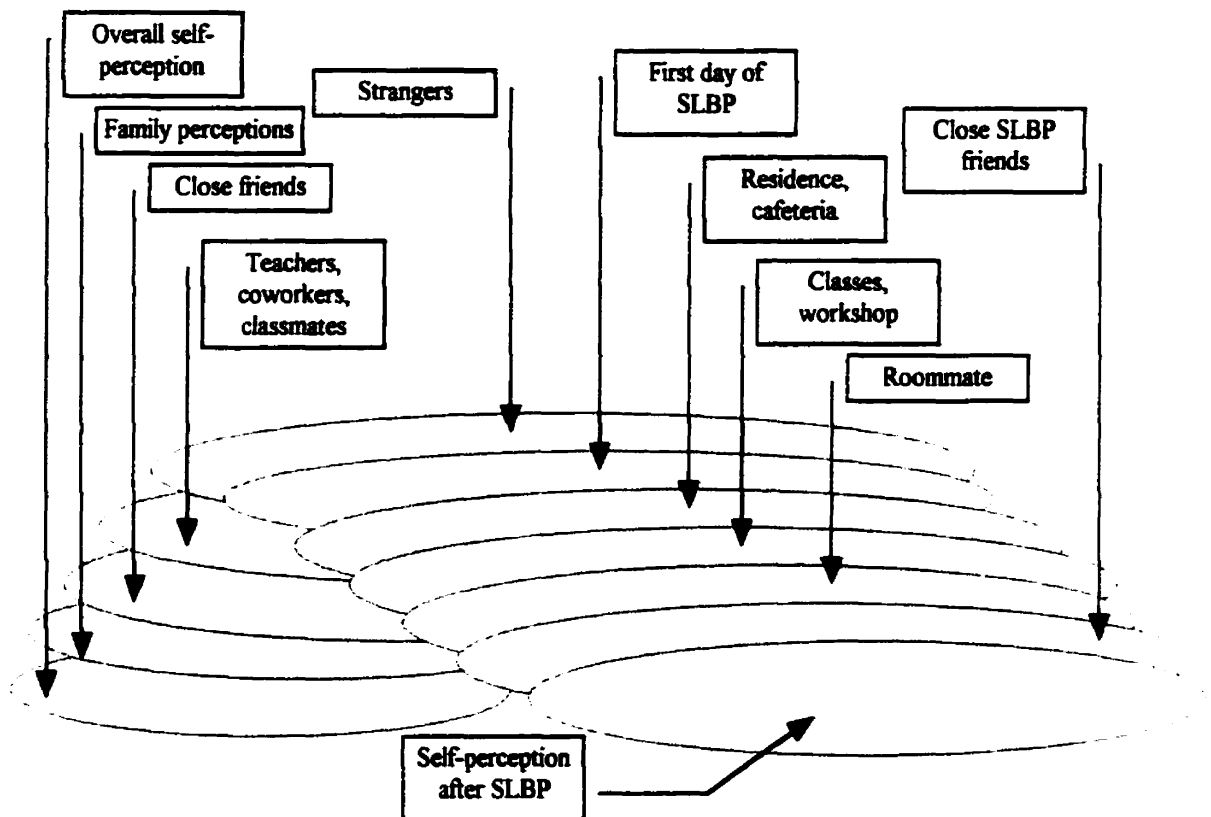
context. By encouraging participants to consider the many intersecting factors of the Dalhousie SLBP, then, it was expected that the research interviews would enable informants to articulate their understanding of the effects of the immersion context on their self-presentation.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured fashion, allowing informants to broach themes as they initiated them. Once a theme appeared to have been exhausted, I would move on to another theme, in a fairly regular order unless a topic had already been dealt with out of order. In general, I sequenced the interview themes in such a way as to explore the layers of context of the SLBP culture. By beginning with the individuals' own perceptions of themselves, the interview then moved in an outward direction, from the more familiar territory of family, close friends and school to the perceptions which strangers might have of the informants. After having expanded the perspective of the informants, I then refocused inward upon the discourse community of the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP, starting from the broader context to the smaller subcultures of the class, workshop, residence and close friends. By spiraling the interview outward and then inward once again, I hoped to structure the interview in a manner which would encourage informants to consider their own identity in the general sense at the beginning, and then to return to the same theme within the narrower confines of the SLBP context. At this point the interview turned to comments made in the replies to the mail-in questions for reflection. This phase of the interview was meant to provide informants an opportunity to elaborate on their comments in the reflective framework which had been initiated by the first phases of the interview. Of particular interest was having the informants elaborate any differences between their self-presentation and others' perceptions of themselves. Also of interest was whether the informants could posit explanations for any perceived discrepancies among their various self-presentations and whether the changes which they were able to enumerate were permanent or relevant exclusively to the SLBP context. An overview of the layers of context is illustrated in Figure 3.

Essentially, Figure 3 represents the overall progression of the interview. Beginning with the individual's own overall self-perception, which is inward in focus, the

informant was then led to consider how he or she might be perceived by others, incrementally increasing the distance through the progressively outward foci of family, close friends, teachers, coworkers, classmates and strangers. Having then considered one's self-presentation from the most distant vantage point of the complete stranger, the

Figure 3: Layers of Context in Identity Perception



interview then moved back towards an inward focus, progressing through the perspective of others on the first day of the SLBP experience, to one's classmates, workshop colleagues, roommate and the SLBP friends with whom each informant had formed the most intimate relationships. The focus of the interview then returned to its starting point: that of one's own self-perception, this time through the filter of the SLBP experience.

In keeping with the contexts which I felt to be most relevant to demonstrate variations in one's self-presentation, the interview's themes reflected these layers. Phrased as possible questions for the research interviews, a general overview of the interview themes is presented in Table 9. In keeping with the inward-outward progression

of the layers of context illustrated in Figure 3, the interview questions have also been identified to indicate their prevailing focus. Again, the order of questions was established in order to begin with one's own self-perception and then progressively spiral outward to

Table 9: Interview Themes

Themes / Layers of Context	Focus
1. Who are you? Describe yourself.	inward
2. If I asked your parents to describe you, what would they say?	outward
3. And what would your siblings say?	outward
4. How about your close friends?	outward
5. What would your teachers say about you?	outward
6. How would classmates and other students describe you?	outward
7. What about people at work?	outward
8. If I didn't know you and just saw you walking down the street, what impression would I have of you? What I would say to myself about you?	outward
9. How about the first day of the immersion? What sort of person might I have seen on that first day?	outward
10. Did that change eventually? If so, how long did it take, and how did you change?	inward
11. If I asked one of your SLBP classmates or teachers to describe you, what would they tell me?	outward
12. What about your workshop monitors and others in your workshop?	outward
13. How about if I asked some people in the residence or cafeteria to describe you from afar? What might they say?	outward
14. And if I saw you on Spring Garden Road (Halifax's main downtown shopping area)? What impression would I have of you?	outward
15. Compare yourself before the program to how you would describe yourself at the end of the immersion. What kinds of differences are there, if any? Are they permanent? What happened to bring about these changes?	inward
16. If you hadn't done the SLBP, would these changes have come about anyway, in some other fashion?	Inward
17. Can you name any specific factors or incidents which you think were particularly important in bringing about the changes you mentioned?	Inward
18. Do you think anyone else has noticed these changes in you?	outward
19. If you had the opportunity to do the SLBP again, what would you change? What would you recommend to a friend who was going to go? What are the most important things for him or her to know before going?	Inward
20. You mentioned several interesting things in your response to my letter. Could you elaborate on... [refer to comments in letter].	inward

consider others' perspectives. The questions then moved back toward one's self-perception, this time through the lens of the SLBP experience. Although it may seem like there were many questions to be covered in the interview, not all of the themes were covered in the same manner each time, nor was each question asked in the same way. Since the interviews were only semi-structured, these themes were simply used as reminders for myself.

Once the interviews were completed, the tapes (ranging from 51 to 72 minutes in length) were transcribed and reviewed for their accuracy and emerging themes. As previously noted, certain segments were conducted in English and others in French. Generally speaking, the entire interview was conducted in French with informants who were less proficient in the second language. With the more advanced students I often spoke in English and the informants were free to choose the language of their responses. In the interests of time and of gathering accurate data, I encouraged the informants to respond in their first language and to think through their answers aloud in the full knowledge that I would understand and could also interject in French if the need arose. The two informants who were most proficient in English participated in the interview almost exclusively in the second language except when they resorted to French to make a point more precisely or to search for their words. I then reviewed the transcribed interviews several times, cross-referencing with field notes taken during the interviews in order to identify and examine trends and tease out common themes among the informants' perceptions of the SLBP experience

With the abundance and variety of responses, it then became necessary to assemble the impressions informants had about the SLBP experience into a framework which would enable the common themes to emerge. Accordingly, comments which were made by most or all of the informants were organized into a set of generally held observations. The data was then examined further in order to identify the factors presented by the SLBP which informants pointed to as having played a significant role in the changes which occurred in their self-perceived identities. I will discuss these issues in depth in Chapter 4.

Summary

In this chapter I have adopted a perspective whereby each of my research informants is seen as a privileged source. Taking care to create an interview context which gives ample voice to informants, I have also explained how informants were selected, how the interviews were structured and carried out, and how the results were examined. Common threads and recurring themes arising from the interviews highlight the layers of context in the SLBP which influence and impinge on one's identity perception. The most salient themes will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

Overview

In this chapter I present and discuss the common themes which emerged in the interviews. Reflecting the dynamic and multiple nature of identity within the context of the Dalhousie SLBP, informants discussed changes in their perceptions of identity in a variety of ways. Although intertwined, significant changes in self-perception are discussed in turn. I then examine the factors particular to the SLBP context which were identified as having contributed in some way to changes in self-perception.

Changes in Self-perception

Since I selected the informants because they had been able to enumerate significant 'changes' in themselves since and/or due to their participation in the Dalhousie SLBP, it is not surprising that all of the informants could elaborate at least one important change in their self-perception. However, what is striking is that there was a strong undercurrent of similarity in the nine informants' responses to the interview themes. What was also striking was that the nature of the perceived changes was nearly uniformly positive in nature. Although most were able to point to the possibilities for negative changes, the overall sense with regard to their own changes was overwhelmingly for the better, with each of the informants enumerating very specific changes in their self-concept, behaviour, attitudes or belief systems. The changes reported by informants which were mentioned most frequently have been summarized in Table 10.

In order to reflect the interview themes, I have attempted in Table 10 to continue with the notion of focus to demonstrate the two prevailing loci of change which informants were able to elaborate. Although most could have been categorized as life skills, in that they are ways in which an individual is equipped to participate in various discourse communities, I have treated only one (sense of direction) purely as such. Similarly, each of the changes noted can manifest itself both in an inward fashion (in that

the individual can perceive and express the changes) and in an outward fashion (in that others may characterize the individual as possessing one of the traits, rendering it a part of one's other-perceived identity). However, most of the changes observed can be assigned a prevailing focus. Changes in the self observed by the self reflect an inward

Table 10: Common Observations

Common observations	
Domain where change was perceived	Focus
• Sense of orientation / <i>sens d'orientation</i>	life skill
• Resourcefulness / <i>débrouillardise</i>	intrapersonal
• Self-confidence / <i>confiance en soi</i>	intrapersonal
• Autonomy / <i>autonomie</i>	intrapersonal
• Independence / <i>indépendance</i>	intrapersonal
• Readiness to try new things / <i>goût des nouvelles expériences</i>	intrapersonal
• Wanderlust / <i>goût de voyager</i>	interpersonal
• Open-mindedness / <i>ouverture d'esprit</i>	interpersonal
• Understanding of difference in others / <i>appréciation des différences chez les autres</i>	interpersonal
• Outgoingness and extroversion / <i>sociabilité</i>	interpersonal
• 'Trying-on'/exploration of new identities / <i>'Essayage' exploration de nouvelles identités</i>	intra- and interpersonal

focus and correspond to Gardner's (1993) intrapersonal intelligence. This inward focus of perspective has thus been labeled intrapersonal in Table 10. Similarly, changes in domains which correspond to one's ability to relate to others have been labeled interpersonal in their focus, corresponding to portions of the interview which dealt with an outward perspective on the self.

On the one hand, I have labeled comments relating to an increased sense of autonomy, resourcefulness, self-confidence and the like as presenting an intrapersonal or inward focus. That is, perceived changes in these domains can be situated somewhere within the individual's personal psychological make-up, relating to core identity markers

such as self-esteem, self-reliance and self-worth. These markers are in fact hallmarks in much of the general literature of educational psychology, often heralded as important personal qualities to be developed during the formative years in preparation for successful living in adulthood (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1980). On the other hand, informants also noted changes in domains such as wanderlust, open-mindedness, sociability and appreciation of others, which I have categorized as more interpersonal or outward in their focus. Although these are certainly individual qualities, these markers have more to do with the way one views his or her community and the world, affecting one's interactions within social contexts and the way one approaches these interactions. Indeed, these would seem to be best grouped under the rubric of empathy, in that they reflect a more refined perspective vis-à-vis others. Although improvements in one's sense of direction and abilities to navigate successfully in new milieux also have an outward focus, this does not imply direct contact with others, in which case a certain measure of self-presentation would be incumbent on the individual. Because the notion of sense of direction can be considered solely in relation to the physical world, this change has been labeled separately as being primarily a life skill rather than an integral part of one's intrapersonal or interpersonal identity structure.

The last change, that of experimentation with new identities, springs from comments made by three of the informants in which the SLBP was characterized as a fertile ground for temporarily reinventing oneself free from the confines of one's prior social interactional history in one's home environment. Because this involves a deliberate intent to recreate one's other-perceived identity, such a notion can be considered as outwardly focused. However, it may also involve an embracing and experiencing of one's newly made identity, albeit for the temporary duration of the SLBP. Here we can situate the change within the individual, and as such I decided to label this realm of change as being both inward and outward in focus, thus both intra- and interpersonal.

In order to present excerpts from both the written responses to the questions for reflection and from the interviews, I have regrouped the domains of change into seven broad categories: (a) sense of orientation; (b) resourcefulness and self-confidence; (c) autonomy and independence; (d) wanderlust and readiness to try new things; (e) open-

mindedness and understanding of others; (f) sociability; and finally (g) identity experimentation. The categories have been collapsed in this manner because of the similarities and interconnectedness of those domains which have been paired together. Salient points from informants' comments have been excerpted verbatim and their data source (letter or interview) is identified accordingly. Ellipses indicate pauses or that there is an intervening portion in the letter or tapescript. Square brackets indicate my own interventions or clarifications, mostly to provide translation or further contextualization.

