2001

Factors Related to Persistence in the Study of French at the College Level

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Factors Related to Persistence in the Study of French at the College Level

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[redacted]

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[redacted] Committee Member	✓ Pass	Fail
[redacted] Committee Member	✓ Pass	Fail
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Monday, December 3, 2001
Date

Factors Related to Persistence in the Study of French at the College Level

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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Acknowledgement

The author wishes to acknowledge and thank several people who contributed to this project. Dr. Judy Richardson deserves the utmost praise for being the perfect advisor and chair. She was able to recognize when I needed her invaluable guidance or when I simply needed an objective ear, and she offered both without hesitation. Thanks also to the other committee members who were very generous with their time and advice - Dr. Katherine Murphy-Judy, Dr. John Rossi, and Dr. Jon Wergin. Other very important members of the VCU community who aided in this endeavor are the French 102 professors as well as the major advisors, Dr. Peter Kirkpatrick and Dr. Angelina Overvold. Lastly, to the VCU French students who responded to my surveys and participated in my interviews and focus group - thanks a million; this study was possible because of you.

Outside the VCU community there are some very important people to thank as well. Mom and Dad - you deserve all the thanks in the world. Your never ending support and encouragement made this possible, not to mention your pushing that little girl on the bus so her education could begin. I am also eternally grateful to other members of my family, my close friends, and my fiancé for enduring discussion about this dissertation for the last three and a half years. I honestly could not have done this without your support and forgiving nature when schoolwork came first. Thank you.

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Abstract

FACTORS RELATED TO PERSISTENCE IN THE STUDY OF FRENCH AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL.

By Caroline E. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2001

Major Director: Judy Richardson, Ph.D., Professor, School of Education

The current study was conducted to address the problem of declining enrollments in French classes. The purpose was to identify those factors that are responsible for student persistence in the study of French beyond the level required to obtain a general degree from the University. Research questions included the following topics: 1) students' perception of their motivation for language learning, 2) the relationship of certain activities, the classroom climate, the role of the teacher, and the use of technology, to their motivation for language learning, 3) reasons students give for not

continuing with their foreign language studies, and 4) factors language majors and minors attribute to the decision making process that led them to continue with the advanced courses.

Using an emergent case study design, the researcher surveyed and interviewed French 102 students and French majors and minors. Classroom observations and a focus group meeting were conducted as a way of triangulating the data.

Participants attributed their motivation primarily to two factors – the value of knowing a second language and the beliefs they had developed regarding language study. Beliefs included notions such as the extensive time and study commitment needed to effectively learn a foreign language and the age at which students best acquire language skills. In terms of the French classroom environment, students indicated that any materials other than the textbook were the most motivating and beneficial, including the use of games, songs, and varied media forms. They also stressed the importance of the professor in motivating students. The most non-motivating activity was anything that was required; students insisted on the need for choice in their assignments and content. Students were somewhat indifferent about the use of technology in the French classroom, perhaps because their use of technology was extremely limited.

Further research is recommended in the areas of foreign language teacher education and the use of technology in the foreign language classroom, as it becomes more widespread. In addition, research is suggested at the secondary and middle school level, where students may acquire some of the beliefs alluded to during this study.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Medical seminars on surgery and heart research, articles on innovative technological developments, non-English information that is found on the World Wide Web, and product labels on many items in U.S. stores, all have one thing in common: they are conducted, written, or produced in the French language. With increasing prevalence, the ability to read such information and communicate in a language other than English is becoming a necessary skill. Organizations involving telecommunications, transportation, medicine, electronics, business, and aeronautics, to name a few, benefit by having bilingual employees who can interact with foreign counterparts in their own language. If bilingual employees or job candidates are regarded as valuable assets, why have the universities responsible for producing this human capital been experiencing a general decline in their foreign language course enrollments? These declining enrollments are one aspect of the problem the current study addresses. More specifically, the researcher intended to focus on the problem of declining enrollments in advanced French language courses, and what can be done to motivate students to continue their language study beyond the introductory, often required, lower-level courses.

Adelman (1995), in "The New College Course Map and Transcript Files: Changing Course-Taking and Achievement, 1972-93," indicates that only a quarter of college students (26.4 percent) take any foreign language courses. In reference to the

same publication, of two million college students recently surveyed, only 9.5 percent of them take nine or more credits in a foreign language; in most cases, this translates to only 9.5 percent of students continuing to study the language after they have completed courses required for their degree.

In addition, surveys conducted by professional organizations such as the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Modern Language Association (MLA) all report a decreased enrollment in French classes at both the secondary and post-secondary levels (Friedrich, Eykyn, & McKeithan, 1997). Speculated reasons for the decrease in French enrollments are listed here, with more detailed information found in the following paragraphs. Reasons include:

- the perceived difficulty of learning French
- the increased belief in the usefulness and ease of learning Spanish
- the lessening importance of arts and humanities in the eyes of today's college students

Reasons for Declining French Enrollments

Friedich, Eykyn, and McKeithan (1997) point out the "French-is harder myth" which they insist be "debunked." Unless teachers of French continue to strive towards that goal, French will be perceived as more difficult to learn by beginning language students. In "Strategies for recruiting and retaining students in French classes," the authors give suggestions for ways in which French teachers can emphasize the similarities between the French and English languages, and thereby reduce some of the

anxiety related to learning a new language. Information reported to potential students might include, for example, that there are many likenesses in grammar and vocabulary for the two languages.

Another part of "debunking the French-is-harder myth" relates to the second possible reason for the decrease in French enrollments: the belief in the usefulness and ease of Spanish. Thirty-seven percent of respondents in a 1995 AATF survey believed that the primary reason for declining French enrollments was linked to student perceptions of learning Spanish (Friedrich, Eykyn, & McKeithan, 1997). More specifically, the respondents felt that students perceive Spanish to be both easier to learn than French and more practical in terms of future use. This "ease of Spanish" notion is interesting since Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, and Daley's (1998) findings indicate that the relationship between anxiety about a foreign language and achievement level is consistent across French, Spanish, and German classes. In other words, this perception of ease is not found among anxious foreign language students or else the perceptions do not have an effect on the anxiety/achievement relationship.

While the perceived ease of Spanish appears to be a detriment to French enrollments, a larger threat may be the perceived consequences of having a Spanish degree. More Spanish speakers in the United States means more businesses and organizations hiring people who can communicate with them; in turn, students pursuing a degree in Spanish see more career opportunities in their future. Taking a foreign language because it is likely to be an asset on one's resume exemplifies one type of

motivation. More on this and other types of student motivation, as well as the theories linking motivation and learning a second language, is included later in this section.

Another reason for declining enrollments in specific language courses may be related to the lessening importance of arts and humanities in the eyes of today's college students. They see value only in those courses that are practical, useful, and helpful in preparing them for the future job market (Will, 1998). Against such a backdrop, enrollments in foreign language literature courses are declining even more steeply than the overall enrollments. The rise in courses such as French Film or Business French, which are perceived as more directly relevant to future needs, is partly responsible for the decrease in more traditional literature courses.

In addition, Lambert (1999) attributes the decrease in this area to the lack of language competency skills that are needed to read works in their original language without having them translated. This "lack of competency" issue is particularly significant because it refers back to the introductory language courses at the college level, and whether or not they actually increase students' proficiency in the target language. Conrad (personal communication, June 6, 2000) alludes to this same point, suggesting the replacement of foreign language requirements with proficiency demonstration requirements. Students who do not feel prepared or proficient enough to advance to more difficult classes terminate their language study, whereas if they felt more confident in their language skills, they may be more inclined to develop them further. Unfortunately, key officers of the National Foreign Language Center in Washington believe that "few of

them [foreign language students] ever reach a level of communicative ability useful to their professional and personal lives" (Maxwell & Brecht, 1996).

Even if one believes the evidence that French enrollments are down, is that really a problem? Why should one be concerned with declining foreign language enrollments? Does the U.S. really need graduates with foreign language degrees when English usage is widespread and continually expanding worldwide? Various benefits of learning French are explained below, however some examples include knowing the two most widely spoken languages in the world, and possessing one of the essential qualifications required for positions in the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and many international organizations. By informing his college students of such benefits, Shryock (1997) encourages them to "seek to earn a minor in French or have French as a primary or secondary major" adding that "with French they have access to the most widely spoken foreign language in the world after English and they become familiar with a culture that influences our own."

Shryock also refers to the December 1999 listing of international jobs distributed by the US State Department in which 82 of the jobs required or preferred French, and 43 required a UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish). Similar requirements exist for many types of professional positions that international organizations offer. The Employment Information and Assistance Unit Bureau of International Organization Affairs U.S. Department of State released a document in September 1999 indicating that five of the international organizations required French, two required Spanish, one required Portuguese, and one required Arabic (Shryock). Such

recent information regarding job qualifications indicates the importance of knowing a second language, and of course by using the phrase "knowing a second language," a certain high level of proficiency is assumed. In most cases, if not all, students in foreign language programs must continue well beyond the introductory classes offered by colleges to gain a practical, working use of the foreign language. Possibly, but depending on many factors, participation in advanced coursework leads to a certain proficiency in French. How then, do professors and departments encourage students' continuance into these courses after they have already completed their language requirement?

Possible Solutions for Retaining French Students

Kastner (1992) maintains that in order for foreign language departments to retain more of their students, they will have to be more in tune with the types of classes that students are seeking and more aggressive in their marketing of those courses. The author also stresses the importance of linking these advanced courses to the introductory ones that have the largest enrollments (due to language requirements). Students must become more proficient as a result of those low-level courses if they have a chance at being successful in the upper levels. While introductory courses are often taught by graduate assistants, one must remember that the initial impressions gained in the first couple of foreign language courses can permanently color a student's perception of the entire language learning experience. Knowing how to increase students' motivation during that crucial time by making them aware of more diversified and interesting advanced courses, while at the same time giving them the language skills needed to

achieve in such courses, are key factors in extending foreign language studies at the college level.

Along these same lines, Dupuy's (2000) findings suggest that content-based instruction (CBI) is a way of coddling students during the transition from beginning to advanced foreign language courses. CBI, further explained in the teaching methodologies section in Chapter 2, involves teaching a subject such as history in the second language. Benefits of CBI to all levels of students include the following:

- enhanced competence in the language
- enhanced knowledge in the subject area taught
- enhanced self-confidence in the understanding and use of the second language
- enhanced motivation to continue foreign language studies beyond the requirement.

