

Learning disability and Immersion Programs (i.e. French Immersions)



Research in French immersion / Spanish immersion has shown that children do better in all areas (math, science, reading) if exposed to more than one language as it opens up more brain pathways. Musical instrumentals and language improve learning and imagination. Please note the research studies below regarding immersion students.

"Several research projects show that immersion students succeed in mathematics, social studies and the sciences. Students in continuous immersion are as successful as those in an English-language program. Immersion students transfer their skills from one language to the other (Yes, You Can Help!, 1997). Certain studies also note that immersion students have greater success than students in the regular program and even than those in English language arts (Turnbull, Lapkin and Hart 2001; Lapkin, Hart and Turnbull 2003)."

"Researcher Fred Genesee (1987) notes that children who could be at a disadvantage in immersion have shown the same linguistic development in their mother tongue and the same academic achievement as children who are disadvantaged in English-speaking environments. Students who have lower-than-average academic achievement have achieved the same oral proficiency and oral comprehension levels as students who have above-average academic achievement.

(b) French immersion offers enough enrichment for students who need to be challenged.

It is important to note that gifted children need as many level-appropriate learning opportunities in late immersion as they do in the regular program. Therefore, simply being in immersion will not guarantee these children enough opportunities for enrichment: they will need challenges whether they are in immersion or not. Such students are not given more work but rather work that presents different cognitive challenges.

(c) Immersion students do not have special needs.

This myth follows the logic of 1. (a). Because we believe that only children with excellent academic achievement are in immersion, we forget that some children have specific needs. Children with special needs, such as learning or behaviour problems, will succeed in immersion just as they will in the regular program, assuming that they receive the necessary help, that is, the same help they would get in an English-language program (Yes, You Can Help!, 1996)"