Sense of orientation.

Given the milieu in which the SLBP takes place, one of the most obvious arenas for personal development is in one's sense of orientation and direction. Living in a new city and getting used to the intricacies of a new institutional campus setting, particularly the residence, cafeteria and classroom areas where daily routines take place, can be daunting tasks for all but the most well-seasoned traveler. Compounded with the second language nature of the task, and the fact that for many of the SLBP participants it is their first time living away from home for an extended period of time, the resulting sense of *dépaysement* (a sense of disorientation or of being out of one's element) can be at first overwhelming. Part of the increased sense of one's own *débrouillardise* (resourcefulness; managing to get by; the ability to cope), then, comes from learning to cope with one's new environment, learning how to get around from one point to the next by internalizing the *points de repère* (landmarks or reference points) of the new place both on foot and using public transportation. Indeed, for some, negotiating public transit is in itself a completely new experience. Although some participants may rely more on their friends to help them get oriented, for Isabelle - who comes from a small village between Montréal and Trois-Rivières - the sense of accomplishment is apparent: "*c'est à Halifax que j'ai appris à avoir du sens de l'orientation... je me suis débrouillée là-bas*" [it was in Halifax that I learned to have a sense of orientation... I managed to get by there] (Isabelle, interview, May 1997).

Resourcefulness and self-confidence.

The notion of *débrouillardise* was without question one of the most salient points which was brought up by the nine informants as they related perceived changes in themselves arising from their participation in the SLBP. This recurring theme of increased *débrouillardise* is best translated as resourcefulness, the art or knack of getting by, the ability to cope. Naturally, contextual factors were pinpointed as those which created a need for such a change. Coping strategies needed to be developed for finding places in a new city, living in residence, dealing with the dynamics of cohabiting with floormates and roommates, reading a map to find the ferry terminal, using an automatic banking machine and even puzzling over the coin-operated washer. All these things made becoming more resourceful and self-reliant an obvious desirable change. Some of the need for an increased sense of resourcefulness stems from the fact that the Dalhousie SLBP promotes a high degree of independent living in that there are no curfews, and that participation in most extracurricular activities is optional. Free time, then, as well as one's financial resources, must be managed by each participant with very little supervision from those in positions of authority.

Not only can increased *débrouillardise* be attributed to the contextual factors inherent to the Dalhousie SLBP, it was also seen to be highly influenced by the second language nature of the experience. The challenges of navigating new experiences in a new place, as in the previous examples, become even more demanding when communication is mediated through the target language. Indeed, such notions were discussed by each of the nine informants. For example, Francine writes:

Premièrement, j'ai développé mon sens des responsabilités. Quand tu te retrouves seule dans une ville que tu ne connais pas, tu n'as pas le choix de trouver les moyens de te débrouiller. [First, I developed my sense of responsibility. When you find yourself alone in a city that you don't know, you've got no choice but to find ways to cope.] (Francine, letter, January 1997)

As Guylaine elaborates, both the environmental factors and the linguistic factor played substantial roles in this domain. In this case she cites the newness of the city, its distance

from her home, and the fact that she found herself alone in the company of strangers as the most significant:

Mon expérience au PBEL s'est distinguée de beaucoup aux autres expériences, car pour moi, c'était une vie tout à fait différente à chez moi. J'étais dans une plus grande ville pendant 1 mois loin de chez moi. Je suis partie seule et c'est ce qui fait que j'ai pu vivre mon expérience à fond. C'était une expérience où nous devions se "forcer" à parler en anglais puis sérieusement je faisais de gros efforts pour y arriver. [...] En arrivant seule là-bas, j'ai été obligé de connaître du nouveau monde et j'ai foncé, chose que je n'aurais pas faite auparavant. J'ai appris à être plus responsable face à l'argent dépensé là-bas, à la petite vie quotidienne, au but ultime du programme: ce que j'ai pu gérer m'a changé là-bas et ici. Cela m'a apporté sur le plan personnel. [My experience in the SLBP differed a lot from other experiences since, for me, it was a completely different life than at home. I was in a bigger city for one month far from home. I went by myself and that's what made me live the experience to the fullest. It was an experience where we had to 'force' ourselves to speak in English and seriously I tried really hard to do it. [...] Arriving alone there, I had to get to know new people and I forged ahead, something that I wouldn't have done before. I learned to be more responsible with the money I spent there, with everyday life, with the ultimate goal of the program: what I was able to manage changed me there and here. It brought me something on a personal level.] (Guylaine, letter, December 1996)

It is interesting to note the intensity of the SLBP experience as Guylaine describes it. Having entered into the experience alone, she ascribes to this fact both notions of hardship (*j'a foncé* [I forged ahead]) and personal responsibility (*nous devions se "forcer" à parler en anglais... je faisais de gros efforts... j'ai été obligé de connaître du nouveau monde... [we had to 'force' ourselves to speak in English... I tried really hard... I had to get to know new people...]*). Indeed, this responsibility imposed by the SLBP context was placed squarely on the shoulders of each participant in the same way that Ivanic and Simpson (1992) and Fairclough (1995) describe the student writer's task of finding his or her identity as a matter of self-assumed responsibility.

The notion of aloneness in coping with the initial days of the immersion weighed heavily on participants, making it incumbent on them to take initiatives to establish friendships and social networks within their new discourse community in order to ensure that their personal and interpersonal needs were met. Elizabeth, Guylaine and Isabelle each describe this phenomenon:

Probably because we told ourselves that it's just for five weeks... get the best of it... do whatever you want... we were quite free actually. (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997)

Ça m'a aidé parce que, dans le fond, il a fallu que je voie d'autre monde, pis, si j'aurais pas fait des premiers pas non plus... j'aurais resté tout seul, mettons... je prenais l'initiative pis là, tsé, c'est là que je faisais ma place aussi. [It helped me because, in the end, I had to see other people, so if I hadn't made the first moves either... I would have stayed by myself, I guess... I took the initiative so, y'know, that's how I fit in too.] (Guylaine, interview, May 1997)

J'ai maintenant un sens de la débrouillardise plus développé ayant été laissé en quelque sorte à moi-même durant le programme. J'ai appris à m'organiser, à planifier mon temps sans que personne ne me dise quoi que ce soit. [I now have a more developed sense of coping, having been left kind of to my own devices during the program. I learned how to get organized, to plan my time without anyone telling me anything.] (Isabelle, interview, May 1997)

However, rather than see their initial isolation as a burden, informants were able to appreciate this as an opportunity to gain initiative-taking abilities, to increase their sense of confidence in themselves and to become less dependent on others. Arriving to confront the challenge of the SLBP experience without one's friends or family was not, however, seen as onerous. Paradoxically, it was seen as a sort of freedom: liberated from the prior social structures of their homebound discourse communities, the students accepted the responsibility of forging their own new ones. In fact, when Isabelle was asked to describe the ideal student for a second language immersion such as the SLBP, she described this person as "*quelqu'un de déterminé, qui parlera pas le français, qui fait ses devoirs... mais qui sort aussi*" [someone who's determined, who won't speak French, who does his or her homework... but who also gets out] (Isabelle, interview, May 1997). From her perspective, it was by leaving the safer and more familiar confines of the campus that she was able to put her resourcefulness to the test and prove her abilities to herself.

It is through this acquisition of increased *débrouillardise* that informants were able to attest to improved self-confidence, hardly surprising given that self-reliance frequently marks a great degree of confidence in one's own survival skills in the social world. In fact, David identified this self-confidence as a key factor in ensuring a

successful immersion experience, and recommended that participants should not be tempted to remain on their own but strike up new friendships right away. As he says, a participant should:

... pas avoir peur de foncer pis de reconstruire du monde, pis de pas se replier sur soi-même dès le début... c'est vraiment ça, la clé... parler au monde... se faire des amis... pas rester tout seul. [... not be afraid to take charge and meet people, and not withdraw at the beginning... that's really the key... talking to people... making friends... not staying by yourself.] (David, interview, May 1997)

This perseverance in securing interpersonal relationships was for some an important aspect of their self-development, and was directly attributable to their participation in the SLBP. As Annie and Guylaine elaborate, taking charge of the experience and assuming responsibility over it bolstered their sense of self-confidence, which resulted in a sense of accomplishment, which in turn boosted self-confidence again.

J'ai aussi pris confiance en moi. Maintenant, suite au programme d'immersion, je sais que je peux vivre dans une autre ville, et que je peux me débrouiller seule. J'ai aussi réalisé que j'étais très débrouillarde. [I also got more confidence in myself. Now, since the immersion program, I know I can live in another city and that I can get along by myself. I also realized that I'm very resourceful.] (Annie, letter, January 1997)

Avant [de participer au programme d'immersion]... j'avais pas trop confiance en moi... je trouvais plein de défauts en moi-même, mettons... avec Halifax, là, tsé, j'ai vu que le monde pouvait m'accepter tel que j'étais... je pense que ça m'a donné un p'tit boost. [Before participating in the immersion program... I wasn't too self-confident... I found all sorts of flaws in myself, I guess... with Halifax, y'know, I saw that people could accept me as I was... I think that gave me a bit of a boost.] (Guylaine, interview, May 1997)

This newly expanded or acquired self-confidence and self-reliance is, intuitively, a predictable byproduct of the independence afforded to participants in the Dalhousie SLBP. Moreover, these traits were to a large degree seen by informants as determining factors in whether an individual would be able to successfully complete such an intensive immersion. In the next section I will discuss the augmented sense of one's own autonomy and independence, which is the natural extension of increased resourcefulness and self-confidence.

Autonomy and independence.

Psychologists have long held that late adolescence and early adulthood are accompanied by a solidification in one's own self-perception, values, attitudes and beliefs, marking the transition from the guidance of parents and other authority figures to the assumption of responsibility for one's own life choices and moral development (Erikson, 1959). Isabelle reflects the challenge inherent in confronting such independence:

C'était en quelque sorte une des premières fois que j'étais vraiment libre, loin de l'autorité parentale et scolaire, car on ne peut pas dire que les professeurs à Dalhousie sont très sévères et, ainsi éloigné chez moi, j'ai dû faire face à plusieurs styles et caractères différents venant des autres élèves. [In a way it was one of the first times I was really free, far away from parental and school authority, because you can't say that the instructors at Dalhousie are very strict and, being so far from home, I had to confront several different styles and personalities among the other students.] (Isabelle, letter, January 1997)

David also mentioned this important step in his personal development, citing the remove from the family unit as the integral factor: "Another big change is that I am now way more independent and autonomous than I used to be due to the five weeks spent away from my parents" (David, letter, January 1997). In fact, many of the informants were quick to point out the role played by the residential living environment as being very different from the home environment they were accustomed to. As Chantale wrote, "...the changes are permanent. I'm more responsible, independent, because it was like if we were in an apartment, so I had to care about my stuff by my own. It prepared me for CÉGEP" (Chantale, letter, December 1996). As both Isabelle and Chantale stipulated, the fact that the SLBP occurred during their transition from Secondary V to CÉGEP made them all the more ready to engage in more autonomous pursuits, particularly for Isabelle who moved out of the family home just weeks after returning from the SLBP in order to attend CÉGEP in a different city.

Annie also took up this notion, explaining how her participation in the SLBP differed from her week-long trip to the Terry Fox - Encounters Canada Youth Centre in Ottawa during her final year of secondary school:

C'est le moment idéal de partir... la coupure entre le secondaire puis le collégial... Ça m'a fait du bien de m'éloigner de tout ce qui était familier... de me retrouver seule avec moi-même... de rencontrer d'autres gens qui étaient totalement étrangers à mon milieu familial. [It's the ideal time to leave... the break between secondary school and college... It was good for me to get away from everything familiar... to be by myself... to meet other people who were totally foreign to my family environment.] (Annie, interview, May 1997)

When asked whether the period between secondary school and CÉGEP would have been as ideal as the summer between Secondary IV and Secondary V, she further elaborated her reasons for thinking that the former was the ideal time in her case:

...j'aurais peut-être plus hésité à participer à ça... parce que, ben, dans mon évolution personnelle j'étais pas rendu là tout simplement... c'est parce que je trouve qu'il y a une grande différence entre ta personnalité quand tu passes de III à IV puis encore de IV à V... tu t'assagis... tu mûris, tu grandis intérieurement... ma décision aurait peut-être été plus hésitante entre Secondaire IV et V que V et collégial... je le ferais encore mais ce serait différent... je voyais quelque chose qui était spécial entre V et collégial parce que ça faisait la transition entre les deux. [...I might have been reluctant to take part in that... because, um, in my personal development I just simply hadn't got that far... it's because I find that there's a big difference between your personality when you go from Secondary III to Secondary IV and again between IV and V... you settle down... you mature, you grow up on the inside... my decision might have been more hesitant between Secondary IV and V than between Secondary V and CÉGEP... I'd do it again but it would be different... I saw something unique between Secondary V and college because it was the transition between the two of them.] (Annie, interview, May 1997)

Here Annie touches upon an intriguing question of debate which the SLBP has dealt with both at the local and national levels. Secondary schooling in Québec terminates upon completion of Secondary V, equivalent to Grade Eleven in English-speaking North America. Students then move on to the college level (CÉGEP, for *Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel*) for either technical/vocational training or university preparatory studies. In addition, although all of the SLBPs across the country have a minimum age requirement, the age of majority differs between Québec and the rest of the country (18 in Québec and 19 elsewhere). Because of the restrictions imposed on visiting Québécois in terms of their access to licensed establishments, their range of choice for free time activities is somewhat less abundant than it is in their home

province. Given that the 18-year-olds are treated as adults in their home province, many students feel somewhat condescended to in the host culture, creating a disparity between their self-perceived maturity and the seemingly arbitrary demotion of their maturity within the host community. Coupled with the lack of parental supervision, alcohol is a behavioral and disciplinary issue in many SLBPs, with some programs in the West having raised the minimum age of acceptance to the provincial age of majority in order to combat the problems caused by differing ages of majority.