Learning more about this last factor, increasing students' motivation, is the goal of the present study. Therefore, theories of motivation, including theories from psychology, will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 2; however, a brief review at this juncture is warranted.

Types of Motivation

Motivation has been mentioned above as it relates to offering courses that interest students, but that is only a small piece of the motivation puzzle. There is more to what motivates students than their interest in the subject matter. For example, the usefulness of knowing a foreign language for a future job, one example of what Gardner and Lambert (1959) refer to as "instrumental motivation," may be the key reason why many

students take advanced courses. Gardner and Smythe (1975) point to the "integrative motive" as another important factor in effective second language learning. It is particularly important for this study because the authors believe that while such motivation is not found in all students, it can certainly be developed. Integrative motivation refers to the notion of wanting to learn the language of another people, interact with them in that language, and in a sense become part of the target language community to the degree possible. The authors stress that while this is not the only sort of motivation that leads to second-language acquisition, it is particularly important in settings where learning a second language "is neither necessary nor perceived as an accepted fact of life (p. 219). The learning environment for the present study, Virginia Commonwealth University, is typical of that described by Gardner and Smythe. Studies conducted in bilingual environments such as Montreal, on the other hand, would be characterized as having a learning environment in which learning a second language is an accepted way of life.

Ely (1986) suggests a third type of motivational orientation that involves the need to fulfill a language requirement. The purpose of his study was to examine both the type and strength of motivation that first year university Spanish students had for learning a second language. The participants were divided into three clusters according to the reasons they listed for studying Spanish – (a) possessing integrative motivation, (b) possessing instrumental motivation, and (c) fulfilling a language requirement. Students' reasons that applied to this final "Cluster C" were "because I need to fulfill the university foreign language requirement," and "because I need to study a foreign language as a

requirement for my major." While fulfilling a language requirement is certainly a plausible motivation, the current study hopes to move beyond such an orientation. The focus will be on asking advanced foreign language students why they chose to further their studies, as opposed to asking lower level students why they are in the foreign language classes at all. At that lower level, the third type of motivational orientation would undoubtedly apply in most cases.

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) reiterate the importance of Gardner and Lambert's (1959) distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation and the research that is based in part on that distinction. At the same time, the authors suggest that what has been studied in much of that research is motivation as it relates to attitudinal factors, rather than the concept of motivation itself. In "Motivation: Reopening the research agenda" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991), the teacher's idea of motivation is described as a way of referring to the concept of motivation itself. Teachers typically do not concern themselves with the reasons that a student may be taking a course; rather they are interested in whether or not the student is participating in the class and completing the work that is assigned. Thinking of motivation in this way leads to the discipline of psychology.

Psychological theories define the concept of motivation in terms of making choices about future goals and putting forth the effort to make sure that the goals are achieved. Choosing one class over another, such as an advanced foreign language class over an elective that is perceived to be less challenging, would be a part of this psychological definition of motivation. Also contained in that definition is "persistence,"

or in this case, continuing the study of a foreign language for an extended period of time – beyond the required sequence of courses. Another aspect involves "continuing motivation" that causes one to return to something without being requested to do so; again, here the idea would be returning to the study of a foreign language after having previously studied it or after having completed the language requirement. The final component of this psychological concept of motivation deals with the level of intensity with which one engages in the actions described above.

Distinguishing between the second language learning theory concept of motivation and the psychological concept of motivation is essential for the purposes of this research. The current study seeks to examine motivation as it relates to persistence in foreign language studies, not as it relates to motivation in the classroom or motivation to perform well on tests. In other words, does the professor's personality or teaching style motivate students to love the language itself and want to continue learning it? Does the interaction through the World Wide Web with native speakers and cultures motivate students? Do they gain an interest in the people and confidence in themselves by communicating with the target group and hence, want to increase their proficiency level through advanced courses? Do classes like "French in the Business World" or "French Film and Media" give students the opportunity to study subject matter that motivates them, while at the same time increasing their proficiency level and desire to learn more of the language? This study addresses these questions as well as others related to students' reasons for continuing and discontinuing formal foreign language study.

If the findings of the present research do indicate that students are more likely to continue foreign language study because of an integrative motive, that will signify implications for the types of courses offered, as well as the material that is covered within specific courses. Students may indicate that they are interested in French culture and learning about the many Francophone countries and the people that inhabit them – in which case, professors and foreign language departments will need to focus on those areas in order to increase their enrollments. The next section will suggest more reasons why knowing what motivates students to persist in formal foreign language learning is essential for increasing enrollments in advanced courses.

Purpose of the Study

By engaging in this study the researcher hoped to identify those factors that were responsible for student persistence in the study of a foreign language, specifically, French. Persistence has been examined in several studies as it relates to attitudinal and motivational factors in foreign language learning, beginning with Bartley's (1969) research on eighth grade foreign language students. Results indicated that students with lower language aptitude scores and less positive attitudes were less likely to persist in foreign language study. Mueller and Harris (1966) found that when students' language proficiency increased as a result of an experimental program, they were more likely to continue their language studies. Clement, Smythe, and Gardner (1978) defined the variable "motivation" as the sum of the variables: attitude toward learning French, motivational intensity, and desire to learn French. In light of that definition, the authors found that motivation was the best predictor of which students would continue their study

of French, followed by an interest in foreign languages. Finally, Oxford and Shearin (1994) remind readers of the significance of motivation in second language learning. It affects how well students speak the language, how often they interact with native speakers, how well they do on tests in the target language, and most importantly for this study – "how long they persevere and maintain L2 (second language) skills after language study is over" (p.12).

Ramage's dissertation, "Motivational and attitudinal factors as predictors of persistence in foreign language study" (1986) found these to be successful predictors as well, however as in the other studies, the sample consisted not of college students but of foreign language students at the high school level. Despite that difference with the present study, it is probable that many of the same reasons for enrolling in advanced courses in high school will apply to enrolling in more advanced courses in college. Characteristics of continuing students included having an interest in the culture, wanting to increase one's knowledge, being interested in the ability to read and write in the foreign language, having a positive attitude toward their language class, and most importantly, being able to speak the language.

Identifying factors such as these that motivate students to persist in foreign language learning is the goal of the present study. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods of surveying, interviewing, and observing the students themselves, it is possible to capture many facets of the language learning experience while paying close attention to those factors that students identify as motivational for them. Kastner (1992) performed a similar study that led to his dissertation, "A quantitative and qualitative

analysis of student motivation to continue foreign language studies beyond the language requirement." His sample included fourth-semester German students whom he surveyed at the beginning and end of the semester in an effort to discover changes in motivation levels. One of the classes that Kastner studied was a German class in which film was the main medium of instruction; it was his belief that using this medium would increase students' motivation and consequently their desire to continue studying German. Indeed, while the motivational capabilities of film were examined in Kastner's dissertation, in the present study the researcher attempted to shed some light on the motivational capabilities of other technological tools that are present in the foreign language classroom.

In terms of technology use in the present study setting, professors in the foreign language department at Virginia Commonwealth University have stated that some form of technology use is fairly prevalent in their classes, particularly in the more advanced courses. By using the term "technology," they are referring to the use of two specific course authoring tools, Web Course in a Box, a university-wide program designed by one of the members of the foreign language department, and BlackBoard. Chat rooms, bulletin boards, e-mail, the Internet, and video-conferencing are other examples of electronic instructional tools used at VCU. Kastner (1992) found that students were motivated by the use of non-traditional media such as film in their foreign language classes, especially when its use related to learning about the target culture.

Rationale for the Study

Communication in today's world takes place across geographic and language boundaries, and technology has helped this process. With access to television programs,

video distribution capabilities, distance learning opportunities, and a variety of computer applications, international communication is not only possible, but has become imperative to facilitate business and political opportunities. As the world gets smaller and draws nearer to our doorstep with each click of a mouse, the ability to read, write, and speak a foreign language will become a valuable commodity.

Colleges in Virginia such as Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and William and Mary all have language requirements for their undergraduates and offer courses in a significant number of languages to meet that requirement. Even more notable than the number of languages and courses that are offered, is the trend known as "languages across the curriculum." This trend is exemplified by James Madison University's (JMU) "Technical Translation Minor." The college's web site describes it as an "intensive, business-oriented track which aims at giving future language professionals the skills they will need in translation, revision,...and other linguistic services." The JMU students in this track are encouraged to enroll in courses in the Institute of Technical and Scientific Communication to complete the credit requirements for their minor. Outside of Virginia, the University of Rhode Island has an engineering program that includes courses taught in German; an internship in a German company is a key component of this inter-disciplinary program. President Tarver of Louisiana's Southern University encourages the study of French for reasons other than its link to the state's heritage (Martel, 2000). Visits with President Rene Preval of Haiti have revealed the overwhelming future needs of Haiti with regards to personnel who can work on internationally funded development projects. Tarver notes

that when this country begins its search for civil engineers, Louisiana college students who are bilingual may have an advantage over other students who are unable to communicate in Haiti's official language.

Lambert (1999) mentions the increased growth of joint majors and minors involving foreign languages and other disciplines such as business, engineering, and nursing. His assertions that such interdisciplinary courses will motivate students and give them increased opportunities to put their language skills to use, is especially important for the current study. It appears that more and more students from all academic areas will be entering foreign language departments at their universities, anxious to gain knowledge and skills that enhance their marketability upon graduation. Professors, teaching assistants, and administrators must be ready to capture the interest of this new hybrid of foreign language students. A new breed of students will not, in all likelihood, counter the decline of enrollments in advanced literature courses. Nevertheless, it is going to be on the shoulders of the departments to add courses that appeal to their interest and their needs.

While more students may possess this need and this desire to enroll in advanced foreign language courses, the fact remains that they will still have to climb the ranks of courses, beginning with the lower level ones. By surveying, interviewing, and observing students at that level, the researcher gained insight on what motivates students in the beginning of their language studies, and what types of courses, materials, and instructional media will continue to motivate them to take future courses.