Notwithstanding the legal definitions, maturity and readiness to deal with the difficulties inherent in such an intensive residential immersion context are determining factors in SLBP participants' ability to cope with the autonomy thrust upon them by the immersion. Indeed, when Benoît was asked to identify the major factors which influenced the way in which an individual participant would experience the program, he replied:

The freedom is probably the biggest one there. They're living in residences they never did and, I don't know, a lot of people, I think, experience their *crise d'adolescence* [adolescent identity crisis] there... a lot of people that never went out, that just do it there, going wild... A lot of people, like, they, they could build a new world around them and build a new person there and say they're the person that they wanted to... *c'est ce que j'ai cru, moi*. [...that's what I thought anyway.] (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Clearly then, some individuals are perceived as better able to handle their newfound independence, while others are less able to moderate their freedom. When I suggested that participants ought to have experienced their *crise d'adolescence* already, Benoît surmised:

Yeah, but you have another one there 'cause you are leaving Secondary and you are going to CÉGEP, so you have there too the chance to create a new person 'cause in CÉGEP it's usually not the same person than in Secondary. You split, you have to decide where you're going and everything, so everybody's changing a little bit in that summer, and in that summer they were in Halifax where nobody knew them. They could start it all over. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Freedom, then, is clearly an important facet of the SLBP experience. On the one hand, it promotes a developing sense of autonomy and independence of mind, effectively easing, extending or accelerating the transition from Secondary to CÉGEP. This question of

opportune timing did, in fact, present itself on several occasions, suggesting that the SLBP's target population is well-suited to its objectives. On the other hand, an intriguing impression which resurfaced in several interviews is that the timing of SLBP participation may also encourage on the part of some a certain intentional manipulation of their self-presentation, an issue which I will address more completely in my discussion on identity experimentation.

Wanderlust and readiness to try new things.

Related to the notions of self-confidence and autonomy is another byproduct of the immersion experience, which is an openness to new things in that informants felt more ready and more able to try other new experiences. As David said:

I have also learned a lot of things about myself out there. Perhaps the most important thing I have learned is to jump the opportunities while I can. (David, letter, January 1997)

En étant là-bas, je me suis rendu compte qu'il y a des choses comme vraiment importantes dans la vie... comme se faire des amis... pis quand t'arrives ici tu te rends compte que c'est le plus important... en revenant j'avais moins peur de faire des affaires nouvelles. [While I was there, I realized that some things are, like, really important in life... like making friends... so when you get back here you realize that that's the most important thing... when I got back I wasn't as afraid to do new stuff.] (David, interview, May 1997)

Having completed such an intensive program seemed to have generated a sense of accomplishment which allowed informants to feel empowered to a certain degree and more willing to undertake other challenges. The most common manifestation of this change was a certain wanderlust, which I define as a heightened desire to travel more extensively, to experience the wider world. Having lived successfully in a strange environment, informants said that they were now more willing to see and experience other new places. Furthermore, having done so in the second language was a crucial factor in developing this facet of informants' self-confidence. Annie, in particular, was able to say that the self-confidence which she mentioned in her letter was not simply linguistic. Rather, she perceived an overall improvement in her competence as a traveler,

from overcoming a shyness to ask for information to trusting her judgment and her instincts:

C'était la première fois que je devais uniquement communiquer en anglais. Je me retrouvais dans une ville anglophone et ce pendant cinq semaines. De toutes mes expériences, c'est l'expérience qui m'a éloignée le plus longtemps de ma famille et mes amis... J'ai aussi pris confiance en moi. Maintenant, suite au programme d'immersion, je sais que je peux vivre dans une autre ville, et que je peux me débrouiller seule... Et depuis ce temps, je suis persuadée qu'à un moment de ma vie, j'irai vivre dans une autre province. Avant ma participation au PBEL, je n'aurais pas envisagé cette possibilité. [It was the first time that I had to communicate only in English. There I was in an anglophone city for five whole weeks. Of all the experiences I've had, this one separated me from my family and friends the longest... I also got more self-confidence. Now, since the immersion program, I know that I can live in another city and I can get along by myself... And since then I've been convinced that at some point in my life I'll go live in another province. Before participating in the SLBP I wouldn't have dreamed of that possibility.] (Annie, letter, January 1997)

Part of the SLBP experience is, as the national mandate states, an introduction to the culture of the other language, and the total immersion concept itself is designed to provide participants the opportunity to live in the second culture. Not only does leaving the SLBP with a positive impression of seeing new and distant places boost one's confidence in doing so on other occasions, it engenders a desire for more, even broader experiences. Although Annie felt she was now prepared to live in another province, others discussed even wider horizons. And interestingly, there was also a new interest in unfamiliar parts of one's own province: "I would like to visit new parts of the world, now that I have seen Halifax. I have new friends from everywhere in the province of Québec that I first met in the program" (Chantale, letter, December 1996). For some, like Isabelle, it even became something of an obsession:

Cela a permis de m'ouvrir les horizons et voir qu'on peut vivre d'autres choses de différents que ce que m'offrait mon petit patelin et qui pouvait être aussi intéressant. Cet été à Halifax m'a permis d'avoir de nombreux nouveaux amis avec qui je garde encore contact et m'a donner un goût incroyable pour vivre d'autres expériences du genre... Je suis plus rêveuse qu'avant le programme, je ne pense maintenant qu'à voyager, visiter. [It enabled me to open up my horizons and see that you can live through other things which are different from what my little neck of the woods could offer me and which could be interesting too. That summer in Halifax enabled me to have lots of new friends that I still keep in touch with and gave me an incredible desire to live through other experiences of

that kind... I'm more of a dreamer than before the program, now all I think about is traveling, touring.] (Isabelle, letter, January 1997)

For Elizabeth, this wanderlust went to an extreme. So enamored was she of her SLBP experience, she had spent the months between its end and the interview contriving to persuade her parents to let her return to Halifax as a university student. In her letter, Elizabeth wrote:

We all arrived there by ourselves knowing no one. We were strangers who became best friends. At Dalhousie, I could be anyone I wanted to or I could just be myself. I never had a relationship that strong with anyone else... I've changed so much since the beginning of last summer. I came back home not wanting to start my normal life again. I'm more mature and sensible. I live in a dream. I think I never really got back on the right track. I realized that an experience like the SLBP can't be forgotten. So I've decided to apply at Dalhousie next year. I loved the atmosphere of the program but I also loved the atmosphere of Halifax. As I said before, I'm not my old self anymore. This summer, I put aside all my worries and problems and for once, lived. I realized that I really didn't feel good in Québec and that I really want to go at Dalhousie and live in Halifax. I felt home, part of it because of the program. The SLBP permits you to live by yourself, to discover a new place, to do stuff you would never have done. (Elizabeth, letter, December 1996)

Clearly, Elizabeth's perspective on the SLBP and its importance in her life is somewhat more extreme than that of the average participant. A large source of her rather rose-coloured vision of Halifax certainly stems from the freedom she enjoyed during her stay there. In fact, this did cause some friction with her family upon her return as she found the transition from the intense SLBP environment to her old life very hard to make. Although her friends and family were understanding, "after a week they were like, OK, get over it, you know, *ajuste-toi* [get used to it]" (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997).

Open-mindedness and understanding of others.

When asked to explain what she meant in her letter by saying that she realized that she didn't 'feel good' in Québec, Elizabeth focused in on the question of political leanings and allegiances, which are often tied to cultural and linguistic identity issues in

Québec. When asked if she would have changed in the ways she had elaborated without having participated in the SLBP, she replied thus:

I don't think it would have [happened]... I was there at the First of July [Canada Day, the national holiday which celebrates the country's founding] and for a first time, people were celebrating in the streets, you know, 'cause here it's not like that at all... I've always been like that but it just made me realize, that's where I felt like home was... I was watching the Olympics and [local Nova Scotians] were so proud. It was really weird... it made me appreciate Canada more, that's for sure, even if I already did before. (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997)

Asked if she thought this were the case for many participants, Elizabeth felt she was an exception to the rule, saying that staunch sovereignists (as many Québécois youth are) "just won't change their mind."

Relating the story of another participant, Benoît concurred, stating that part of the reason for this participant's reluctance to open up to the second language culture was the high concentration of Québécois living together and socializing together, albeit surrounded by the other culture. As he puts it, the residential aspect of the immersion created a sort of Québécois 'bunker' mentality, with the onus to meet anglophones falling squarely on participants' shoulders:

... we're all Quebecers there, we're in a Quebecer bunker... I probably got a little bit more since I met some people from there, I went to parties there... but other people that were like sticking in their rooms and, you know, they came back still a Quebecer, and sovereignist Quebecer... Like the one that hang the flag in his room, Québec, in his window... I didn't get it, but anyway... He didn't want to see it... He was... really a stubborn sovereignist... he didn't even want to speak English... he hates English so I don't know why he went there... no, he came back more sovereignist than when he arrived... (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

A change in political perspective was, however, the case for one of the other informants as well as Elizabeth. In David's written response, he says:

My perception of Canada has also changed during the program. Before visiting Nova Scotia, I was in favor of Québec sovereignty. I have visited all the regions in our country, but never talked to the people and never stayed long enough to understand their culture and their way of life. Spending five weeks in Halifax made me realize how great a country Canada is and how friendly anglophones can be. So if there is another referendum [on Québec sovereignty], be sure that I will vote no. (David, letter, January 1997)

Even though this change in political perspective is not one of the program's overt goals, the origins of its funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage could lead one to suspect that such consequences would not be unwelcome - if not such wholesale changes in perspective, then certainly increased tolerance of Canada's official linguistic duality. For David, at least, it was the duration of the immersion which made this foray into 'the other solitude' more important in terms of change. As he mentions in his letter, he had traveled quite extensively, but never in an immersion setting and never with such autonomy. He pursues this change in attitude further during his interview:

Avant j'étais plutôt indécis... l'idée que j'avais des Canadiens anglais, c'est peut-être du monde qui nous aime pas... l'idée du Parti réformiste... là-bas quand on a parlé au monde, tu vois comment ils sont amicaux... tout le monde veut nous parler... tu te rends compte, mais écoudons, ils nous haïssent pas vraiment là... tsé, dans le fond, c'est peut-être des fausses idées qu'on avait. [Before I was quite undecided... the idea that I had of English Canadians was maybe that they were people who don't like us... the idea of the Reform Party [a right-of-centre federal political party]... there when we spoke to people, you see how friendly they are... everybody wants to talk to us... you realize, hey, they don't really hate us... you know, in the end, maybe we had the wrong idea.] (David, interview, May 1997)

Although not all of the informants claimed changes in their political perspectives, it can be said that changes in their understanding of difference, in the appreciation of others (whether individuals or other communities and cultures), and in what I have called here 'open-mindedness' took place. Much of this has to do with the residential aspect of the immersion; participants share washroom, cafeteria, laundry, sports, and leisure facilities with a large number of other students (in some cases, not all of whom are in the SLBP), creating a need to put into practice the necessary social skills for such communal living. Moreover, due to the randomness of the awarding of bursaries, the SLBP population has its origins from across the province of Québec, bringing individuals together from myriad backgrounds and cultural positionings.

In such a context, it might seem obvious that living amongst such novelty and difference can be enriching. As Isabelle comments, "*on voit une différence de mentalité, je trouve ça l'fun... tu vois que le monde est différent* [you see a difference in mindset, I find it fun... you see that people are different]" (Isabelle, interview, May 1997). One of

the interview objectives, however, was to try to elucidate the vagueness in statements informants had made in their letters. Chantale had written, for example, "In fact, it changed my whole person. I have now different opinions, feelings, and ideas, because I have met different people with a different culture" (Chantale, letter, December 1996). In this extract, the people and culture to whom Chantale refers need to be clarified. Because of the different layers of context within the SLBP, its overlapping discourse communities, culture could be interpreted along a continuum, with one end referring to the culture of the SLBP immersion, and the other representing the larger and less defined host community (the city of Halifax, the province of Nova Scotia, or perhaps even English-speaking Canada). When this issue was explored in the interviews, the two interpretations came out in varying degrees.

For some, the differences between the French-speaking and English-speaking cultures of Canada were difficult to enumerate. For example, consider these two very hesitant interview comments:

Je le sais pas, j'ai pas vu ben de différences... ce serait peut-être ça que j'ai appris finalement. [I dunno, I didn't see that many differences... maybe that's what I learned in the end.] (Isabelle, interview, May 1997)

Déjà là, j'ai de la misère à trouver la culture anglaise pis la culture française, tsé? ... la culture d'Halifax, là, mais la culture en générale anglaise, je ne sais pas là. [I've already got trouble figuring out what English culture and French culture are, y'know?... Halifax culture, yeah, but English culture in general, I dunno about that.] (Guylaine, interview, May 1997)

Others clearly felt that the SLBP experience had opened them up to another culture. Both Hugo and Francine stated that the warm welcome they felt in their host city had enabled them to change their point of view towards Canada's 'other culture' in positive ways:

Le PBEL m'a permis d'apprendre, comme la plupart de mes autres camps, à être plus ouvert face aux autres et d'être moins gêner face aux étrangers. Ces changements sont, d'après moi, permanents. Bien sûr, ces changements ne se font pas du jour au lendemain!... On point de vue culturel et humain j'ai pu constater que, quand je me promenais dans Halifax (quand j'avais du temps libres), les gens étaient très sympathiques et compréhensifs envers moi. Cela m'a appris, contrairement aux autres camps que j'ai fait au Québec, à respecter les gens qui n'ont pas la même langue que moi. Grâce à ce programme, j'ai appris à être plus

ouvert vers le monde et à élargir mes horizons. [The SLBP enabled me to learn, like most of my other camps, to be more open to others and less shy with strangers. These changes are, in my opinion, permanent. Of course, these changes don't come about overnight!... From a cultural and human point of view I could notice that, when I was walking in Halifax (when I had free time), people were really nice and understanding towards me. That taught me, as opposed to other camps I'd done in Québec, to respect people who don't have the same language as me. Thanks to the program, I learned how to be more open to people and to expand my horizons.] (Hugo, letter, January 1997)

J'ai dû me forcer à parler avec les gens même si mon anglais n'était pas parfait et je me suis rendu compte que les gens sont très compréhensif et aidant. Je suis moins gênée qu'avant de m'exprimer. [I had to force myself to speak with people even though my English wasn't perfect and I realized that people were very understanding and helpful. I not as shy as before in expressing myself.] (Francine, letter, January 1997)

Annie, however, seemed to touch on issues which go beyond the simple matters of politeness and courtesy:

J'ai acquis une nouvelle ouverture d'esprit, car j'ai rencontré d'autres personnes qui ont des mentalités et des règles de vie différentes des miennes ou des règles dans ma ville... Finalement, le PBEL a enrichi mes connaissances culturelles. Étant donné que le PBEL se déroule à Halifax, j'ai pu visiter, dans mes temps libres, cette ville merveilleuse. J'ai été en contact avec des gens qui ont une mentalité différente. [I acquired a new open-mindedness because I met other people with mindsets and codes of conduct different from mine and from the rules in my city. ... Finally, the SLBP enriched my cultural knowledge. Given that the SLBP takes place in Halifax, I was able to visit this amazing city in my spare time. I was in contact with people who have a different mindset.] (Annie, letter, January 1997)

The notion of different mindsets (*mentalités*), lifestyles and codes of conduct (*règles de vie*) is an interesting one which relates directly to the cultural component of the SLBP mandate. Interestingly, however, apart from the difficulties encountered with a higher age of majority in Nova Scotia, informants were hard pressed to enumerate specific large scale instances of difference between life in Québec and Nova Scotia. Indeed, most of the examples were geographically based, whereby informants would remark on the highly visible military presence in Halifax (the city is home to Canada's largest naval base as well as an air force base), the ubiquitous reminders of British colonial history, and the popularity of wooden houses which, in long-standing Atlantic

Canadian tradition, are painted all colours of the rainbow. When pressed for an example which could not be firmly rooted in geographical explanation, Annie came up with these two: the fact that people never appeared hurried, even in the provincial capital; and that motorists never failed to stop at pedestrian crosswalks, even without the presence of traffic lights. These social conventions are, in fact, frequently remarked upon during the SLBP, and seemed to have made a lasting impression of the host culture as relaxed and courteous.

Perhaps because of participants' limited exposure to local residents in their day-to-day lives in the home, little more could be extrapolated in terms of more fundamental values, attitudes and beliefs. 'Culture', then, became a word whose shades of meaning meant that informants were not using it to identify the same concepts. This inability to elaborate one's use of the word, to limit its meaning within a defined framework, is best illustrated in Benoît's interview. Iterating in his letter that participating in the SLBP enabled him to adapt to 'the anglophone cultur', he asserted:

A new language includes new mimics, a different attitude and a different way express your self. Therefor, a simple english class isn't intense enough to give us the change to learn and appreciate those differences. In the SLBP program, we weren't only leaning the vocabulary, we were learning the cultur. In fact, we were living the cultur. With [he lists several staff members, their origins and some of their significant traits]... we were experiencing your cultur in a way that a teacher could creat in a class. Plus [he mentions other staff members], we are living, for a month, the complet life of and anglophone. I think that these are the element that rise the SLBP pro. to the status of a cultur experience. (Benoît, letter, December 1996)

Benoît's impression of culture is seemingly more limited to the one created by the interpersonal dynamic of the SLBP community. Yet, it is held up as an example of 'the complet life of and anglophone'. When asked during the interview to explain what he meant by this, he focused on the second language itself as the key factor in 'learning the cultur'. To illustrate this, Benoît gave several examples of idioms created by SLBP participants for their own use. One, for example, was simply specific to the SLBP discourse community whereby the noun 'report' denotes an official sanction received by a participant for an infraction of the English-only agreement. Other examples were transliterations from the participants' mother tongue used as shortcuts in communication,

such as 'cup you' for '*tasse-toi*' [squeeze over, get out of the way]. Culture then was not intended in its broad sense, as was the case with Annie. For Benoît's purposes, culture was more a concept related to the way people speak, the choices which have to be made based on the limitations and expressiveness of language proficiency and of the language itself. As he says, it is a difficult distinction to explain:

It's more a way to act than culture. We're all living in North America, it's basically USA everywhere. So the culture really ain't different from place to place. So that's not really what I meant. Just, really, speaking another language is really another way to act, it's another way to think in a way, 'cause you don't have the same word, if you don't have a word to say something, you can think it. So you have to learn the new way to act in the situation you're in. It's hard to express. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Notwithstanding a greater appreciation of the differences which exist between larger-scale communities, the more striking expansion of informants' open-mindedness has to do with the way in which they related to their peer group of the SLBP. I have already cited the intensity of second language residential living several times, and it seems that participants who report more open-mindedness saw such a change as a necessary self-development which was used as a tool to facilitate the smooth functioning of the SLBP's group dynamic. As Isabelle points out, it is this coexistence with others that fosters such pragmatic change:

Je pense aussi que j'ai appris mieux à accepter les différences les côtoyant chaque jour. Je suis plus sociable qu'avant le programme et je m'approche plus facilement des personnes qui sont différentes de moi. Dans un de mes cours, j'avais une petite madame de 42 ans environ avec qui j'ai développé une amitié et depuis je ne vois plus les adultes comme des ennemis mais je pense que certains peuvent devenir nos amis à nous les jeunes. [I also think that I learned to accept differences better by being around them every day. I'm more sociable than before the program and I approach people who are different from me more easily. In one of my classes, I had a little lady around 42 years old who I developed a friendship with and I don't see adults as enemies anymore since then but I think that some of them can become friends with us young people.] (Isabelle, letter, January 1997)

Interestingly, Isabelle benefited from the presence of an adult student in her class and the positive interactions which they had during the program, and felt confident in extending this facet of her open-mindedness to envision similar relationships with other adults in the future. In contrast, Lyne (the adult student whom Isabelle mentions), has

something of a different perspective on the SLBP, a direct result of her age. Although Lyne and her other middle-aged comrades soon formed a subgroup of their own, enjoying a study vacation in Halifax, the age disparity was predictably something of a hurdle for the older students. Lyne describes this problem in her letter:

Le fait que les étudiants étaient très jeunes ça m'a beaucoup vexé. Des "ados" qui ne veulent pas parler anglais entre eux, ça ne m'intéressait moins mais j'ai dû m'habituer à vivre en leur compagnie. À mon avis, lorsque l'étudiant doit payer ce genre de programme, il doit s'attendre à faire des efforts et avoir amélioré son anglais. Je suis une personne assez joviale et j'aime parler à tout le monde, alors je crois que les jeunes m'appréciaient. Avec certains jeunes j'ai dû les consoler comme une mère, c'était un peu spécial surtout à cet endroit. [The fact that the students were very young bothered me a lot. Teens who don't want to speak English with each other didn't interest me very much but I had to get used to living with them around me. In my opinion, when a student has to pay for this type of program, he or she expects to work hard to see his or her English improve. I'm quite an easygoing person and I like to talk to everyone, so I think the young people appreciated me. With some of them I had to comfort them like a mother, it was a bit different especially in this respect.] (Respondent #12 - Lyne, letter, December 1996)

Lyne's use of the word '*spécial*' must be clarified here. Although this might be read as a positive comment, it is more ambivalent than positive, for in Québécois French, the word denotes a judgment which questions the worth or quality of something. This ambivalence is connoted much as in the English expression 'Well, you know, it's different', where anglophones use the word 'different' to cast doubt on something's intrinsic interest or value. As can be seen, then, the benefits of mixing such age groups may be more apparent for the younger students than for the more mature ones. Indeed, as SLBPs across the country integrate non-bursary adult students as well as foreign students into their SLBP classes, this issue of mixing clienteles may provide an interesting avenue for further research.

For the more youthful interview informants, however, openness to difference in others was a uniform change, despite difficulties in defining the culture which many of them referred to. In terms of the culture of the SLBP itself, we have already seen from Isabelle's comment that it is the proximity and frequency of interpersonal contact created by the residential immersion that fosters the changes. Benoît echoes this in his letter, stressing the variety of backgrounds brought by participants to the SLBP:

...my whole perception of my surroundings have change. I've learn to appreciate people for there differences... I'll allaborate on the why of the question. I was raised in Rosemere, one of the richest city in Québec, I went to private schools were I was "*pensionnaire*" [a boarder]. Everybody there came from rich famalys. So, I closed my mind and classified people, judgind them without knowing who they realy were and why were they like that. Even though I have a wonderfull famaly that thought my [taught me] values that made me the person I am proud to be, I had never lived any experience that could open my mind to reality and the richness of different cultures and economic class. Being thrown into a crowd of people coming from every diffent type of environement was the best thing that could ever happen to me. I've even reoriented my field of concentration at school: before the SLBP program, I was studing in business administration, next year, I'm going to go at McGill in Philosophie, to be able to understand more what can cause our mind to view life so differently. That experience was a turning point in my life, I will remember it for ever. (Benoît, letter, December 1996)

Although Benoît's comments are insightful, it appeared that the temporary dynamics of the SLBP and the need to create new friendships in the somewhat artificial SLBP context created a sort of paradox. That is, different attitudes such as the increased openness toward others formed during the SLBP might be seen as a sort of survival skill which would not be necessary post-immersion. Asked whether he would have been attracted to the same people in his hometown or at his CÉGEP, Benoît replied, "I wouldn't go to them. That's the thing I've learned there, not just judging the appearance because we were all so different." Indeed, the contradiction in Benoît's case seemed to hold true. Questioned further as to whether he felt his friends during the SLBP might feel likewise about him in a different context, he concurred:

Yup, I think... that's why we never saw each other again, well, two or three times, that's it... That's *The Breakfast Club*, they explain it better than me. There's the sports, the *fille à papa* [Daddy's girl], the intellectual, the marginal and the *névrosé* [neurotic]. And they all stick together for a day and then they, they get along but when they have to leave, that's, they ask themselves the question 'Will we talk together, to each other, tomorrow at school?' (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

The reference to the film *The Breakfast Club* (Hughes, 1985) is apt in the way it reflects the variety of individuals randomly assembled for a brief period of time. Brought together in detention for a single Saturday, several high school students each representing a stereotypical high school subculture spend the day forming close bonds only to

conclude that they won't talk to each other again outside of the detention room because of their pre-existing and opposing memberships in these school subcultures. Benoît has thus remarked on the contradiction inherent in informants' claims to more open-mindedness. Having learned to accept others and their differences is indeed a crucial factor in the successful negotiation of the SLBP immersion experience. This open-mindedness and tolerance may however regress when participants return to pre-existing and highly structured social groupings in their home lives. Perhaps this has something to do with a perceived immutability vis-à-vis already known discourse community structures and their functioning. Brought together by circumstance in a novel context, it seems that giving others the benefit of the doubt and allowing relationships to be forged without preconceptions is easier then in the more rigidly predetermined cultures of one's own secondary school. Indeed, in order to make the most of the novel context of the SLBP immersion, Elizabeth advises that "You have to be quite open and open your mind that you can meet something you're not used to it, you know, you just, something new... you just have to have an open mind" (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997). This, then, may be the more precise nature of the open-mindedness which informants so frequently mentioned. As Benoît concluded:

Even though they're not thinking the same thing as I am, everybody has his priorities and is acting for it. Well, not everybody, but... everybody that wants to gain something in life. So I just, where my perception change is that, *j'ai compris que tout le monde a sa passion. Il faut respecter la passion des autres, il faut pas s'attendre à ce que les autres aient notre passion... J'ai appris à accepter comme, c'est ça...* [I understood that everybody has a passion. We have to respect other people's passions, we can't expect everyone to have our passion... I learned to accept that that's the way it is...] and there I realized that, not because you're thinking the same thing as I am, that doesn't mean you're... what you're thinking is not right. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

It appears, then, that the perceived expansion in informants' open-mindedness can not be disputed. All of them report such a change, whether it be expressed vis-à-vis other cultures or other individuals. The one caveat to be made, however, is that this development may be tempered in part by the return to one's former discourse community, where the need for more open-mindedness is not a requisite for forming new social groupings. How then, are participants able to put their open-mindedness into

practice in the SLBP context in order to forge links with others for the duration of the program? According to the informants, sociability was the crucial factor.

Sociability.

Asked to explain how SLBP participants could best go about forming friendships for the duration of the immersion, David asserted that one has to “*oublier [ses] amis pour cinq semaines, quasiment... pas les oublier mais les mettre de côté un peu... rencontrer d'autres personnes* [practically forget about friends for five weeks... not forget them but put them aside a bit... meet other people]” (David, interview, May 1997). Parachuting into an unfamiliar discourse community does, of course, pose a challenge for those who constitute the community, particularly for those whose language skills limit their expressive abilities. One of the consolations, however, is that “*Tout le monde est dans la même affaire pareil* [everyone’s in the same boat]” (Isabelle, interview, May 1997), which serves to unite individuals in a common sense of purpose as well as in the shared frustrations of language immersion. In the absence of pre-established social groupings, we have already seen how participants use their sense of autonomy and openness to create new friendships and a sense of community. Another facet of self-development, then, was in the area of *sociabilité*.

Although I have decided to render this term as ‘sociability’ in English, its disuse in our own everyday discourse may necessitate a more accurate definition. From the observations of the informants, it seems that this trait involves overcoming one’s shyness or timidity (*la gêne*), becoming more outgoing and using one’s social and conversational skills to form friendships. In this sense the notion of sociability approaches that of extroversion, one of the qualities of the more able language learner, and of proficient learners in general. Sociability then is an individual trait which is directly related to the process of socialization in that participants identified an increase in sociability as an enabling factor in the socialization process. Though most of the informants self-identified as giving off an appearance of self-assuredness to strangers, it was intriguing that most

felt somewhat less assured in the second language environment and pointed to sociability as playing a significant role in their successful negotiating of the SLBP experience.

Although the need for sociability was paramount in the second language context of the SLBP, gains in this area seemed to carry over into post-immersion interactions. Chantale noted this change, especially in her interactions in English: "Moreover, I'm not shy anymore to speak English, because I know that people will, most of the time, understand me even if I do mistakes" (Chantale, letter, December 1996). Overcoming shyness was also an important change for Francine: "*Un des grands changements qui est de nature permanente est la sociabilité... Je suis moins gênée qu'avant de m'exprimer* [One of the big changes that's permanent is sociability... I'm not as shy as before to express myself]" (Francine, letter, January 1997), both in the second language and in the larger sphere of her life. This was also the case for Isabelle: "*Je suis plus sociable qu'avant le programme et je m'approche plus facilement des personnes qui sont différentes de moi* [I'm more sociable than before the program and I approach people who are different from me more easily]" (Isabelle, letter, January 1997). By exploring the different perspectives on this change, several points emerged, including the feeling of facing the challenge on one's own and of having learned a social skill important for future situations of a similar nature.