There is still another source of students who are beginning to enter university foreign language departments, and consequently, another group of students who should be encouraged to continue their foreign language studies. In Foreign language learning: The journey of a lifetime, Donato and Terry (1995) devote their first three sections to elementary students and students in middle school. In this same book, Rosenbusch (1995) reiterates the importance of advocating policies that allow children "opportunities to begin the uninterrupted sequence of foreign language study in the earliest years of their education" (p. 29). She is speaking of the students who are able to begin studying a foreign language in elementary school – such students will conceivably enter college with six or seven years of previous foreign language study. What makes this population unique is that they are likely to have received a high enough score on the advanced placement test or the university's placement test to catapult directly into more advanced courses. Information gained from the present study will undoubtedly enable professors and departments to maintain and increase both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Brophy, 1987) that such students obviously possess.

Need for French Studies

Several studies conducted in the past have identified factors that influence students' decisions to continue or discontinue foreign language study, however there are no studies looking specifically at the motivation of students studying French at the college level. "Motivational and attitudinal factors as predictors of persistence in foreign language study" is the title of Ramage's (1986) dissertation in this area. The researcher examined these factors as they related to students finishing the required French and

Spanish courses at the high school level. Indeed, motivational and attitudinal factors accounted for the biggest differences between continuing and non-continuing students than other factors in the study. Factors that correctly classified the greatest percentage of continuing and discontinuing students included a combination of attitude and motivation, grade in foreign language, and grade level in school. Also, continuing students possessed a greater degree of intrinsic motivation than the discontinuing students – not surprising, since high schools often require two years of two languages or three years of one language for an advanced diploma. Students who perceive the lower levels of foreign language as easy are more likely to choose the two years of two languages, so as not to enter the advanced, more difficult courses. Following that sequence to gain a diploma rather than to gain the pleasure and knowledge that comes from learning a second language can be characterized as extrinsic orientation.

Comparable to Ramage's (1986) study, Speiller (1988) also examines students' attitudes and motivation with regards to continuing beyond the second level in high school. Factors found to influence the decision included the following: interest of family members in foreign language study, student's interest in learning to use the language, influence of friends and other students, recommendations of faculty members, possibility of traveling to the target country, interest in people/culture of the target country, enhancement of college applications, advantages that might accrue when establishing oneself in a career or job, level of progress in present class, level of anticipated difficulty of next course, and relationship between students and foreign language teachers. Immediately, certain factors stand out that will not apply to students at the college level –

at least not to the degree that they do to students in high school. For example, enhancement of college applications is not relevant, and the interest of family members may not be a significant factor, as parents typically have less control over the courses their children take in college than over the courses they take in high school.

Conrad (1997) examined the "Self-reported opinions and perceptions of first and fourth semester foreign language learners toward their language learning experience." While the author did not focus specifically on motivation, he concludes that foreign language professors and departments must know who their students are, which includes understanding the motivation and expectations of such students early on in their language learning careers. Findings of the study point to several factors that were relevant to the present study. For example, results showed that students prefer classes that emphasize communication since students want to be able to read, write, speak and listen to and comprehend the foreign language adequately. Differences between early terminating students and students who persisted in studying a foreign language included the following factors: satisfaction with degree of foreign language competence, non-ethnocentric personal orientation, anticipation of job-related outcomes to foreign language study, and adequacy of four semesters to develop competence. Incidentally, four semesters of a foreign language completes the foreign language requirement for an undergraduate degree for many colleges and universities across the nation.

Obviously, many previous studies skirt the issues that are being examined in the present study, and many of them focus on motivation levels of students, but again the focus of this study is more precisely what motivates students to continue foreign

language study. The goal, nevertheless, is for professors and foreign language departments to learn about these motivations and use them to capture the interest of the varied types of students that are now entering language classes. It is widely known in education that to be an outstanding teacher, one must know the students, know what interests them, and know how to challenge them just beyond their own individual level of comfort. This study strives to empower foreign language professors with a portion of that knowledge by giving continuing and discontinuing foreign language students a voice to explain the motivating or non-motivating factors behind their decisions.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine what motivates students enrolled in college foreign language classes to persist in their studies beyond the 102 level, or the level required to obtain a general degree from the university. More specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

- How do college students at different levels of language study perceive their motivation for language learning?
- How do students describe the relationship of certain activities, the classroom climate, the role of the teacher, and the use of technology, to their motivation for language learning?
- What specific reasons do students completing their language requirement give for not continuing with their foreign language studies?
- What factors do language majors and minors attribute to the decision-making process that led them to continue with the advanced courses?

Keeping in mind the goal of demonstrating the importance of the present study, Chapter Two describes in greater detail the research mentioned above relating to motivation in the study of a foreign language. Theories of motivation, particularly the motivation to learn, will also be explored as a means of constructing a theoretical basis for the present study. A diagram relating certain factors to student persistence in foreign language study is also included in Chapter Two, along with a "Definition of Terms" section, to help the reader understand how specific terms are used in the present study.

Exactly how the researcher carried out the present study is described in detail in Chapter Three, entitled Methodology. Nevertheless, as the reader learns more about the literature that is available in the area of foreign language learning motivation, it may be beneficial to know how the present study was conducted. The researcher surveyed French 102 students, as well as French majors and minors at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). One-on-one, in-depth interviews followed the students' completion of the surveys on their motivation for studying French. Content analysis involved examining syllabi for the courses, as well as instructional materials used within those courses. Classroom observations and a focus group discussion among students from both groups (majors and minors plus 102 students) were also conducted. The study was primarily a qualitative one, given the goal of learning what students themselves had to say about their reasons for continuing or terminating their study of French.

In Chapter Four, the researcher presents the results of the data analysis, saving the discussion and recommendations for Chapter Five. These final chapters have the same basic format - the research questions are addressed individually in the order in which they

appeared earlier in this chapter. Diagrams outlining the results and recommendations are also included with Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to learn more about what motivates college students to persist in foreign language education, beyond that level that is typically required for a bachelor's degree from many universities. Designing a frame of reference for such a study requires the researcher to delve into motivation theories, specifically those that relate to motivation to learn a second language in an educational setting. Besides the learning that ideally takes place on the part of the student, the role of the teacher is equally important. Therefore, another area to explore is the evolution of second language teaching and second language acquisition theory.

After describing the information about students' motivation to learn and the teacher's role in motivation, the researcher will discuss what has been found regarding student persistence in foreign language programs. Language course dropout and attrition were initially studied at the grade school level, however some information is available at the college level. Finally, it is essential to take a look at those studies that have come closest to the subject of this dissertation.

Defining Motivation

Why should one be interested in motivation and its link to second language learning in the first place? Oxford and Shearin (1994) point to several aspects of

language learning that are affected by students' level of motivation: how much of the target language is being learned, how well they perform on language achievement tests, how much proficiency they attain in the language, how much interaction they have with native speakers of the target language, how often they employ language learning strategies, and "how long they persevere and maintain L2 [second language] skills after language study is over" (p.12).

Pintrich and Schunk (1996) define motivation as "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (p.4). Granted, there are many variations of this definition, but the researcher chose this one because of the word "sustain." For the purposes of this study, sustaining foreign language study is synonymous with persisting in foreign language study, and that is the concept that is central to the present research. As previously mentioned, there are many variations of the term "motivation" – all of which can be linked to the equally numerous variables that can affect motivation. Given the difficulty of pinning down such an expansive term, researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt (1991) and Oxford and Shearin (1994) have suggested widening the theoretical framework surrounding language learning motivation. By "widening," they mean using Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model as a basis for expanding the framework to include motivational theories from fields other than education, in an effort to better characterize language-learning motivation.

Keeping in mind Pintrich and Schunk's (1996) general definition of motivation, it is also valuable to note the distinction that Tremblay and Gardner (1995) make between

"motivational behavior" and "motivational antecedents." As one might guess motivational behavior refers to the visible actions undertaken by an individual in the process of working towards a certain goal. On the other hand, motivational antecedents refer to the factors that lead up to engaging in this process; such factors are often invisible to an observer, until the individual discloses information through self-reported measures. Given the methodology used for the present study, motivational antecedents were particularly important, as students responded to surveys and interviews about their motivation and hence, self-reported their reasons for continuing foreign language study.

While it is true that the distinction between motivational behavior and motivational antecedents is a notable one, another distinction is synonymous with second language learning motivational research. Gardner and Lambert (1972) characterize the concept of motivation in two ways – the integrative way and the instrumental way. "Integrative" refers to the notion of wanting to know more about the people who speak the target language, while "instrumental" refers to the notion of learning a second language for a purpose such as acquiring a future job.

Leki (1992) demonstrates this motivational distinction by referring to students in the United States who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Such students have a strong need to learn English as it will allow them more independence in society, more of a chance to acquire a higher paying job, and more of an opportunity to communicate with the other people in the society; they are instrumentally motivated. On the other hand, the students in the United States voluntarily learning French are more

likely to possess an integrative motive. They do not necessarily have to learn French to fare better in society, but rather they are inherently interested in the language and the French culture, and therefore want to learn more about the language itself, including the ability to use it accurately. What does this indicate about how students are motivated to learn a foreign language? "If the L2 [second language] is a foreign language, as, for example, French is here, then integrative motivation appears to correlate better with acquisition" (p. 43). What then becomes important is how successful language acquisition correlates with one's desire to continue studying a foreign language.

The integrative/instrumental distinction is only one of the ways in which Gardner (and Lambert) address the issue of motivation. To cover the gamut on language learning motivation research, it is also necessary to look closely at Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model. Being motivated to learn a language means more than just setting a goal to do so, according to Gardner. Motivation is also dependent upon a desire to learn the language, upon one's attitude toward the learning situation (as described below), upon the action of language learning, and finally, upon the effort that is put into the goal of learning a second language. "Integrativeness" and "attitude toward the learning situation" are the variable classifications that he believes affect student motivation. Being genuinely interested in learning more about the people who speak the target language and about their culture as a whole, describes the concept of integrativeness. "Attitude toward the learning situation" refers more to the language course itself and the teacher. Many of Gardner's studies were situated in bilingual Montreal where integrating

with the other culture and language, be it French or English, is significant. In the present study, the situation was not a bilingual one, and the opportunities to interact with target language speakers, in this case native French speakers, were much less likely than in Gardner's study.