In her letter (December 1996), Guylaine had noted that not knowing any of the other participants prior to the SLBP and facing the challenges on her own in some way allowed her to "*vivre [l']expérience à fond* [live the experience to the fullest]". Exploring this issue during the interview, she was able to elaborate her reasons for feeling this way:

Si j'avais allé avec une autre personne, là, disons mon amie là, ça, je l'aurais eu à côté de moi pis ça aurait été comme la vie d'aujourd'hui... tandis que là, si je pars tout seul là, j'ai pas besoin de m'occuper d'elle... tsé ce que j'veux dire, je fais une nouvelle vie, comme, on peut le dire... c'est comme je m'intègre dans une autre affaire... pas de barrières à cause de l'autre personne... je connais cette personne-là, pourquoi forcer, me forcer à voir d'autres personnes, tsé? [If I'd gone with another person, let's say my friend, I would've had her by my side and it would've been like life today... but if I go there alone, I don't need to take care of her... y'know what I mean, I create like a new life, I guess you can say... it's like I'm getting into a new thing... no barriers because of the other person... I know that person, why force, force myself to see other people, y'know?]
(Guylaine, interview, May 1997)

This notion of facing the challenge of establishing new friendships on one's own as a criteria for living the immersion experience to its fullest was also taken up by Annie. She, however, recognized that it was not an easy task:

Au programme j'étais toute seule... je connaissais personne pis personne ne me connaissait... j'étais obligée à faire les premiers pas, d'aller vers les gens... j'avais pas le choix. [In the program I was all alone... I didn't know anyone and no one knew me... I had to make the first moves, to go to people... I had no choice.] (Annie, interview, May 1997)

Despite viewing overcoming her shyness as an obligation, she did not feel it was a burden:

Non, c'était plutôt un défi pour moi... c'était le bon moment pour moi... ça m'a redonné une partie de la confiance en moi que j'avais perdue... ça m'a aidé à réaliser que... les gens pouvaient être intéressés à moi. [No, actually it was a challenge for me... it was the right time for me... it gave me back part of my self-confidence that I had lost... it helped me to realize that... people could be interested in me.] (Annie, interview, May 1997)

For Annie, "*Dès le premier jour... la gêne d'aller vers les autres... ça s'est vite passé* [From the first day... the shyness to go to others... passed quickly]" (Annie, interview, May 1997). However, she did feel that in certain cases her relationships were somewhat hindered by the second language. The effect of the language restrictions were not as significant, though, as the length of the immersion. To take friendships to another level, she noted, "*cinq semaines, c'est pas assez, même en français* [five weeks isn't enough, even in French]" (Annie, interview, May 1997). The primary benefit in Annie's attaining more ease in unfamiliar social situations was increased skill at adaptation, becoming more adept at entering into and shifting between various discourse communities, an effect which she observed soon after the immersion: "*encore là c'était plus facile de m'adapter au collégial* [and it was even easier to get used to college]" (Annie, interview, May 1997).

Although Annie felt that moving past superficial relationships to a deeper level of friendship was compromised by the length of the SLBP, David and Elizabeth focused conversely on the intensity of their newly created friendships, citing the same reason of program length as a key causal factor:

C'est un peu différent au CÉGEP cette année... les gangs étaient déjà formées... c'est plus long au CÉGEP... parce que, bon, ben, à Halifax on était toujours ensemble, on avait pas de vie à l'extérieur de tout ça, j'veux dire, on avait pas nos amis ailleurs, fait qu'on était comme forcé de, de, de faire des relations tout de suite là... c'est un devoir de rencontrer des personnes, de se faire des amis... au secondaire les gangs sont plus séparées... à Halifax c'est plus comme une grande famille... le monde était plus proche les uns des autres qu'à l'école. [It's a little different at CÉGEP this year... groups had already been formed... it takes more time at CÉGEP... because, um, in Halifax we were always together, we didn't have a life outside of all that, I mean, we didn't have friends from anywhere else, so we were like forced to, to make connections right away... the onus is on you to meet people, to make friends... in secondary school groups are more apart... in Halifax it's more like a big family... people were closer to each other than in school.] (David, interview, May 1997)

My experience at Dalhousie was a unique one. We all arrived there by ourselves knowing no one. We were strangers who became best friends. At Dalhousie, I could be anyone I wanted to or I could just be myself. I never had a relationship that strong with anyone else. (Elizabeth, letter, December 1996)

Regardless of the difference in opinion as to whether friendships created within the temporary discourse community of the SLBP were stronger than those in other spheres, the intensity of the immersion program did make desirable active efforts in improving one's sociability, a social skill which for all informants carried over to some degree to their CÉGEP studies. Moreover, becoming aware of one's social nature, and actively engaging in improvements thereto, represented for some an important stage in their own developing self-awareness. Francine, Guylaine and David each explained this development:

Le fait de passer 5 semaines à Halifax m'a permis d'en apprendre beaucoup sur la personne que je suis. Je sais maintenant que me loin de chez moi, je réussis à m'adapter à différentes situations. Je sais aussi que j'ai énormément besoin de personne qui comprenne ce que je vie et qui sont là pour m'écouter; je suis une personne qui a besoin de contacts humains. [Having spent five weeks in Halifax enabled me to learn a lot about who I am as a person. I know now that far away from home I can succeed in adapting to different situations. I also know that I have a huge need to have people who understand what I'm going through and who are there to listen to me; I'm someone who needs human contact.] (Francine, letter, January 1997)

Before the SLBP, I was always hanging out with the same bunch of friends. Since I had always been with them, I was not willing to develop relationships or even

talk with other people. When I arrived in Halifax, I did not know anybody in the program. I had to meet those people, and some very good friendships were developed. Since I came back, it is easier for me to meet new people and I enjoy it. (David, letter, January 1997)

Jamais j'aurais cru d'être capable de partir seule un mois avant, et maintenant j'y crois. J'ai appris que je pouvais me faire confiance et ne pas avoir peur de la vie. Avant j'étais plus naïve et gênée et aujourd'hui, grâce en quelque sorte au programme, je m'affirme plus, je suis optimiste, j'ai reconstruit de nouveau monde (plus ouverte) comme au PBEL... [I never before would have believed I could go away for a month, and now I do. I learned that I could have faith in myself and not be afraid of life. Before I was more naïve and shy and today, thanks somehow to the program, I assert myself more, I'm more optimistic, I met new (more open) people like in the SLBP...] (Guylaine, letter, December 1996)

Indeed, the autonomy, self-confidence and sociability which for the informants represented such significant change, were for Guylaine on a par with the language-learning aspect of the immersion in terms of importance. Asked to note the most substantial difference in herself between the beginning and end of the SLBP, she said that, "*avec Halifax, j'ai su comment aborder le monde* [with Halifax, I learned how to approach people]", describing herself as "*une fille qui a découvert plein de choses... qui voit que t'as rien à rester tout seule* [a girl who discovered plenty of stuff... who knows that there's no point in staying by yourself]". And prompted to offer advice to a hypothetical friend embarking on a similar immersion program, she replied: "*Tu vas là pour travailler avec d'autres personnes... il faut savoir comment vivre avec du monde* [You're going there to work with other people... you've got to know how to live with people]" (Guylaine, interview, May 1997).

Identity experimentation.

The previous six domains of change were all perceived positively by informants in that they represent various dimensions of the human character which are highly valued. That informants should be able to report having developed these traits speaks both to the intensity of the SLBP immersion and of their readiness to take on the challenge. Another area where change was observed, however, was in an awareness of

the control over which individuals are able to project facets of their identity, either intentionally or unknowingly. This in fact may be a manifestation of critical self-awareness as described by Ivanic (1994). An example of the latter case in which aspects of identity are projected unknowingly is Isabelle, who reported the following in her written response:

Je ne croyais pas avoir changé de quelque façon que ce soit en ce qui a trait à ma personnalité etc. mais mon entourage me l'a fait remarquer. Durant le programme j'agissais timidement au début comme la plupart mais j'ai vite retrouvé la manière pleine de joie et active. On m'a dit que durant les 2 premiers mois de mon retour du programme j'étais plus distante avec ma famille, moins proche d'eux, plus discrète. Ils ont même cru que j'avais vécu une certaine expérience traumatisante à Halifax que je voulais camouflé, et ce n'était nullement le cas. [I didn't think I'd changed in any way whatsoever in terms of my personality, etc. but my close friends made me see that I had. During the program I acted shyly at the beginning like everybody else but I soon found my old way of being happy and active. I was told that for the first two weeks after I got back from the program I was more distant with my family, not as close to them, more reserved. They even thought that I had gone through some traumatic experience in Halifax that I wanted to hide, and that wasn't the case at all.] (Isabelle, letter, January 1997)

Having convinced her family that there was in fact nothing the matter, Isabelle could only explain the impression she was giving off by her general fatigue and a lack of interest in returning to her old life, the SLBP having been such an intense and enjoyable experience: *"C'est parce que je pense que je parlais moins qu'avant quand j'étais arrivée... peut-être que j'étais essouffée de parler [It's because I think that I didn't talk as much when I got back... maybe I was all talked out]"* (Isabelle, interview, May 1997).

The notion of impressions and interpretations made by others - whether accurate or not or somewhere between the two extremes - is a fascinating one. Although many of the informants recalled encountering difficulties in making themselves understood properly in the second language, Isabelle touched on another facet of what is frequently seen as an exclusively linguistic problem:

Au niveau de la langue, ça m'a pas aidé, ça, pas du tout... ça m'a pris du temps à m'adapter... c'est comme, en anglais, c'est pas la même, tsé, tu dégages pas la même affaire en anglais, moi, je trouve là. J'avais de la misère à tout dire qu'est-ce que j'avais à dire en français. [As for the language, that didn't help me, no way... it took me a while to adapt... it's like, in English, it's not the same, y'know,

you don't give off the same thing in English, the way I see it anyway. I had trouble saying everything I wanted to say in French.] (Isabelle, interview, May 1997)

What is particularly interesting in this observation is Isabelle's use of the verb *dégager* [emit; give off] when referring to others' perceptions of her. In such contexts informants would use this notion of 'giving off' to distinguish between what they thought of themselves and what they surmised to be others' opinions of them. The awareness of the distinction is interesting in that it reflects a major underpinning in Goffman's (1959) discussion of the presentation of self. He holds that an individual's expressiveness, and by extension his or her capacity to give impressions, involves two very distinct kinds of sign activity: the impressions which we give (here the sense is volitional) and those which we give off (in this case it is more incidental). Clearly, expressing oneself in a second language in which one is not proficient can create the possibility of interference between one's expression and the impressions received, as Isabelle points out. It may also occur unintentionally and without the filter of a second language, as Isabelle also came to discover subsequent to her return home. What surfaced in some of the interviews, however, were observations of another kind of impression-making which was considered intentional.

Given that the SLBP is a residential program, it may not actually be surprising that participants discover that the impressions which classmates give or give off in the class setting might juxtapose with those projected elsewhere. Typically, high school-aged students have a close-knit group of friends with which they maintain extracurricular contact, but they may also ignore much of their other classmates' extracurricular lives. In discussing the group dynamic in her class, Annie commented on this very phenomenon:

Au départ... je me sentais pas à l'aise... l'atmosphère, qu' il y avait des gens, comme, leur façon de penser ne se joignait pas à la mienne... ça, c'est encore mon insécurité de l'adaptation... je suis insécure dans ces milieux-là... j'étais pas dans une gang mais j'étais pas toute seule non plus dans mon coin... j'étais avec les autres mais pas nécessairement impliquée personnellement, ben, je veux dire impliquée personnellement, oui, mais j'aurais pas confié n'importe quoi à ces personnes-là... comme leur parler de ma personnalité, des choses qui me tiennent plus à coeur, peut-être moins... je pourrais être amie mais ce serait pas des amis intimes... ça, c'était des amis d'école... souvent je voyais un autre côté de leur personnalité dans les résidences que je voyais pas aux cours. Pis ça, je le

sais pas qu'est-ce qui les influençait... c'est ça, je voyais un autre côté que j'aimais mieux que celui qu'ils montraient... [At the beginning I didn't feel comfortable... the ambiance, there were people, like, their way of thinking didn't mesh with my own... again that's my insecurity in adapting... I'm insecure in those situations... I wasn't part of a group but I wasn't alone either in a corner... I was with others but not necessarily personally involved, um, I mean I was personally involved, yeah, but I wouldn't have confided just anything to those people... like talking about my personality, stuff that I find important, maybe less so... I could be friends, but they wouldn't be close friends... they were classmates... I often saw another side of their personality in the residence that I didn't see in class. And that, I don't know what was making them do that... that's just it, I saw another side that I liked better than what they were showing.] (Annie, interview, May 1997)

Indeed, as the case exists for a perceived difference between one's projected identity in class and outside of the school setting, so does it hold for perceptions of SLBP participants during the immersion and afterward. David remarked on this when he spoke of another SLBP participant who seemed distant and cold during the program, but with whom he became friends after meeting one another again in Québec City. When it was suggested that perhaps his friend was not quite the same person as he had been during the SLBP, David then related the story of another participant whom he felt had made intentional efforts to change the impressions he gave to others:

Ça se peut aussi. Ben, je sais qu'il y a du monde, comme, qui voulait se faire comme une autre vie là-bas là, qui voulait ben, comme, pas se faire une autre vie mais, genre, peut-être repartir à zéro, mais pas repartir à zéro mais, comme, oui, comment je pourrais dire ça, se, se faire d'autres personnalités un peu, là, être différent. [That could be too. Um, I know that there're people, like, who wanted to like make another life for themselves there, who wanted like, not to make another life for themselves but, like, maybe start from scratch, well, not start from scratch but, like, yeah, how could I put it, sort of make other personalities for themselves, to be different.] (David, interview, May 1997)

Asked how an individual might do so, he replied:

Je sais pas, si tu commences avec du nouveau monde, c'est l'occasion de donner une autre impression de toi. Mettons, tu sais les défauts que t'as ici ou... je veux dire, t'essaies de corriger ça là-bas, avec du monde que tu connais pas, tu leur montres que tu étais toujours comme ça, genre. [I dunno, if you start out with new people, that's a chance to give another impression of yourself. I guess you know the flaws you've got here or... I mean, you try to fix that over there, with people you don't know, you kind of show them you've always been like that.] (David, interview, May 1997)

Although David clearly had difficulty expressing the phenomenon of intentional self-(misre)presentation, he was aware that it could be done. Again, we can see this idea in Goffman's (1959) notion of 'character', a sort of persona which is willingly projected to others. As David indicates, the contextual factors of the SLBP, particularly its temporary nature and the entirely unknown community of individuals, present a timely opportunity to wipe one's identity slate clean in order to try out/try on a new identity. In such a situation where there is very little vested interest in foreseeing long-term relationships with the other participants, it seems that the stakes are low for those wishing to experiment with facets of their personality, of their self, of their identity. David, however, maintained that he was not such a person, saying, "... *mes vrais traits remontaient toujours à la surface... c'est trop tard... je reviens à moi-même* [... my true traits always came to the surface... it's too late... I revert to myself]" (David, interview, May 1997).

Benoît also remarked on this phenomenon, explaining that the need to be accepted into a group might outweigh the inherent problems in such intentional reinventing of the self. He adds, however, that success is not necessarily guaranteed:

They're probably the person they always dreamt to be, well, I think, or they're just making it easier to be accepted... it's obvious that when they came in our group... they all thought they all had to say [certain things to fit in]... but they learned probably in secondary that if you don't, you can't come to see the person. So they were making up stories and then *ils n'étaient pas à la hauteur de leur réputation* [they didn't measure up to their reputations]. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

The very fact that SLBP participants have no shared history creates a sort of mass anonymity which allows for considerable freedom of expression. Regarding her class group, Elizabeth commented:

Everyone felt free to say what they wanted to because we were like 15 and we didn't know each other and that was the best part of it... we kind of, you know, were able to be someone else or just be ourselves, so... I could say whatever I wanted to and just say what I was thinking and, you know, get to know everyone else... it was great. (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997)

It is understandable that teenagers might appreciate this freedom to interact without the pre-existing hindrances of in-groups and out-groups which typically mark

their school lives. Elizabeth was asked, however, to clarify her use of the phrase 'be someone else', and whether she thought this reinventing of oneself happened often.

Well, I think it did because nobody knew anyone when they arrived there so, it was like, you can have a whole new life. Nobody knows where you come from, nobody knows your past, so you can just be yourself, or a little different person if you want to. You can just choose whatever you want to. Yeah... and when they were there, like, it's like for five weeks, they're like, well, I can do whatever I want, you know, for five weeks, I just take advantage of it and, you know, do everything I never did, you know? (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997)

Again however, as with David, Elizabeth did not situate herself among those who sought to experiment with their impressions. While the complexity of identity for some led to a perceived distinction between the self and the presentation of self, her socially projected identity during the immersion experience was the same as her self-perceived identity. As she said self-assuredly, "I was myself, yes... I don't know, I just was myself... it was easy to be myself" (Elizabeth, interview, May 1997).

Factors Promoting Changes in Self-perception

Whether informants were talking about changes in their self-confidence, sense of autonomy, sociability or open-mindedness, a set of factors inherent to the SLBP immersion were consistently cited as the key factors in contributing to these changes. Among the most prevalent were: (a) the age of the participants; (b) the shared experiences of residential living; (c) the constraints to communication created by the prohibition of first-language use; (d) the length of the program; (e) the absence of a shared history as a discourse community; and (f) the relative freedom associated with living away from parental authority. In order to explore briefly these motors of change, I will use excerpts from Benoît's interview to illustrate each of these issues.

The notion of multiple discourse identities was clearly articulated throughout the interviews, particularly as informants were asked to describe how they felt others perceived them in a variety of contexts such as the home, at school, or as a stranger walking down the street. After having discussed the different impressions he gives off in these various contexts, Benoît was asked which one of them he thought had come out in

the first days of the SLBP. Upon his arrival, and even before, he was already aware of the necessity to be outgoing:

The one at home and the one at my job... when I went there I knew I had to, to change that side of me 'cause I would have had a long summer if I were to stay in my room and just ignore everybody. And that is what I wanted to do, I wanted to, to see what it was like to go to people and just talk to people without, just, just *enlever ma pensée de, de m'isoler là* [get rid of my thoughts of isolating myself], just seeing what it was like. That was my goal so, that's what I did when I arrived. I just talked to, to anybody, at the cafeteria, in the quad... just talked to everybody... I thought I would be more nervous... but everybody was in the same situation so it's not the same as here... Approaching someone here which, which is, he is with his friends and he is in his domain, so you have break that to, to come into a situation where you could talk to him, or to her, whatever... when there everybody had to talk to everybody 'cause they wanted to have a great summer, so everybody was wandering around... more in the first days 'cause you have to, you had to find who was more like you and who wasn't... (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Unlike prior experiences where students have a shared history of having attended the same schools or even coming from the same town, it became incumbent on SLBP participants to overcome their shyness. Putting aside some of their preconceived notions of others thus enabled them to find those within the group of 174 participants who did share common interests and with whom they would feel most comfortable associating for the duration of the program. The arduousness of this challenge, however, was mitigated somewhat by the fact that all the participants were in the same situation, equalizing the task to a certain degree in the early portion of the immersion before the English-only rule officially came into effect.

Age was also an important factor, as has been seen in comments made by several of the informants. Given that the vast majority of SLBP participants were 17 and 18 years old, all of the social pressures, social issues, and psychosocial problems associated with late adolescence and early adulthood come into play in the new discourse community created by the SLBP. As Lyne mentioned in her letter, the older students became marginalized to a certain extent, and in large part of their own volition. This should not, however, be seen in a negative light; rather, it is hardly different than what happens with the social dynamics of the younger students who were in the majority. As Benoît points

out, older students may not face some of the same issues as do the teenagers, but the end result may be similar:

...because when you, you get to a certain age, I think everybody is *conforme à un certain modèle pour pouvoir progresser dans la société... donc* [conforms to a certain model in order to progress in society...so], if we go to an older age, we'll probably more be, we'll be, *en plus se ressembler, donc la frontière des gens va moins nous empêcher de, sauf qu'il y a quand même toutes les différentes pensées qui vont faire que les mêmes genres de personnes vont se retrouver, selon moi* [be more alike, so people's boundaries will make it less difficult to, except that there are still all the different ways of thinking that'll make it so that the same kind of people will find each other, in my opinion], whatever the age is... (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

One of the SLBP's contextual factors which greatly influenced the way in which participants experienced the immersion was the residential aspect of the program. Some had attended summer camps in the past or had participated in exchange programs with high schools outside Québec, but none had spent so long away from home in a residential environment. While security and supervision measures do exist, participants are allowed a great deal of freedom in the residences and considerable free time without curfews. This living environment seemed to create a need for more autonomy and more self-confidence both for the mundane day-to-day requirements of daily living but also for maintaining social networks and one's place within them. I asked some informants whether they would choose a program which offered homestays in host families (as a number of SLBPs do) if they were to do a similar immersion a second time. Some thought they would consider it, if only for linguistic reasons. That is, in order to ensure the use of English at all times and reduce the temptations to fall back to the first language with one's friends, many felt that living in a host family would encourage self-regulation. All of the informants, however, felt that the residential aspect of the SLBP played a significant role in helping them to develop in various ways, especially in terms of their open-mindedness, sociability, autonomy and self-confidence. Regarding the possibility of opting to live with a host family, Benoît was categorical in affirming that living in residence was instrumental in his self-development:

That's probably much harder, 'cause I wasn't hanging out with the people who were not in my class... so I don't know where I would have met the people I met in our residence... I paid to go, so I chose... that's what I wanted... I wanted to

go to people and talk to people, to live with people, to change a side of me. So if I were to go in houses I wouldn't have this chance, so I would choose the residence again. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Similarly, informants were able to identify the length of the program as another major variable which influenced the changes which they observed. Hugo (letter, January 1997), for example, compared his SLBP experience with other summer English immersion programs he had done in Québec, each of which had lasted less than three weeks. The SLBP, he noted, was markedly different in terms of his linguistic progress, because of its five-week duration. Commenting on the changes in their self-confidence and autonomy, most of the students felt that a substantial portion of their sense of accomplishment at the end of the immersion came from the very fact that it had lasted so long, representing a major achievement requiring many hours and days of effort. And for those who wanted to experiment with their identity, the five-week program also afforded the opportunity to do so while not having to uphold certain impressions for a longer period of time. While discussing the topic of impression experimentation, Benoît was asked how participants might cope in a four-month program. In this case, he felt the adoption of a persona (Goffman, 1981) could be ventured, but the maintenance of such a persona would be more difficult than in the five-week immersion.

I think it's harder. I think that when you know that you're only there for five weeks, it's easier to say that I'll change for five weeks and then I'm coming back home... I don't know if it's safer but the person that will go to it will have to apprehend it in another way... He wouldn't face it in the same way. You know it's short, so, short and long at the same time, but *relativement* short *pareil* [relatively short just the same]... so they know that they're not getting into a big thing if they want to change during that period of time. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

The absence of a shared history as a discourse community creates both challenges and opportunities for the creation of and changes in identity within the culture of the SLBP, a community which is still establishing itself even as it is dismantled. Yet, perhaps the most important factor in creating circumstances for all the facets of personal development and identity experimentation is the relative freedom enjoyed by participants. Notwithstanding the constraints on expression and self-presentation thrown up by issues of language and unfamiliarity, it seems that these same factors also free

participants from the constraints of social constructs which exist in their lives outside of the SLBP.

Regardless of how free one feels, however, having to create and maintain one's social identity in the second language forms an additional layer of context, making it all the more difficult. In Benoît's interactions with local anglophones, this difficulty was all too apparent, to such an extent that he wasn't sure how they perceived him:

It's hard to say 'cause I was working on my impression, just, while I was having a relation with them... when you speak a different language, you're not completely yourself... I could understand what they were saying and I could understand who they were 'cause they were comfortable with what they were saying, and I knew that that was the type of person I wanted to talk to, but in order that they could think the same of me, I had to, I had to work hard on it... it's hard and we [SLBP participants] were all thinking the same about it... it's hard to give the impression you want to give 'cause you're always *biaisé* [disadvantaged] by the fact that you're not yourself completely, you're somebody who's trying to, to learn something. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Indeed, many of the informants felt that their abilities to project themselves accurately, not just to anglophones but to each other, were skewed (*biaisé*) by having to express themselves in the second language. *Biaisé* may also be understood from a linguistic perspective in that expressiveness in the second language is often roundabout and indirect (i.e. on the bias, slanted, or skewed), a clear disadvantage in terms of presenting one's identity. Given the social dynamics of late adolescence, this complicated the already complex set of unspoken rules which govern the formation of in-group/out-group structures. Even though Benoît was one of the most proficient students in English, he too felt this impediment to normal social interaction:

You're always stopped by the, *l'interprétation de l'environnement* [the interpretation of the situation]... Even though we were all in the same situation, we were all comparing ourselves to everybody so we were stopping ourselves from trying to be natural... we wouldn't say it just because we thought we would look stupid saying it, so you can't be totally natural. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

This may explain to a great degree the frequently observed tendency of SLBP participants to resort to first-language use when removed from the supervision of

program staff. As Benoît observed, this phenomenon becomes rampant by program's end, for easily explained reasons:

Well, it's hard. We're all francophones... you are all francophones, so why not understand what the other one is saying and speak French... and the fact that you begin to know people and you know they're gonna leave soon and the other one can live like five hours from your place and you won't see him again, or her, and if you want the relation to be completed when you leave, it has to go faster than word by word in a language you don't know so you just switch because you want to live fully your relation with that person before leaving. (Benoît, interview, May 1997)

Indeed, the violations of the self-imposed first-language prohibition are far from rebellious in nature. Rather, from the participants' perspectives, the second language is a hindrance to complete self-expression, creating a barrier to their capacity to present their identity as desired. Benoît (interview, May 1997) rendered this notion succinctly when he explained why he spoke French to his girlfriend: "I wouldn't speak English to her 'cause I wanna be me."

Summary

Through the voices of the informants, this chapter has explored the ways in which they have experienced change in their identities by virtue of their participation in the Dalhousie SLBP. Several domains of change have been enumerated, with most of them perceived positively on the part of the informants. The informants have also enumerated those factors within the SLBP context which can be attributed with bringing about changes in their self-perception. I can not surmise on the permanence of these outcomes. However, the informants have strongly argued for the role played by the Dalhousie SLBP in fostering contexts in which these outcomes may occur.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Overview

In this chapter I make two claims. First, I argue that the changes in self-perception enumerated by the interview informants do not come about by chance in the context of the Dalhousie SLBP. Rather, given the intense nature of the immersion, as well as its inherent philosophy and implicit objectives, the potential for such changes is significant. Secondly, I propose avenues for further research by suggesting that successful participation in intensive immersion contexts may be related to a notion which I have called personal competence.

Incidental Outcomes and Implicit Objectives

Based on the accounts of the informants who participated in this research, I would argue that the Summer Language Bursary Program is more than simply a language learning and cultural experience. This is not to diminish its stated aims, both at the national level and at the level of individual programs. It seems, however, that there is a great deal of additional learning which takes place. Naturally, improving one's second language proficiency is the pretext for participating in the program, as is perhaps the desire to visit and experience another part of the country. And indeed, in the case of the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP, these objectives seem to have been met to varying but on the whole satisfactory degrees.

What has surfaced in this research, however, is that the SLBP may in fact achieve a third objective, which is to learn about oneself. Not only do participants learn something of the second language and its host culture, they also learn a great deal about one another, and thus learn about their own province and their positioning within each of these contexts. Moreover, the interplay and intensity of all the contextual and individual factors - the nested layers of context which I have discussed in this inquiry - seem to conspire to bring about a better understanding of the dynamics and intensity of the

community created within the SLBP experience. Self-representation indeed occurs through social action and social interaction, and the intensity of the SLBP creates a sociocultural context where participants can socially construct and convey their identities and personas with varying degrees of success. Positioned by the newness of the context, their own individuality and by the second language, the SLBP participants who were interviewed showed a highly developed sense of critical self-awareness, which in many cases involved changes which could be attributed in part to their participation in the SLBP. It would seem then that the SLBP has built into its uniqueness a third objective which is incidental, if not implicit - that of becoming more sociable, more autonomous, more self-confident, more resourceful, more open-minded and more self-aware. Indeed, it is these developments which seemed to have made a lasting impression on the interview participants more than their improved language skills or their observations of English-Canadian culture. Furthermore, given the philosophy so firmly espoused by the Dalhousie SLBP's academic director (Young, 1996), I would conclude that this implicit objective has in fact become an explicit one in the Dalhousie context.