Theories of Motivation

While constantly reiterating the value and usefulness of Gardner's model in second language learning motivational theory, some researchers have suggested expanding the model. For example, Oxford and Shearin (1994) propose adding to Gamder's theoretical basis by exploring "need" theories, "instrumentality" (expectancy-value) theories, "equity" theories, and "reinforcement" theories, but stress that this is only the beginning of an expanded theory and not yet a completed model. The following paragraphs explore these theories in more detail and demonstrate their implications for motivating foreign language students at the college level.

When one thinks of need theory, the name Maslow comes to mind. His hierarchy of needs stretches from basic biological needs such as food, to more complex psychological needs such as love. Campbell and Ortiz (1991), who also address self-efficacy theory, believe that over 50 percent of foreign language students' performance is negatively affected by the severe anxiety that they experience in the classroom. It is easy to see how enduring such anxiety might prevent one from progressing through Maslow's (1972) needs hierarchy to achieve psychological safety and security. In fact, Oxford and Shearin (1994) imply that foreign language students can take steps backward rather than

forward in their language-learning quest, if needs related to psychological security are not met. Backward steps are exactly what the researcher undertaking this study is trying to prevent – the idea is for students to feel more sure of themselves and their abilities and to continue into advanced language classes. Making students feel more comfortable and capable so that they participate in the classroom activities is something that is feasible on the part of teachers and professors.

Instrumentality or expectancy-value theories of motivation can also be used to analyze students' motivation for continuing foreign language study. Atkinson's (1964) expectancy-value theory is based on two factors – the motive for success and the motive to avoid failure, both of which have to do with the outcome of the learning situation. In addition to the outcome of the learning situation being a motivating factor, there is also the motivation that comes from within the person himself. Known as the "incentive value of success" (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996), this factor consists of the inner value or self-pride that comes from achieving a goal or reaching a specific outcome.

According to this model, students would engage in foreign language learning if they thought they could achieve success as defined in their own terms. On the other hand, they might not enroll in foreign language classes because of their own fear of failure, or fear of not being successful in their endeavor. The latter explanation is likely to occur with students who have struggled or failed foreign language courses in high school and are consequently gun shy about "wasting" more time in higher education language classes. Consequently, foreign language departments and professors could

reconsider their marketing strategies, making it known and demonstrating that college language courses are offering the ability to speak another language to all students, despite their past experience in a foreign language. New technologies used in the foreign language classroom, discussed at length in a later section, may enable students to have more contact with native speakers and more practice with difficult grammatical structures – both of which may benefit struggling students.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) describe equity theories again as they relate to the outcome of a learning situation. They believe that students must truly feel that the effort they are using to learn a second language is equal to the results that will be forthcoming. This can be a particular problem with foreign language learners as they fail to see the usefulness of learning another language when English continues to grow as an accepted means of communication around the world. As the authors suggest, devoting time and effort to foreign language study may seem ludicrous, given the barely satisfactory results that are typically seen in terms of the following: level of proficiency in the language, length and frequency of social interaction with people in the target language, actual usefulness of the language for one's job or career, and satisfaction or enjoyment that comes from learning a second language. To rectify this situation and increase students' motivation to continue foreign language study, Oxford and Shearin suggest inviting successful learners who are using their language skills on a regular basis to come to classrooms and visit currently enrolled students, demonstrating the value of time spent learning a second language.

Reinforcement theories are undoubtedly some of the most recognized by a wide audience. Certainly educators from all realms have thought about or taken part in a debate surrounding the use of rewards or negative stimuli in the classroom as a way to produce some sort of desired behavior. In the researcher's opinion, reinforcement theory, as described above, is more likely to relate to school age children as opposed to college students. Younger foreign language learners may enjoy stickers, free homework passes, the promise of Friday being designated as game day (all used in the researcher's own high school French classroom), but college students are less easily stimulated into better performance through the use of these manipulatives. On the other hand, the possibility of acquiring a better job may be considered a reward by some students; these students might then be more motivated to continue language study based on that reward.

Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1982), a spin-off of social learning theory, relates educationally to students' own perceptions of their ability to perform successfully or achieve certain goals. "Individuals with strong efficacy beliefs are more likely to exert effort in the face of difficulty and persist at a task when they have the requisite skills. Individuals who have weaker perceptions of efficacy are likely to be plagued by self-doubts and give up easily when confronted with difficulties" (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996, p. 92). In light of this statement, it appears that language students in higher education most definitely need to acquire the basic skills of the language (lower-level courses are meant to provide students with such skills). According to self-efficacy theory, when students internalize these skills early on and develop a perceived competence in the language, they

are more likely to continue or persist. Unfortunately, there is evidence that language students believe they will achieve a relatively high level of proficiency by taking one to two years of a foreign language in college, and that is rarely the case (Horwitz, 1988). Other literature (McMenamin, 1988) demonstrates a lack of continuance in language learning on the student's part because of the belief that advanced classes are too difficult; in other words, students lacking self-efficacy do not feel that they have developed adequate skills to continue and therefore cower at the challenge of upper-level courses.

Stipek (1998) identifies sources of self-efficacy judgments that can easily be related to learning a foreign language. These sources include actual experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. Actual experience has to do with that which occurred in the past, based on the present task at hand. For example, students who take French in high school and do well, have an increased sense of efficacy and would seem more likely to continue in that language in college. At the same time, students may have guidance counselors who suggest that foreign languages are too difficult and that an elective in accounting would be more attractive on a college application. Such potentially misguided students can develop low self-efficacy in terms of their ability to learn a foreign language and consequently choose to avoid language courses in college. Confronted by a language requirement, students with low self-efficacy are not likely to endure more than the 1-2 years of mandatory language study.

"Vicarious experiences" and "verbal persuasion" are not completely distinguishable. The notion of vicarious experiences refers to the idea of seeing someone

perform an action successfully and then feeling the inner ability to succeed at the same task based on the previous individual's performance. Verbal persuasion comes into play when an authority figure or other reputable person suggests that achievement is possible. To relate these concepts to language learning, picture a college student who meets someone who excelled in high school French and appears to speak it fluently. While observing that person learning French in high school was obviously not possible for the student, observing the use of the language and apparent ease at which the words flow may encourage the student to attempt or continue foreign language study. When coupled with verbal persuasion and encouragement, a perceived self-confidence may develop and further the likelihood of continued study.

Finally, there is the notion of "physiological arousal" as a factor that affects one's judgment of self-efficacy. Anxiety is often present in foreign language classrooms as a result of the necessity to speak orally in a language other than one's own. Authors Campbell and Ortiz (1991) suggest that half of all foreign language students may suffer from anxiety that negatively affects their performance or achievement in the language. When students are asked to listen and respond to questions in the target language, or produce spontaneous conversation in the target language, there is always the possibility of producing anxiety in the student. In turn, the student's own perception of his[1] skill level in the language may become clouded and lead to a wrong answer. After so many

[1] Please note the researcher intends to alternate the use of masculine and feminine pronouns.

wrong answers or embarrassing situations, the student's desire to take more foreign language courses or willingness to continue foreign language study may be affected.

This unwillingness to participate orally or engage in classroom activities in the target language depends too on the personality of the learner, regardless of the atmosphere in the classroom. Ellis (1985) states that there are many such personality factors that can promote or inhibit a student's progress in the language. Such factors include the age of the student, her reason for taking the language or the basis of her motivation for doing so, her ability to learn a foreign language, and her individual learning style. With regards to the age factor, "we do not really know if there is a critical age for the acquisition of a target grammar or whether age has an impact on vocabulary growth" (Leki, 1992, p.12). Nevertheless, it stands to reason that the earlier one begins learning a language, the more one practices its usage in everyday situations, and the more one interacts with native speakers of that language, the more proficient the learner will become.

The beliefs of the language learner may also play a significant role in the amount of dedication and energy that is afforded the study of the foreign language. For example, as discussed in the previous paragraph, many believe that younger students are more capable and apt to learn a language than older ones. If students do hold this belief or a related one, they may fall prey to self-fulfilling prophecy and achieve less than they would if they felt confident in their abilities as a language learner. How students perceive themselves as language learners as well as how they believe that languages are learned,

may greatly affect their level of achievement, success, satisfaction, and most importantly, their level of commitment to learning the language (Horwitz, 1988).

When studying beginning university students in French, German, and Spanish about their beliefs in language learning, Horwitz found the students to be fairly optimistic in terms of the amount of time required to sufficiently learn another language (two years maximum), and the level of achievement they would attain ("I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well"). The present researcher speculates that in reality, learning a foreign language often proves to be more difficult and time-consuming than originally expected; at the same time, the proficiency level that one actually achieves is often lower than expected. In referring to the students in her study, Horwitz states that many of them planned to quit foreign language study as soon as the university allowed them to do so. Furthermore, "Those who continue it – and are somewhat successful – may have very different beliefs about language learning than the dropouts" (p.291). Gathering information through surveys and in-depth interviews regarding students' language learning beliefs allowed the researcher to elaborate on Horwitz's speculation.

Teaching a Foreign Language

It is true that the purpose of the current study was to learn more about what motivates students to continue the study of a language beyond the required course sequence. Nevertheless, learning more about what outside factors, such as the teacher and/or one's classmates, motivate students while they are actually in the language

classroom elicited valuable information for the current study as well. By exploring the way foreign languages have been taught in the United States and carrying that exploration into the present day technological era, it is possible to see how teaching styles, materials, and environments may affect student motivation. If certain teaching styles or types of materials tend to motivate students more than others, the usage of such tools might encourage prolonged language study.

Foreign language teaching has changed over the years in many ways, and looking back at the different instructional methods and forward to the use of technology in the foreign language classroom, helps the researcher visualize the setting in which one wishes students to become more motivated. It is useful to discuss each method according to its objectives and the role that the teacher plays in carrying out those objectives. More detail on the role of the teacher as related to motivating students is included in later paragraphs.

The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986) are based on objectives that include teaching the four basic skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This is not an approach that emphasizes communication and understanding solely for the purpose of getting the message across. The goal here is much more precise, focusing on grammar, pronunciation and avoiding errors in those two realms. The teacher is most likely at the front or center of the classroom, spouting sentences and formations for the students to repeat again and again. Barnhardt's (1999) idea of the "learner-centered classroom," which seems highly motivating to many

students, would be the opposite of the Oral Approach as described here. This would depend, of course, on how much choice the students had in the subject matter and types of activities that were used to elicit these correct grammatical structures and sentences.