How then is the SLBP unique? Informants were clear in isolating several of its features which make for it to be an intense experience which facilitates a developing self-awareness. First, there is the issue of its timeliness. Participating in the SLBP as one makes the transition from secondary school to CÉGEP seems to ensure a preparedness in terms of maturity and life experience to face the responsibilities, hardships and challenges of total immersion in an unfamiliar, disorienting, linguistic and social context. Related to this is the issue of freedom, particularly in the way it manifests and imposes itself in residential living. Indeed, the SLBP's residence life presents participants with a new social structure and 'critical mass' of individuals from which relationships and a complex web of discourse communities must quickly be formed. Communal living, with its contradictory combination of freedom and responsibility, appears to provide an opportunity to hone interpersonal skills as much as the more obvious so-called 'life skills'. And lastly, there is the issue of mandated second language use. Somewhat surprisingly, rather than viewing this integral feature of the SLBP as a burden, there was a consistently reported sense of achievement and accomplishment with respect to the

successful completion of the immersion. From the students' perspectives, 'surviving' the second language immersion experience seems then to contribute strongly to one's self-reliance, self-confidence and self-awareness.

Personal Competence: Key to Successful Immersion?

There remain, however, several unanswered questions, primarily regarding the permanence of the changes which participants were able to observe in themselves and the extent to which those who were interviewed for this research may in fact represent the experience of SLBP participants on a broader scale. Clearly, the informants in this research all enjoyed their SLBP experience and had successfully completed the immersion. But how permanent will their changes in self-perception be? Although their experience of the SLBP immersion made a strong impression in the short term, it would be worthwhile to return to these same participants at a later juncture to see whether their reported changes are lasting or if they are tempered somewhat over time. And what of those students who do not complete the immersion, who leave before it ends because they can not adapt to its intensity? Or those students who do complete the immersion successfully, but whose memories of it are not so fond? This is an area of exploration which will need to be addressed in order to better situate the perspectives of the participants in this research.

And where can the experiences of those who were interviewed for this research be situated in the theory of second language learning? Much has been made in the study of second language acquisition about the processes by which a second language is learned, and immersion has been found to be one of the most efficient avenues by which learners can improve their grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (Harley, 1984). These competences, however, are all linguistic in nature, and may not fully account for the success of immersion students in the unique context of the Summer Language Bursary Program. Of course, these competences must play a role; however, based on the observations made by the informants in this research, I would suggest that there is another competence at work.

In the context of the SLBP, a number of factors are operating which are not seen in the more common immersion environment of a high school classroom, which has been the object of considerable study. As the informants in this research have shown, the 24-hour total immersion espoused by the SLBP creates much more opportunity for interaction among participants, a feature which is amplified by the residential living environment and a shared sociocultural program of activities, and exacerbated by the formal prohibition of first language use. Moreover, participants bring with them a common set of individual variables related to their life stage, generally late adolescence. Combining their own individualities within a shared set of circumstances, the result is an extremely challenging five weeks, on the linguistic, personal and social levels. Given the number of factors which impinge on the participants' experience of the SLBP immersion, then, the additional competence which may be at work might be termed 'personal competence'. That is, putting the question of language acquisition aside momentarily, there is another measure of success operating within the sphere of the SLBP's total residential immersion.

This notion of success is not related to a measure of improvement in one's language proficiency. Rather, participants who successfully complete the program must have also achieved improvement or growth on a personal level. Erickson and Shultz (1981) have already promoted an interactional view of 'social competence' (Hymes, 1971) in which the capacity to monitor contexts and then cope with them is an essential feature. Focusing on the context-dependent nature of learner needs, Ciarain (1984) promoted a view of such extralinguistic competence as an outcome of a language learning experience. He would have conceived of the personal and social needs of the informants in this research as an 'energizing agency' leading the informants to engage in the identity changes which they enumerated. Oxford (1990) has taken a more skills-based approach to the issue by focusing on learners' affective and social strategies in second-language learning. Stevick (1982) has already discussed the concept of 'personal competence', locating it within a cognitive and emotional realm and linking it to successful linguistic and communicative competence. H. Gardner (1993; 1983) has also touched on this issue, elaborating his notion of 'intrapersonal intelligence', knowledge of

one's self. And more recently, MacIntyre et al. (1998) have elaborated on the concept of 'willingness to communicate' as the primary goal of language instruction, rather than linguistic or communicative competence. As with the informants in this research, MacIntyre et al. posit that 'willingness to communicate' is not a fixed trait. Rather, it is seen as dynamic, whereby its situational nature is highlighted and the key roles played by self-confidence and social context are recognized.

I would suggest that in the context of the SLBP language immersion, 'personal competence' must necessarily include all of these notions. As my informants have described it, the extralinguistic competence demanded of participants in the intense immersion environment of the SLBP is very much a manifestation of their willingness to communicate, to participate in interaction. Dynamic, situational, and fluid, the notion I am putting forward of 'personal competence' takes in the 'social competence' of Hymes, Stevick's 'personal competence' and H. Gardner's 'intrapersonal intelligence'. It also subsumes Gardner's 'interpersonal intelligence', which allows one to understand and work with others. For, if we are discussing here the participant's sense of their identities, then we are dealing with their individual sense of self as socially constituted individuals. Gardner also argues that in the sense of self there is a 'melding of inter- and intrapersonal components'. Personal competence as it has been elaborated by informants in this research also attests to this fusion.

The notion of personal competence thus relates to the concepts which have been enumerated by the informants: self-development in the areas of autonomy, self-confidence, resourcefulness, open-mindedness and the like served in some way to assist the participants in the primary objective of the immersion which was to make gains in language proficiency. Perhaps this competence is simply a highly complex version of the more familiar strategic competence which is foregrounded by the total immersion approach. Or it may be that this issue of personal attributes is nothing more than a highly contextualized perspective on the role of motivation or social investment in language learning. Whatever the case, it is clear that this competence is an important aspect of the SLBP's approach to language learning and to an individual's success in negotiating the SLBP immersion experience.

Identity, then, may not be the most appropriate term to describe the process of change which has been explored in this research. Although each of the domains of change can be considered an aspect of one's identity construct, it remains that they are simply parts of the whole. By exploring the various domains of change separately and through the voices of SLBP participants, I have come to see the interconnectedness of the parts. As such, I consider the reflections of my informants as manifestations of the same thing: a critical self-awareness. This self-awareness can in turn be viewed as a life skill, and, as such, choosing to perceive this skill as a competence is not an unreasonable proposition, and represents an avenue of inquiry which begs to be explored further.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented a view from my own positioning which has arisen from this inquiry. I believe that changes in identity and self-perception in the context of the Dalhousie SLBP are more than simply incidental outcomes. Rather, the uniqueness and intensity of the immersion create a context of communities and discourses where participants can experience the multiplicity and dynamism of their identities. I have also proposed avenues for further research by suggesting that successful participation in intensive immersion contexts may be related to a variety of notions already present in the research literature which I have opted to call personal competence.

Afterword

The Value of a Program

The history of the Summer Language Bursary Program reflects recent trends in Canadian history, especially with regard to political and societal views on bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada. Since Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the subsequent adoption of the federal Official Languages Act in 1969, we have all witnessed the triumphs and defeats for what many hold to be one of the true markers of the so-called Canadian identity. It is in this spirit of cooperation that the territorial, provincial and federal governments were able to conclude bilateral agreements whereby Ottawa would assist in maintaining and improving funding for effective minority official language and official second language instruction. Accordingly, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, working in tandem with the Department of the Secretary of State and later the Department of Canadian Heritage, has been equipped to take on the task of administering the Official Languages Monitor Program and the Summer Language Bursary Program (Goldbloom, 1997). Working under the auspices of the federal Official Languages in Education Program, however, is not without its pitfalls, both financial and political.

Funding has been cut in the last years in varying degrees, but most of the SLBP immersion programs have responded to the best of their abilities. Although it is not clear how secure future funding will continue to be, what remains certain is that the current atmosphere in Ottawa will maintain pressure on the SLBP to prove its usefulness in order to ensure adequate funding. This is not to say that the SLBP is at risk from a purely financial perspective. In these times of downsizing, outsourcing and budgetary rationalization, it is clearly understandable that the SLBP, like any other government-funded operation, should be willing to be put under the efficiency microscope. What I believe to be more dangerous is political pressure which amplifies skepticism as to the role of not only the SLBP but of the Official Languages mentality as a whole.

Nicole Keating (1989), former national coordinator of the SLBP, was already sounding the alarm in 1988 when she warned that those involved should not rest on their laurels lest they receive what she called the 'Katimavik treatment' (another experiential, youth-oriented learning initiative that fell victim to federal budget reductions). Yet, I wonder whether we have really responded to her call to fulfill our intended role, doing so better every year. I am quite confident that those working in the SLBP have, in fact, made consistent improvements in the way their programs work and the ways in which their mandates are fulfilled. Yet, what is perhaps more important - and as a result more worrisome - is that we may not be taking full advantage of our abilities to make public our accomplishments.

Now, this is not to suggest that marketing strategies need to be revamped, although this too would be an interesting area to investigate. It is quite clear from the overwhelming numbers of bursary applicants in Québec that must be turned away each year, as well as the growing numbers of participants who pay out of their (or their parents') pockets, that the SLBP is a known entity among those who are best able to promote the immersion experience in secondary schools, colleges and universities. Not only are there committed second language teachers in place to promote the SLBP, it is clear that past participants help us out a great deal by extolling the virtues of the immersion experience to their friends and siblings. The audiences that need to be reached more effectively are the politicians and bureaucrats at the federal and provincial levels who will decide the SLBP's eventual fate.

I am not proposing a full-scale lobbying effort to be directed at Official Languages bureaucrats, because I believe that these people are in fact probably the best placed to see how much is achieved by the SLBP for what is unquestionably a cut-rate price. Nor am I suggesting tackling head-on those in certain political constituencies who would like to dismantle the Official Languages Act altogether. Rather, it seems to me that, although political persuasions may in fact have the final say when decisions are made, it would be in the best interests of the SLBP's members to revisit the program's mandate and try to determine through studies larger in scope and duration whether or not we are meeting objectives to the best of our abilities, both in the short and the long terms.

Reflections of Our Students, Reflections of Ourselves

My first hands-on experience with the Summer Language Bursary Program was as a student in the summer session at l'Université Sainte-Anne in 1987. Although I knew people who had participated in the immersion, the secondhand information that had filtered down to me before that point was mostly about the ups and downs of social life at the age of eighteen in remote Pointe-de-l'Église. Little did I know that the six weeks I would spend there would bring about a drastic change - both real and perceived - in my ability to understand and communicate in my second language. Of course, I had heard all of the horror stories about monitors catching students in the act of speaking English, their *avertissements* [warnings issued when the second-language-only rule had been breached] and the ensuing blacklists, the students who were sent home after three infractions and the many others who were not caught even though they were the most heinous recidivists of all. Naturally, these were the stories to be told - stories of bravado, cunning and survival; stories which were far more entertaining to tell and to hear than ones about what was learned in class or how one finally overcame the language barrier to tell the cafeteria ladies that one serving of rappie pie - the local dish - was plenty. The informants in this research were not dissimilar. They, too, had stories to tell, and my having been at Dalhousie during their immersion made me complicit in understanding the nuances and unspoken significance of some of their stories.

Four years later I found myself on the other side of the teaching-learning equation, teaching English to bursary recipients from Québec who had come to the Dalhousie SLBP. Having experienced the bursary program as a student, I felt I was in a well-placed position to understand the difficulties presented by being away from home, stripped of one's mother tongue and being coerced into trying one's best to communicate all that a teenager wants to say in a new language. Now, several summers and hundreds of students later, I still remind myself from time to time of my own experience as a student so as not to forget the unique challenges inherent in intensive total second language immersion. Participant-observer, indeed.

Although I made what I thought would be everlasting friends at Sainte-Anne's, I have found that more lasting connections have been made at Dalhousie, both with the staff and the very interesting students whom we have hosted. It is especially with my fellow teachers that I began to wonder about what it was exactly that we were trying to achieve. "Just how bilingual (whatever this may mean) are we expected to make these people?", we would naïvely ask ourselves. "What is the precise meaning of sociocultural anyway?", we would ask in planning evening and weekend activities. Although I have yet to answer these questions to my own satisfaction, what most of our queries boiled down to in the end was really quite a straightforward question: "What exactly are we supposed to give these students and what exactly do these students want from us?"

The problem is, however, that this question is far-reaching, for what our students want from us is in large part a reflection of what we imply they can expect to get. True, we do not unrealistically promise full bilingualism in a five-week immersion. Nor do we give ourselves any false hope of transforming students in such a way that they will return to their home provinces to carry the banners of pan-Canadian unity and pie-in-the-sky nationalism. Yet, these are - at least implicitly - goals that many in the SLBP hope to achieve. Nor, it must be said, do the vast majority of our students come into the immersion program with unattainable expectations. In fact, it has been my experience that most students have a fairly accurate idea of their abilities in the second language. What I believe we often tend to forget in our zealousness for promoting the advantages of bilingualism and biculturalism is that these same students also have a concrete, and in most cases realistic, idea of what their needs will be for their second language skills.

I am sure many SLBP staff members can recall at least one of that particular brand of student who, prod as we may, seems none too keen on grasping the present perfect or mastering that nasty 'th' for, as he or she says ever-so-blandly, "I'm not going to need English for my job" or "Nobody where I live speaks English anyway." Even in this globalized information age, who wants to argue with such a blunt assessment? I, for one, am not in the arm-twisting business. I am fortunate, however, in being able to say that these students are in the minority in our program and I would hazard a guess that this is undoubtedly the case in most programs across the country because - it must be said

honestly - although the bursary selection is for all intents and purposes random, we already benefit from a prescreening of sorts. In order to be on the list of potential bursary recipients one must presumably have had enough motivation (for whatever reasons) to apply in the first place.