The Audiolingual Method (Richards & Rodgers, 1986) is similar to the Oral Method, as their auditory-based names imply. The objectives include developing accurate pronunciation and grammatical skills as well, with the emphasis on the oral aspects of the language, as opposed to the reading and writing skills which are taught once the oral skills are somewhat perfected. The teacher is again the center of attention as he directs the students' pronunciation and repetition of patterned drills. It is essential that the target language be used at all times, as it should be in any foreign language classroom, to elicit choral responses from each student.

The Communicative Approach (Chamot & Stewner-Manzanares, 1985) is supposedly the one that is most widely used today, although most foreign language teachers and programs use some combination of all of the methods being described – Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual Drill being the most prominent. Here the primary objective is communication obviously, but more specifically, communication tailored to the type that the students are most likely to encounter or to need in their future encounters. Rather than focusing on the production of error-free choral responses, the Communicative Approach tries to empower learners with the ability to express feelings, needs, and judgments – simply put, to express themselves. Richards and Rodgers (1986) refer to the teacher's role in the Communicative Approach as needs analyst, counselor,

and group process manager. No matter which role applies, the goal is a more learner-centered classroom with the teacher acting as facilitator for group activities, rather than a choral leader for pattern drills. Knowing which activities to use based on the learners' needs and goals is the job of the teacher as analyst. Counseling students refers more to the notion of modeling good communication practice and demonstrating for students techniques such as paraphrasing and delivering feedback.

Total Physical Response (TPR) (Richards & Rodgers, 1986) needs mention because many learners are active learners and may feel that the use of an instructional method such as this one is motivating for them. If students can communicate intelligibly to a native speaker on a basic level, they have accomplished the objectives of the TPR Approach. The objectives are more primitive because the range of activities is much narrower – students learn by acting out commands issued in the target language. The teacher is "king for a day" here, deciding what materials to use, what content to teach, and how to present the lesson through the use of the imperative. For example, the main emphasis on the lesson might involve students standing up, sitting down, turning around, raising their hand, or lifting their leg – all of which would be "ordered" in French by the teacher at the front of the room. In short, the students learn by doing.

Hypotheses discussed in the following paragraphs including the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis, make up what is called the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). As with the Communicative Approach, the specific material taught depends on the needs of the learners, and the goal

is to be able to understand basic information given by a native speaker, as well as communicate information to that native speaker and be understood. In contrast to the Oral Approach and the Audiolingual Approach, the emphasis is not on precisely correct grammatical structures and exact phrases; rather, the emphasis lies with the ability of making one's point understood in the target language, regardless of the number or degree of errors.

The Natural Approach requires the teacher to be what every foreign language teacher should be, in the researcher's opinion. It is her duty to speak constantly in the target language, providing students with adequate linguistic models and information that they need in order to begin to internalize the language. Secondly, she should give students the opportunity to learn in a comfortable, stress-free environment where multiple, varied attempts to use the target language are expected and commended. Lastly, she should equip herself with a repertoire of activities to keep students interested and perhaps even somewhat unaware that they are constantly being bombarded with the structures, vocabulary, and linguistic tools necessary to learn a language.

Content-based instruction (CBI) (Dupuy, 2000) is another way of teaching a foreign language, however it is very different from the previous methods described above. Students in a CBI classroom study a subject area such as math or humanities, only they are taught in a second language; they are tested on subject content rather than on their abilities in the language. When using this method, it is essential that the teacher "speak" to the students on their own level, in terms of their second language proficiency.

The focus is on lectures and activities surrounding the content, rather than grammatical structures and vocabulary lists focusing on the second language. As a result, students learn the language by listening to the lectures and participating in the activities; they are thinking in the language, rather than about the language. The researcher has attempted to provide the reader with a better understanding for the ways in which a foreign language can be taught. The next step is to look at the role that environment and more specifically, the teacher, can play in activating a student's motivation to learn that language.

Motivation and the Role of the Teacher

Dornyei (1994) refers to three factors that relate specifically to the motivational capacity of the teacher. There is the "affiliate drive," the "authority" level of the teacher, and the "socialization of student motivation." The affiliate drive is often what concerns researchers when students are filling out surveys as a class. Unless precautions are taken and it is emphasized that students' grades are not affected by their responses, there is always the possibility that students will not answer honestly as they try not to offend the teacher.

The second teacher-related motivational aspect has to do with the teacher as an authority figure. In other words, if the teacher is controlling, dominating, less flexible with her teaching (an authoritative figure), students' interest in the class and the subject, as well as their intrinsic motivation, appears to wane. On the other hand, when students decide on the types of projects they will complete, the particulars of the subject matter they will cover, and/or the method and length of time in which they will cover it, their

intrinsic motivation is activated or enhanced. Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand's (2000) study indicates a direct link between students' perception of freedom of choice and competence and their self-determined forms of motivation. In fact, at the National Capital Language Resource Center at Georgetown University, it is believed that "giving students the opportunity to direct their own learning can increase students' involvement and may help increase students' motivation for learning a second language" (Barnhardt, 1999, p.2). As testimony to this belief, one of the major goals of the Center is to establish language-learning classrooms that are more learner-centered as opposed to the traditional teacher-centered ones.

Dornyei (1994) refers to the last motivational factor as "socialization of student motivation." Components of this factor include "modeling," which has to do with how the teacher's personality and enthusiasm for the subject, or lack thereof, affect students' own enthusiasm for learning the language. "Task presentation" centers on the ability of the teacher to make the material seem relevant to students' lives, while at the same time activating the necessary cognitive learning strategies that aid the student in processing the new material. The manner in which a teacher offers feedback also affects students' motivational level, depending on the type of feedback that is given. Feedback that pertains to the student's inherent qualities and capacities for learning the language are seen as helpful; evaluative information that compares the student's capabilities to other students, known as "controlling feedback," is less meaningful. Noels, Clement, and Pelletier (1999) confirmed this with their findings that indicated students' perceptions of

their teachers' communicative style affected their own motivational orientation. As it turns out, when students felt their teacher was controlling or behaving authoritatively, and not providing them with instructive feedback, they were less intrinsically motivated.

Another way in which the teacher may indirectly foster motivation depends on the classroom environment itself. The atmosphere that is created, be it comfortable and open or anxiety-producing, affects the level at which students participate and become involved in their own language learning. Krashen (1982) addresses this concept as the "affective filter" in his Monitor Model. He hypothesizes that there are outside, affective factors that can prohibit students from learning a second language. In other words, this affective filter siphons out the meaningful, communicative aspects of the language, and hinders the students' retrieval of such information. Fear of appearing unintelligent to one's peers, anxiety about speaking in public, and pressure from the teacher to answer swiftly, are all responsible for producing a high affective filter in the language classroom.

Ely (1984) examined university students in first year Spanish classes to analyze their discomfort, sociability, and motivation in the second language classroom. His results seem to imply the same need for lowering the affective filter: "Apparently, before some students can be expected to take linguistic risks, they must be made to feel more psychologically comfortable and sage in their learning environment" (p. 23). To relate this theoretical information to the present study, it is helpful to think of the student who is constantly frustrated in his language class. He feels that he looks stupid in front of his friends when he tries to speak French, the professor constantly calls on him to respond to

difficult questions aloud, and his grade depends on his oral participation in the target language – will he be motivated to take another foreign language class if he isn't required to do so?

Dupuy and Krashen (1998) go so far as to say that even a comfortable, non-inhibited classroom environment is not enough to enable students to become proficient and at ease in the use of the target language. The authors sampled undergraduate students in French, German, and Spanish on their experience with the language outside of the classroom. Understandably, most of the students in the advanced courses had had opportunities to use the language in settings other than the formal academic setting. What does this say about current foreign language classes at the university level? "Upper division foreign language classes are composed of two groups, the 'haves' and the 'have nots,' and those with superior preparation, far more than the institution officially demands, and those who have only the required preparation. The 'haves,' those with extensive outside experience, dominate the class and receive higher grades" (p. 6). Language learners in the present study were asked about their use of the language outside of the classroom, and as Dupuy and Krashen decided, native speakers were not included in the analysis. As for what it means for foreign language classes, departments, and administrators – more time and money will be needed for "extra-curricular" target language activities, such as the VCU French Film Festival, field trips to ethnic restaurants, and study abroad. What seems like a quick fix, adding fun, cultural activities to the curriculum, may not be enough, Noels, Pelletier, Clement, and Vallerand (2000)

caution. "To foster sustained learning, it may not be sufficient to convince students that language learning is interesting and enjoyable; they may need to be persuaded that it is also personally important for them," (p.75).

The personality and instructional methods of the teacher are responsible in part for students' motivation level, but there are additional determiners as well. The content of the course is also important, whether it is civilization, culture, grammar, literature, or film; just as important are the activities that are carried out in an effort to teach the content. Krashen's (1994) Pleasure Hypothesis suggests that activities that foster "comprehensible input" are perceived as more pleasurable by students. Comprehensible input, in this case, refers to the linguistic material that language learners are able to understand, which then goes into the subconscious where it is easily recalled. Reading aloud and free reading are examples of activities that encourage comprehensible input, whereas forced speech and error correction are "activities" that would not. Krashen's Pleasure Hypothesis is related to the present study because of his findings that suggest that foreign language students enrolled in courses emphasizing comprehensible input proceed to more advanced language courses.

Swaffer and Woodruff (1978), and Lafayette and Buscaglia (1985) compared university foreign language students in traditional skill-based language classes with foreign language students in sheltered immersion classes, where the subject matter (such as civilization) was taught in the target language as a way of learning the content, as well as the language itself. Generally speaking, those students who decided to continue into

the more advanced classes were the ones that had undergone the "immersion/multiliteracy" programs. To the researcher's knowledge, VCU offers a one-year intensive French program that includes content from French 101, 102, 201, and 202 courses, but there is no immersion program as referred to above.

Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model also refers to the notion of "I+1" or comprehensible input as described above. In this case, the idea is that students need to be challenged and pushed slightly beyond what they are capable of accomplishing comfortably. "Pushing students" does not mean producing a high affective filter so that learning does not take place. Krashen suggests that learners acquire language by listening and absorbing concepts that are slightly beyond their current level of language usage. Think of the young child who is learning the language of her parents; she begins to understand the language through the use of hand signals and motions that her parents are using in order to teach her to communicate. The comprehensible language input is directly related to the level of the child, or is "dumbed" down in such a way that the child can begin mastery of the new language, according to where she is developmentally.

Beginning the mastery of a new language is a process of which "interlanguage" is an important part. Selinker (1972) uses this term to describe the linguistic material that is formed when the student tries to use grammatical structures from the second language, and in fact, ends up creating "language" that is somewhere in the middle of the first and second languages. This concept can have a direct impact on a student's motivation level for learning the language, depending on whether the interlanguage transfer is positive or

negative. A positive transfer occurs when a grammatical structure in the new language is the same as that of the first language, hence, the student is able to successfully manipulate the target language simply by knowing his own language. On the contrary, a negative transfer occurs when the learner tries to form the grammatical structure in the new language based on what he knows of his first language, except the structure is completely different. In this case, the student's risk-taking would not be beneficial and his usage of the target language, incorrect.

Leki (1992) refers to a period in the language learning process when students may appear to have mastered one of these grammatical structures, and then revert back to forming it incorrectly. The author states that such regression can occur for a number of reasons: when the student is faced with new or difficult material, when she is experiencing anxiety or frustration, when she is unable to practice speaking in the target language for a period of time, or when she pays less attention to the formation of structures. Furthermore, these incorrectly formed structures may then become "fossilized" or somewhat permanent, as it is nearly impossible to rid the learner of her belief in the malformed structures. "Fossilization manifests itself most frequently and obviously in 'foreign' accents but may occur in any form of the target language. Fossilized interlanguage forms are particularly difficult to alter, possibly because the learner is for whatever reason unmotivated to identify completely with the target discourse community" (p. 112). From this statement, it appears that fossilization occurs as a result of non-motivation, but there is also the possibility that too many negative

transfers are occurring for a student – in which case he becomes frustrated and less willing to try new structures and advanced forms in the new language. Eventually, the same sentences and vocabulary become boring, and the student sees no reason to continue if a certain level of communication is simply not possible. Recent, as well as some not so recent, technological advances may be the answer to combating both student boredom and the need for more interaction and communication with native speakers in a comfortable environment. The next section will describe some of these advances in teaching a foreign language and the ways in which they relate to student motivation for language learning.

Technology and the Foreign Language Classroom

As far back as 1964, researchers were suggesting that technology, such as films and slides, be used as a way of changing students' negative attitudes toward the target culture, hence making them more likely to continue foreign language study (Harrison & MacLean, 1964). Since then, technology has been used for a variety of reasons in the foreign language classroom: increasing interaction with native speakers through the use of email, increasing the use of authentic materials by accessing those found on the World Wide Web, and increasing the amount of individualized practice that students can have by linking them with national and global resources and people. Olsen (1999) describes ways in which French instruction can be enhanced through the use of World Wide Web resources such as the following: interactive grammar exercises, on-line texts with links to supplementary information, on-line newspapers and television and radio broadcasts. The

following paragraphs discuss some of these technological tools and the research that has been conducted about their use in the classroom. Not every type of technology will be examined, but certainly any of those that may be used in the foreign language classrooms at VCU.

As explained earlier in the information on various foreign language teaching methods, communicative competence is often the goal for those learning a new language. Kroonenberg's (1994) experiences using email in the classroom, chat rooms, and bulletin boards for posting writing samples suggest that these tools are helpful in developing communicative and thinking skills. She asserts that using a keyboard for composing instead of the typical pad and paper motivates students to write; her students say that they feel less inhibited because of the ease with which one can fix mistakes and change things around.

Oral skills may improve using this electronic medium as well, due to the fact that students base their class discussions on subjects previously pondered and debated in email correspondence. Kroonenberg (1994) suggests that students are less inhibited online than they are in the regular classroom, perhaps because peer pressure and the faces of intimidating classmates are less visible when students communicate in this manner. Reading skills can also be enhanced by using these tools if students engage in peer review activities with their writing samples. The nature of communicating in this fashion dictates that students do a certain amount of reading in the target language in order to respond sensibly to the other members of the class. Mandating that communication occur

only in the target language, is of course essential for gaining all of the benefits described above.

Warschauer (1996) looked into the motivational aspects of computer-assisted instruction for 167 English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in university writing courses in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the US. Specifically, Warschauer was interested in learning more about the aspects of writing and communication that second and foreign language students find motivating. To quickly clarify, a second language student would be a French person living in the United States and wanting to learn English, whereas a foreign language student would be a French person living in France and wanting to learn English.

The three motivating factors in Warschauer's survey were "communication, empowerment," and the idea that "computers help students learn better and more independently" – all of which go beyond the traditional integrative/instrumental categorization, according to Warschauer. Communication involves interaction with native speakers but also interaction in the target language with other members of the class, creating a type of supportive learning community. Empowerment refers to the personal power that learners gain through their ability to manipulate language electronically. Communicating by computer may also lessen the extent of the social isolation students may feel from not being able to actively participate in classroom discussions and activities. The final factor is self-explanatory – the idea being that

students can gain more practice in both writing and communicating in the language by using computers, and at the same time have more control over their own learning.

Mindful of the fact that studies of this nature depend greatly on the dynamics of the particular classes that are surveyed, Warschauer does offer some general conclusions. Many of the students, despite their age, gender, knowledge of computers, and level of typing skills had favorable attitudes toward the use of computers for writing and communicating in the language classroom. Finally, the study suggests that teachers can activate students' motivation by encouraging them to use computers for writing and communication, and most importantly, by integrating the use of computers into the regular curriculum and the routine classroom activities. Warschauer is careful to distinguish between that type of integration that students favor, and the alternative, in which computer-enhanced lessons are simply added on top of the regular assignments.

Beauvois (1994-95) examined 41 students in a third-semester college French course who were electronically connected to each other using a local area network (LAN). Generally speaking, she found that computer networking promoted student confidence as a result of simply using the language so often and in such quantities. "Based on the positive affect reported by the students in this study, it can be said that the use of the LAN communication was an effective motivating force," (p. 187). The researcher is careful to add that such results do not indicate the superiority of this type of teaching over more traditional foreign language teaching. What Beauvois does purport is that the LAN exerts a motivating influence over students that increases their production

of the language at the intermediate level. Her work demonstrates another phenomenon of equal importance that occurs with LAN use – shy students and students who appear less motivated are more likely to participate and speak out when they are "disguised" by their computers.

Aside from being useful as a mediator of communication, the networked computer can also serve as a valuable resource for teaching materials. The previously discussed Monitor Model (Krashen, 1982), suggests the significance of giving students input in the target language. Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot (1994) stress the importance of technology usage in the foreign language classroom as a source of this input. They recommend increasing students' interaction with native speakers through the use of videotapes, television and satellite broadcasts – all of which provide students with access to the culture and the people that they might not otherwise have. In their projections describing the foreign language classroom of the future, Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot envision students who are "motivated by the immediacy and authenticity of contact with the target language and culture" (p. 483).

One example of a place where the aforementioned interaction with native speakers might occur is on the Language Trade web site (www.LanguageTrade.com). In January 2000, the researcher received an email heralding an "amazing new web site" that offered visitors the opportunity to chat with native speakers of certain languages. Currently, the site brings together people who are looking to converse in English, French, German, or Spanish. The visitor is asked to fill out a registration form, and Language

Trade then matches her with someone who speaks the language she wants to learn and vice versa; finally the two chat via the free Yahoo Messenger service.

The web site boasts about its ability to provide language learners with what they need – practice speaking with a native of the culture. Other benefits include the ability to learn real, factual information about the culture itself or about one's travel or study abroad destination from a knowledgeable source that would know the area intimately. Another similar web site that offers much the same in terms of connecting language students and teachers from around the world is called ePals (http://www.epals.com). In addition, ePals prides itself on the ability to help its customers share classroom pictures and video and sound clips; this site is, however, geared more toward the K-12 educational sector. The researcher is not promoting these sites in any way, and has had no experience with the sites other than navigating around them to learn about the services they offer. The purpose in mentioning them is to make the reader aware of the kinds of possibilities that exist today for language students who possess the sort of intrinsic motivation that would propel them to seek out resources such as these. The benefits from engaging in interaction of this type for the purpose of learning about the culture and the language itself are unimaginable.

Meunier (1998) did a study involving 64 students in third-year French and German writing classes at the college level. The main purpose of the research was to examine the motivational factors involved in computer-mediated foreign language communication (CMFLC). While the present study was much more general in terms of

its interest in motivation, some of Meunier's findings have implications for motivation as it relates to continuing the study of a foreign language. For example, 61% of the students who enrolled in these writing courses stated that they had no intention of majoring in French or German. Despite that fact, almost a quarter (24%) said they were considering a foreign language major as a result of the CMFLC. Granted, considering a major and declaring one are two different things, but the involvement of the technology at least seems to have had a positive effect in this case.

On the contrary, the portion of Meunier's (1998) questionnaire that solicited students' open-ended responses revealed many negative attitudes toward the use of technology. The students least motivated by technology came from classes characterized by the following: too much peripheral equipment was used, the students' conversations/assignments were too tightly bound and monitored by the professors, the professors were not knowledgeable and comfortable with the technology, and the computerized discussions were simply occasional add-ons to regular class work.

Up to this point, the researcher has explored various foreign language instructional methods, language acquisition theories, and the ways in which technology can be used to enhance learning and motivation in the foreign language classroom. The goal of prior discussion has been to make the reader more aware of how language learning should take place in the university classroom. Progressing to the next step involves looking at the literature on student attrition and dropout in language classes in an effort to gain some insight on what not to do. The goal of the present study once again,

was to learn what makes students persist and not drop out of foreign language study once they have completed the language requirement characterized by the degree they are seeking.