It was as an immersion participant that I first came to understand this strange situation of sorts. Presumably, my fellow bursary recipients and I were to be the nation's future bilinguals. Some had farther to go than others and some showed more promise, but we had all nonetheless applied for the privilege to be there. In effect, we were the lucky ones - with the immersion under our belts we were really getting a jump start to our second language development. Granted, some students were there more for the vacation but how could several weeks living and breathing the second language not help to galvanize the will to keep up with the progress?

Now living in Montréal, it is somewhat curious, then, to meet former students whose confidence in English has deteriorated - even in the space of several weeks - to the point where they are too self-conscious to speak to me in their second language. In reality, though, this is not curious at all; I need only look at myself to uncover the reasons behind this seeming regression. I made incredible progress during my immersion at Sainte-Anne's, and even more by living for a year in France. Yet, even though I live in a city where I am bombarded daily by second language 'comprehensible input', I may simply choose not to use it. Currently, at least, I can attest to the validity of those old excuses of "I don't need it for my job" and "Nobody at my home speaks French anyway." I have, however, available and plentiful opportunities to maintain my second language skills. I wonder then how realistic it is to expect Heather in Saskatoon or Olivier in Jonquière to be able to maintain the progress they make in a bursary immersion.

Renewing the Commitment to the SLBP

It is with these realities in mind, then, that I first began to question the objectives of the SLBP as well as my objectives as a teacher in the program. As I have always

understood it, both as a teacher and as a student, the SLBP's mandate is twofold. Firstly and most obviously, we exist to help bursary recipients improve their second language competence. Secondly, we are entrusted with somehow transmitting a Made-in-Canada vision of bilingualism and biculturalism. I have absolutely no doubts whatsoever as to whether or not we achieve the first goal, especially in the short term. Although the degree of improvement in linguistic ability varies widely, I believe it is virtually impossible that any non-comatose immersion participant could leave without having made progress. I do have reservations, however, about whether or not these gains are maintained in the longer term. As for the ideals of promoting lasting acceptance or tolerance of biculturalism, my reservations here are stronger. I am not sure that a single immersion experience is able to get this message across as efficiently as we might think it can. Yes, my students profess a newfound appreciation of Halifax, of Nova Scotia, and of Nova Scotians in general in their post-immersion questionnaires before leaving for their homes. However, based on the interviews I conducted for this research, I am left doubting whether this extends to the wider Canadian context. Unfortunately, perhaps, these warm and fuzzy feelings are maintained with more difficulty once students return to their 'real lives'.

In fact, I pay homage to Louise Young, academic director of the Dalhousie SLBP, for her perseverance in maintaining that the formally stated goals of the SLBP - as laudable as they are - are not the true objective of the program at all. Rather, they are secondary objectives, a sort of diversionary tactic used to focus people's attention while the true work of programs such as the SLBP takes place. Young has long maintained that successful SLBP participants must overcome the initial frustrations, fears, and confusion inherent in the experience through a persistence which enables them to grow more proficient, certainly, but also more self-confident and self-aware. It is this change, far above and beyond what is learned in the classroom, which matters most. Indeed, even though there are many achievements both in and out of the classroom, much of what is learned in the SLBP can not ever be measured by a test. Rather, what is gained is the knowledge that comes from experience and self-discovery. Not only does the SLBP allow participants to come into intimate contact with another part of the country and its people,

it also provides them with the opportunity to better understand their own neighbours, and thus themselves.

When asked to assess the SLBP immediately post-immersion, bursary recipients overwhelmingly respond favorably, reporting improved second language fluency as well as a greater appreciation of the host culture. However, the most striking feedback I have received regarding the program has less to do with language abilities or cultural appreciation than with a sense of accomplishment, pride in one's personal achievement and self-confidence. What I was interested in finding out in this research was whether or not these favorable changes hold true for an extended period of time and, if this is the case, how much (if at all) this may be attributed by past bursary recipients to their participation in the SLBP. Since I am very aware, as I have alluded to earlier, that the population in the SLBP is less heterogeneous than the overall population of second language learners, I do not purport to make any concrete claims about the nature of second language immersion in any general sense. However, I do hope that conclusions from this research might lend themselves to a minimal amount of generalizability across different bursary programs. At the very least, I hope that other programs might see similarities between their own participants and the informants in this research.

In consumer research, manufacturers, broadcasters and retailers must turn to market surveys in order to test new products, change existing ones and judge when others should be pulled off the shelves for good. Surveying the consumer, then, requires a willingness to listen to the demands and needs of those you are trying to reach. In committing myself to undertaking this research, I was also committing myself to listening to and taking note of the ways in which students perceived their side of the SLBP experience. However, as with the consumer model of research, this is not the end. In the long term, it is to be expected to a certain degree that language proficiency will decrease post-immersion as will those positive attitudes toward the second language culture. This in no way means that the SLBP product should be taken off the market. Nor does it mean that breast-beating and soul-searching over mandates and ideals is necessary. It simply means that further consultations must be in store.

As I mentioned in the Foreword, this research has allowed me to consider my own views on the roles and objectives fulfilled by the SLBP, to come to terms with them and to renew my commitment to them - enthusiastically. To end on another note which I touched upon earlier, I do not question the pertinence or worth of the SLBP's mandates, whether stated or implicit. What my research was meant to uncover was not weaknesses in the SLBP or in its participants. Rather, I hope that by taking a look at the reality of my former students' experiences from their perspectives, we may be able to understand better what happens outside the SLBP immersion classroom and where our attentions might be directed in order to make even more possible. By developing a more expansive view of second language acquisition theory, particularly in the context of immersion education, I believe that the role of the student and of the contexts in which the student is placed may take on increased importance. Linguistic competence - grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic - have each been the object of worthy research pursuits, enriching the professional discourse and professional practice of second language teaching. The second language student as learner clearly is a central role that needs to be explored by teachers and researchers. 'Learner', however, is only one aspect of the student's identity, and a new avenue of research (Norton, 1997; McNamara, 1997; Hansen & Liu, 1997) is clearly opening up. By exploring the sense of self in my students, I hope to have allowed them to illuminate another aspect of their identity. In doing so, I also hope that they have contributed to illuminating a short stretch of this new avenue.

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Appendix A - Request for Consent to Post-immersion Contact

FROM: ROBERT
TO: ALL 1996 SLBP STUDENTS

RE: MASTER'S RESEARCH

BACKGROUND

I am currently completing a Master's Degree in Education (TESL - Teaching English as a Second Language) at McGill University. For my degree, I am conducting research for a monograph (thesis). I intend to focus my research on certain aspects of second language learning within the SLBP here in Halifax.

One component of my research will be interviews with SLBP students about their immersion experience. McGill University's guidelines for ethical research demand that research participants give their written permission to be interviewed. In addition, they must be informed about the consequences of their participation.

CONDITIONS

For the purposes of my research, there is no risk of any kind and participation is entirely voluntary. Anonymity will be assured - real names will not be used in any publication or presentation and participants will not be identified. An individual may discontinue his or her participation at any time, for any reason.

PROCEDURE

Interviews will take place in early autumn, in person. If you are willing to be contacted for an interview, please print and sign your name below. Please note that not everyone will necessarily be contacted due to geographical and financial restrictions.

Thank you for time and your consideration. If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me.

Robert Armstrong
July 31st, 1996

_____ Yes. I am willing to participate.

_____ No. I am not willing to participate.

YOUR NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____
(please print)

*Version française disponible lors de l'entrevue éventuelle.

Appendix B - Follow-up 'Questions for Reflection' Letter

December 12, 1996

«FirstName» «LastName»

«Address1»

«City» «PostalCode»

Dear «FirstName»:

As I explained briefly at the end of the Summer Language Bursary Program this past summer, I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language) Program at McGill University. In order to fulfill the requirements for the Master's degree, I am conducting monograph (thesis) research on the 1996 SLBP at Dalhousie University. Accordingly, I am writing to all those students who consented to be contacted for the purposes of my research.

My research aims to investigate students' perceptions of various components of the immersion experience at the 1996 Dalhousie SLBP. In order to do this, I am asking students to answer several questions by mail. The second step, which will take place in the New Year, will involve individual interviews in person. Because of limited time and financial resources, I will not be able to interview everyone who responds by mail in the first stage of my data collection.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that there is no risk of any kind associated with participation in this study. Participation is entirely voluntary - individuals may discontinue their participation at any time, for any reason. Anonymity will be assured - real names will not be used in any publication or presentation.

If you are still willing to participate in the study (both by answering the included questions by mail and by willing to be contacted for a tape recorded interview), please read the instructions on the enclosed page. If you do not want to participate, please indicate so and return the questionnaire in the pre-addressed stamped envelope. In either case, I would be grateful if responses could be sent to me before January 15th, 1997 so that interviews may be planned for early in the New Year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the address below (mail, phone, or e-mail). In the meantime, I thank you for your cooperation, and wish you the best of luck in your current pursuits.

Sincerely,

Robert Armstrong
Program Manager, Dalhousie SLBP

Version française au verso.

December 12, 1996

Comme je l'avais mentionné vers la fin du programme d'immersion, je suis actuellement en train de préparer une monographie (thèse) qui complètera ma Maîtrise en Éducation (l'enseignement de l'anglais langue seconde) à l'Université McGill. Pour la monographie j'ai l'intention d'entreprendre des recherches auprès des étudiant(e)s du Programme de bourses d'été de langues de 1996 à l'université Dalhousie. C'est donc dans le but de cueillir des données que j'écris à tous les étudiant(e)s qui ont indiqué une volonté de participer à mes recherches.

Mon travail va s'axer surtout sur les perceptions des étudiant(e)s en ce qui a trait à plusieurs composantes du PBEL de 1996 à Dalhousie. Dans le cadre de la première étape de mes recherches, j'aurai vous demander de répondre par courrier à plusieurs questions. La deuxième étape, dans laquelle il s'agira d'entrevues individuelles, aura lieu aux mois de janvier et février 1997. En raison des limitations du temps et des restrictions financières, je ne pourrai faire ces entrevues qu'avec quelques participant(e)s qui répondront au questionnaire ci-inclus.

Il importe de vous rappeler qu'aucun risque n'est associé à votre participation, qui est tout à fait volontaire - vous pourrez demander de retirer votre participation à tout moment, pour quelque raison que ce soit. Le caractère confidentiel de votre contribution sera assuré par le biais de pseudonymes dans toute présentation ou publication des résultats. La monographie finale sera déposée aux bibliothèques de McGill.

Si vous êtes toujours disposé(e) à m'aider - ce qui vous demandera de répondre au questionnaire et peut-être de participer à une entrevue enregistrée - vous n'avez qu'à lire les directives à la page suivante. Si vous ne voulez plus y participer, veuillez indiquer ce fait en signant le formulaire dans l'espace réservé à cette fin. Dans les deux cas, une signature est exigée. Veuillez par la suite retourner le questionnaire dans l'enveloppe pré-affranchie. Je serai très reconnaissant de recevoir les réponses avant le 15 janvier afin de faciliter la planification des entrevues éventuelles.

Si vous avez des questions, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à l'adresse ci-dessous (par courrier, téléphone ou courrier électronique). Entre temps, j'aurai vous remercier d'avance de votre coopération. J'aurai également profiter de cette occasion de vous souhaiter beaucoup de succès dans ce que vous faites actuellement.

Robert Armstrong
Program Manager, Dalhousie SLBP

English version opposite.

INSTRUCTIONS / DIRECTIVES

When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to me (before January 15th) by using the enclosed pre-addressed stamped envelope. Thank you.

Lorsque vous aurez complété ce questionnaire, veuillez me le retourner avant le 15 janvier dans l'enveloppe pré-affranchie. Merci.

Please fill in the appropriate information:

Veuillez fournir les renseignements demandés:

Name / nom : _____ Date: _____

Consent / autorisation :

- A) I hereby consent to give Robert Armstrong permission to use the information which I provide below for use in his M. Ed. monograph at McGill University on the condition that any identifying factors will be changed or omitted in order to ensure my anonymity.

Par la présente j'accorde à Robert Armstrong la permission d'utiliser mes commentaires sur les questions ci-dessous pour les fins de sa monographie de M. Ed. à l'Université McGill. Cette permission se donne à condition que toute information qui pourrait m'identifier soit modifiée ou omise afin d'assurer le caractère confidentiel de ma participation.

Signature: _____ Telephone: _____

- B) I do not wish to participate in this research, nor do I wish to be contacted at a later date.

Je ne veux ni participer à ce projet ni être contactée à l'avenir.

Signature: _____

QUESTIONS for REFLECTION / QUESTIONS à RÉFLEXION

Please consider the following questions which relate to your experience in the 1996 Summer Language Bursary Program at Dalhousie University. Remember that I am looking for your perceptions - therefore please include as much detail as you can by elaborating on your answers and explaining them so that I may be able to interpret them appropriately. Please feel free to use another sheet of paper. Your answers may be written in English and/or French.

Veuillez répondre aux questions suivantes qui sont reliées à vos expériences dans le cadre du Programme de bourses d'été de langues à l'université Dalhousie. Je vous rappelle que je m'intéresse surtout à vos perceptions. Il est donc préférable d'élaborer et d'illustrer vos réponses afin que je les interprète de façon juste. Veuillez ajouter des feuilles supplémentaires. Vos réponses peuvent être rédigées en français et/ou en anglais.

1. In what ways did your experience in the SLBP differ from previous experiences in your life? Do you attribute these differences to any specific factors or combination of factors in the SLBP?

De quelles façons votre expérience dans le PBEL s'est-elle distinguée de vos expériences antérieures? Attribuez-vous ces différences à un ou plusieurs facteurs précis du PBEL?

2. Do you believe that you were changed in any way by your experience in the SLBP? If so, were these changes noticeable only for the duration of the program or have they been more permanent?

Croyez-vous avoir été changé(e) en quelque sorte par votre expérience dans le PBEL? Si oui, ces changements ont-ils été perceptibles seulement lors du programme ou ont-ils été de nature plus permanente?

3. By comparing the person you were before the SLBP to the person you are now, identify and elaborate any important differences. How are any of these differences attributed to your experience in the SLBP?

En vous comparant maintenant à la personne que vous étiez avant le PBEL, identifiez les différences importantes. Dans quelle mesure ces différences sont-elles imputées à votre expérience dans le PBEL?