Attrition and Dropout in Foreign Language Programs

If one writer in 1968 was calling for changes in the teaching of foreign languages based on the fact that a more "heterogeneous groups of students [were] populating our language classrooms," (Parent, 1968, p.191) imagine what he might advocate today, given the diversity that is largely present. Parent's suggestions are nonetheless valid despite their somewhat early publication date, and most of them have already been touched on throughout this review. Pointing toward the psychological aspects of teaching and learning, the author stresses the need for students to feel secure in the classroom and for teachers to minimize student anxiety that comes from having to answer a question correctly in a foreign language in front of one's peers. "Wait time" (Rowe, 1969) is a phrase with which most educators are familiar, and in the language classroom it is especially important. Particularly in the early stages, students need time to comprehend the question as it is asked in the language, think of the answer which comes in English (the learner's first language), and then translate it back to the target language – all of which requires wait time on the part of the teacher. Abiding by some of these "rules" decreases students' level of frustration and anxiety in the classroom, which may

in turn leave them more satisfied with the course and anxious to continue learning in such a pleasant environment.

While the focus of the present study was on language students at the college level, the premier study on language dropout was done by Bartley in 1969. Her study dealt with students in the eighth grade who had chosen not to continue the language they had been studying since the sixth grade; she was interested in the aptitude and attitude factors that had led to their decision. Bartley's research is similar to the present study in that she looked at characteristics of students who had dropped out of language study versus characteristics of those students who had decided to persist in language study. As one might expect, both the attitude and aptitude scores were higher for those students who decided to include foreign language in their ninth-grade schedule (instruments included the Modern Language Aptitude Test and the Foreign Language Attitude Scale). Citing limitations such as the fairly high percentage of students who are college bound in this California school district, as well as the high number of students who have been studying a foreign language since elementary school, Bartley concedes to the non-generalizability of this study. She does however request that future researchers conduct similar studies and perhaps ask more specific questions such as "Is it the instructional methodology, the language itself, or...the teacher, that leads to undesirable attitudes on the part of the students?" (p. 55).

A decade after Bartley's study, Clement, Smythe, and Gardner (1978) decided to probe deeper into the aptitude and attitude question as it related to persistence in language

study. Their sample consisted of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade English speaking students who had decided either to continue or not to continue their study of French. Their "motivation" variable comprised three scales: "motivation to learn French," "motivational intensity," and "desire to learn French." Based on their findings, the researchers concluded that the student's motivation to learn French was more strongly associated with his desire to re-enroll in French than the student's achievement level of linguistic aptitude. The results also demonstrated a link across the board between students' attitude and the decision to stay in or drop out of the language course. Carried even further, they conclude that students' decision to persist in this context is strongly associated with their fairly high motivation to study a second language.

Implications of the study include the need to target students' motivation levels as a way of increasing retention in foreign language courses. Strategies offered by Clement, Smythe, and Gardner include giving students larger doses of cultural matter including "bicultural excursions and exchanges... and emphasizing cultural appreciation as opposed to exclusively linguistic outcomes..." (p. 694). Almost 20 years later, Friedich, Eykyn, McKeithan (1997) offer similar advice in their "Tips for Retaining Students." For language students at the college level, they suggest a "French table" at a café or lunchroom, a "French floor" in a dormitory, or even a "French house" such as the one at the University of Virginia. The idea is of course, that students interact on a daily, routine basis while speaking only in the target language.

Several sources have implied the importance of regularly inserting "culture" into the foreign language curriculum, however Bernhardt and Kamil's (1998) study revealed a rather innovative way of making that insertion. The authors believe that the intellectual level of college students makes them hungry for more substantial cultural information than the importance of bread and wine in the French diet or the fact that women go topless on many European beaches. While material of that sort may in fact spark their initial interest, there comes a time when students want to discuss and debate more complex issues. The problem obviously, is that lower level language students do not yet have the reading skills necessary to comprehend foreign texts on such issues, and at the same time, they do not have the language skills to speak on topics that require more specific vocabulary. Bernhardt and Kamil say it best: "This is one of the reasons why, even after an expertly executed first-year program and/or second-year program, learners cannot cope with the 'upper-level' curriculum. They may well have a lot of language, **but** they have no conceptual tools for dealing with the subject matter" (p. 43).

Their study involved 19 students enrolled in a first-quarter university-level German Studies course. Besides the basic language skills portion of the syllabus, there was also an English language syllabus that accompanied the course materials. This English syllabus required students to read a book in English entitled The Germans, by Gordon Craig. On top of merely reading the book, students were required to post comments from each chapter electronically on the World Wide Web, and respond to other classmates' comments as applicable. As one might expect, not all students

participated, but the majority of the students commented frequently with lengthy, well thought-out responses.

Bernhardt and Kamil (1998) listed several outcomes that resulted from conducting the language class partially in English. First of all, the course seemed to have rightfully gained its place in the college course catalog. Whereas some people may see low-level foreign language classes as "fluff," having students read a novel and then provide their classmates with thought-provoking comments and discussion appeared to legitimize German Studies as a true college level course. Secondly, this intellectually stimulating exercise awarded students their status as adult learners. The authors mention the inability of early language learners to talk about more than the time or the weather, and how this assignment afforded them a different opportunity. By writing in English, students had the chance to express their thoughts on a higher level and in greater depth than they were able to when forced to speak constantly in the target language. Just as Kroonenberg (1994) found that shy students and students who appeared non-motivated, contributed more in electronic conversations, so too did Bernhardt and Kamil feel that more of the students took part in the class, not just those who felt competent in their German language skills. Another outcome relates simply to the amount of knowledge that students gained with regards to the German people and their culture. They now possessed more of a background or cognitive scaffolding on which to place incoming German words as well as cultural information.

So what happened at the termination of this course, one might ask? In this first-quarter German Studies course, very early on in these students' academic career, roughly 50% of the students (9 out of 19) declared either a German major or minor after this course. In words relative to this study, 50% of the students desired to persist in their study of German beyond any language requirement.

Wanting to learn more about what actually does occur in early college language classes, Schwartz (1981), a language department chairman, decided to take an introductory Chinese language course in order to see and feel first hand what first year language students experience. Of course, it is duly noted that there are many factors that affect how a class is conducted such as the specific course materials, the professor's personality, the time of day the class meets, and the students' personalities and manner in which they function as a group. Interestingly enough, Schwartz experienced many of the feelings that one should now expect he would – boredom, embarrassment, anxiety, frustration, fatigue, satisfaction, exhilaration, and a lack of confidence. What is interesting is the fact that those are not the reasons he cites for dropping out of the language course. Admitting that he has persisted in classes that were equally frustrating, boring, and anxiety producing, the author concedes that language course dropout occurred because of a lack of incentive to continue. Believing in 1981 that diplomatic and commercial relations with foreign countries would increase the need for bilingual students, Schwartz predicted that economic incentives would increase and therefore increase student persistence in language study.

While the present study takes place at a four-year public university, it may be worthwhile to examine information that is available at the community college level. Admittedly, it is sometimes difficult to think of college students as adults, however, in reality they are adults whose learning strategies, priorities, and goals must be taken into account. Having been a full-time student for the past three years, it is hard to ignore the image that the traditional 18-year old college student has become more and more of a minority, while the number of older students has increased (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). Franklin, Hodge, and Sasscer (1997) sought to learn more about the troubling attrition rates in the foreign language departments in the Virginia Community College system. The authors surveyed language teachers regarding their own perceptions of why students dropped out of the classes and what techniques they employed in an effort to combat those dropouts.

One factor that the authors linked to persistence is that of "perceived relevance." They insist that adult learners need to see a direct link between what they are learning and how that will be used in a practical sense outside of the classroom. Setting clearly defined goals, and then being careful to revisit them on a regular basis, is another important rule for teachers to follow. Franklin, Hodge, and Sasscer (1997) indicate that when the class materials increase in their level of difficulty and students become frustrated as previously mentioned, it is motivating for students to be reminded of the original goals and where they are with regards to achieving them.

Another reason that students may become frustrated, they say, is due to the way that foreign language classes are conducted. This is where previous experience in a good foreign language class would free many students from this frustration. Courses should be taught completely in the target language, maximizing the amount of comprehensible input that students receive during the period. Students new to foreign language may lack confidence in their own ability to understand anything that is going on in the classroom in a language other than their own, and consequently shut down or shut out the incoming information. Given the references to technology in the previous section, it is also interesting to note that several of the authors' students made reference to the advances now being used in many foreign language classrooms. For example, students expressed interest in emailing native speakers in other countries and learning about software that could be used for grammar or pronunciation practice. Obviously, such students are interested in taking a more active role in their learning, and possibly at the same time becoming more motivated to continue their studies in this area.

Studies Involving Persistence in Foreign Language Study

Previous paragraphs have referenced studies that relate in various ways to the present study, however there are three studies that seek to address the same problem – the lack of persistence in foreign language study. Ramage (1986) looked at "Motivational and attitudinal factors as predictors of persistence in foreign language study," Kastner (1992) performed "A quantitative and qualitative analysis of student motivation to continue foreign language studies beyond the language requirement," and Conrad (1997)

examined "Self-reported opinions and perceptions of first and fourth semester foreign language learners toward their language learning experience." What are the similarities between these studies and the present study? What are the significant differences? What kind of further research is warranted based on these studies? A closer look at each of these authors' works will answer such questions.

The earliest study of the three, done by Ramage in 1986, is the most different in that the sample consisted of high school students, and the present study will be examining college students. Two of the high schools were located in Northern California districts and the other was located in Arkansas. The final sample consisted of 138 students from one second-year French class and one second-year Spanish class in each of the three schools. Ramage administered a survey to each of the classes, upon completion of a pilot study which was conducted in order to produce a questionnaire. Open-ended responses from the pilot study yielded information on "motivations for initially taking a foreign language," "reasons for continuing," "reasons for discontinuing," and "reasons for choosing to take French or Spanish in particular." The responses were transformed into a Likert-type format for use with the actual study participants.

Ramage (1986) also collected student grades, not as a measure of aptitude, but rather as an indication of the student's perception of his or her proficiency level in the language. To learn more about the materials used in class, the instructional style of the teacher, the focus of the course, the ways in which students were evaluated, and the

administration's attitude related to foreign language study, the researcher also interviewed the French and Spanish teachers.

There were three primary research questions:

- What are students' motivations for taking a foreign language?
- What factors influence the decision to continue or discontinue foreign language study?
- What motivational and attitudinal factors predict continuation, and to what extent?

Obviously, the findings based on the second and third research questions are the ones of most value considering the present study. While the current researcher was interested in motivation, it has to do with motivation to persist in foreign language study, not motivation as related to choosing a particular language to study. Also, Ramage was interested in analyzing the differences in reasons for continuing language study, based on the language being studied. For example, she found that French students' strongest motivation for taking a foreign language and for continuing in that language was based on their desire to speak the language. On the other hand, Spanish students' strongest motivation was linked to their need to fulfill the language requirement. The present study focused only on French students, so an in depth description of Ramage's comparisons between the languages was not included.

Among the reasons French students cited for continuing, "because I want to learn to speak it [the foreign language] well" had the highest mean of 2.64. Following that in

descending order of mean scores were other reasons including: "because I want to know a language other than English," "because I want to learn to read and write it [the foreign language]," "because my teacher is good," "because I'm interested in the language and enjoy studying it," "because I plan to attend a college that requires it," and "because my parents have encouraged me to do it."

Previous research indicates a meshing of Gardner and Lambert's (1959) integrative and instrumental types of motivation. "Wanting to know a language other than English" could be based on the desire to integrate and communicate with another culture (integrative), or it could be based on the notion that becoming bilingual will be an asset for job searching (instrumental). Either way, French students identified both integrative and instrumental reasons for continuing language study. Two of the reasons that do not apply to the present research involve taking languages for future college admittance and parental encouragement in language study. At the college level, parental influence typically decreases as students become more independent and more likely to choose their own classes. Still, it is possible that parents may have encouraged their children to pursue a certain language in high school, and those children may have continued in that language in college. It is likely however, that the parental influence was over language choice or whether or not to take a language at all, rather than over the decision to persist in college language study.

Ramage (1986) found that French students' reasons for discontinuing language study included the class not fitting into his/her schedule, having already fulfilled the

language requirement, feeling incapable of doing well in a foreign language, having unsatisfactory grades in the language, and having too many difficult courses for the next year already scheduled. The good news is that the discontinuing reason with the highest mean (1.95), a scheduling conflict, has nothing to do with the student's dissatisfaction with the language itself, or the language learning experience as a whole. The bad news has to do with the implications for the current study. Despite teachers' efforts to use such studies as a basis for increasing student motivation to persist in the study of a foreign language, the language class is usually an elective, and required classes often take priority in scheduling. Ramage points out however, that continuing students have or had to fulfill the language requirement as well, but yet they decided to pursue their study of a language. She adds that if teachers are able to produce increased intrinsic interest in their students, they will be more likely to continue after the language requirement is met.

Interestingly enough, most of the reasons given for continuing foreign language study had to do with one's intrinsic motivation to learn the language. Students want to speak the language, read and write well in the language, and know a language other than English. A general interest in culture was one of the reasons that French students cited for initially choosing the language, and while the purpose of the current study was not to look at language choice, culture has implications for continuing language study as well. Ramage found that contact in the target language, or interaction with native speakers in a restaurant environment for example, was a motivating factor for continuation. Fortunately, as a result of the Internet and availability of the World Wide Web, increasing

cultural contact with native speakers is feasible, relatively cheap, and absolutely possible for most foreign language students. The effects of such tools were examined on a small scale in the current study, to see if foreign language students preferred multi-media learning and the use of the Internet, and more importantly, if it motivated them to continue to the next level of the language.

While Ramage's study undoubtedly demonstrates some interesting conclusions regarding high school students' reasons for continuing foreign language study, it can speak only briefly to the study at hand. The sample of the current study consisted of college students, many of whom were merely 3-4 months older than high school students, but whose learning environment was quite different. As previously mentioned, parental encouragement and taking a language for college admittance are persistence predictors that were not appropriate for the current study. Also, Ramage's findings indicate differences in the attitudinal and motivational dispositions of French students versus Spanish students. The current study accepted those differences and chose to analyze one language group more closely, rather than make comparisons between languages as this and other studies have done (Kastner, 1992). Finally, the instrument was designed based on an open-ended questionnaire used in the pilot study. The same students were not used for the actual study, but the pilot students were from the same district in Northern California. The Likert-type questions were based on the responses of the first students and then with slight tweaking they were addressed to the final sample. The instrument, therefore, is applicable to this particular group of students, and the findings relate only to

this group of students. Ramage discloses such a limitation simply by indicating the descriptive rather than experimental nature of the study.

Unlike Ramage's (1986) research on high school students enrolled in foreign language courses, Kastner's (1992) dissertation concerns college students in their fourth semester of German. The author makes an effort to determine why German students continue or discontinue their foreign language study at this particular point in the language learning sequence. Again, the focus is on student motivation to continue the study of the language, not motivation to study foreign language at all, or motivation to study a particular foreign language.

All fourth semester German students at the University of Texas were given a pre-test and post-test questionnaire in order to gather information on student motivation and answer the research questions. These questions fell into three categories – pre-test questions, post-test questions, and comparison of pre-test and post-test data. Pre-test questions focused on personal variables, the effect those variables have on plans to continue language study, attitudes toward the target culture, and the source of information about class offerings as related to students' choice of language class. Post-test questions looked at the relationship between choice of fourth semester class and plans to continue language study, and choice of class as related to the students' analysis of their motivation for doing work in the language class. Finally, pre-test and post-test comparison questions examined choice of fourth semester course and its relation to certain shifts: shifts in

students' motivation to continue, shifts in students' opinion of the target culture, and shifts in students' opinion related to the evaluation of the language course.

Some items in the questionnaires were developed by using previous studies as a basis, while other items were based on Gardner and Lambert's (1959) attitude-assessment scale with adjustments made for the students and the environment of his particular study. In addition to the questionnaires, data collection included student grades, homework and quiz assessments, teacher interviews, classroom observations, selected student group interviews, and student essays written on the subject of what new information had been learned about Germany in the course of the semester.

As previously discussed, Ramage (1986) found that intrinsically motivated students persist in language studies, and that studying culture or having interaction with the target culture were both motivating factors. In his chi-square analysis of the variable "plans to travel to a German-speaking country" by the factor "interest in the people and culture," Kastner (1992) identified a significant relationship. Students who indicated this interest in the culture as a reason for choosing to study the language were more willing to spend time in the foreign country. Therefore, both of these studies demonstrate the need for increased cultural lessons in the foreign language classroom if the goal of the professor is to motivate students to persist as a foreign language learner. The present study attempted to corroborate this finding by asking similar questions of students and professors on the topic of culture in the classroom.

Other statistically significant relationships pertained to culture and interaction with the target population as well. For example, most of the students enrolled in German "for fun" were found in classes where English was used only 10% of the time. Interestingly enough, this was not the case for German majors and minors – almost a quarter of these students (22.22%) were enrolled in courses where English was spoken 75% of the time. This discrepancy may have something to do with the fact that it is mandatory for language majors and minors to take a certain sequence of courses in order to fulfill their degree requirements. Following the sequence is imperative regardless of how much of the mandatory course is conducted in English and how much is conducted in the target language, as it would seem students prefer.

Another interesting finding according to Kastner (1992) involves the relationship between academic performance in the language class and the decision to continue with foreign language study. Contrary to what one might expect, the straight "A" students are not necessarily the ones most likely to continue on the more advanced courses. Kastner found that students situated in the "A/B" range or the "B" range were likely to continue their language studies. Along these same lines, the analysis of the relationship between planning to continue taking German courses and the expected grade in the German course did not lead to statistically significant results. This may imply that such students are more challenged and possibly more motivated by that challenge to become more advanced language learners. All of these findings, in addition to ones from the current study, have implications for every level language courses – they need to be challenging,

include significant information and materials on the target culture, and conducted primarily in the target language.

By using Kastner's (1992) study as a stepping-stone to the present study, there are important factors to keep in mind. Kastner indicates that "it would be of interest to conduct a similar study with university students in other languages, including English as a Second Language (ESL)" (p. 254). While the goal of the present study did focus on students in another language (French as opposed to German), the researcher will also took into account the notion that some of the qualitative data collection did not yield information different from that already collected by the quantitative measures. Since not all of the professors allowed Kastner's evaluation of students' quizzes, test results, and attendance records, it was important to determine the availability of such information before the commencement of the study.

Whereas Kastner's (1992) sample consisted of students enrolled only in fourth semester German language courses, Conrad (1997) was concerned with students taking either first or fourth semester French, German, Italian, and Spanish language courses. In reality, however, of the 454 subjects in Conrad's study, there were almost twice as many fourth semester students (61.23%) as there were first semester students (38.77%). Results based on the differences between the language groups will not be discussed given that the sample of the current study consisted solely of French students.

Through the interpretation of chi-square test results, Conrad (1997) reveals seemingly logical information about the statistically significant differences within the

French language group. To summarize, more fourth semester French students (F4) felt they could make themselves understood in the target language regardless of their mistakes, than first semester French students (F1). Similarly, more F4 students felt they could "understand spoken French well" than F1 students. The story is the same with the students who considered themselves to "have good pronunciation and accent when speaking" – more F1 students disagreed with this statement than F4 students. It stands to reason that students in their fourth French class (F4) would feel more comfortable and competent in the areas of understanding, speaking, and pronouncing the target language than students in their first French class (F1).

The final significant results within the French group have to do with the individual survey statement "Doing written exercises in a workbook is useful for my learning" (p.96). Here, more F4 students disagreed with this than did F1 students. In all likelihood, students in he F1 class know of fewer ways in which a language course can be conducted. This is their first class in French, perhaps their first class in any foreign language, and workbook exercises may consume a disproportionate amount of time in their particular classes. F4 students who have been exposed to as many as four different teachers, instructional styles, types of materials, and classroom environments may have a better idea of what they like and what works in terms of language learning. On a not so obvious note, Conrad found students in first semester French more likely to be taking the language for the pleasure of learning it than fourth semester French students. Again, the

importance of nurturing students' intrinsic interest and trying to motivate them from the very beginning of their language learning experience, seems evident.

Both Ramage (1986) and Kastner (1992) indicated the importance of integrating culture into the study of a foreign language as a way of motivating students and enhancing their likelihood of persistence. Interestingly enough, Conrad (1997) found many early-terminating language learners' outcomes for their foreign language study to be related to culture. For example, they wanted to be knowledgeable of the target language-speaking world, to be knowledgeable about target language-speaking places, to enlarge their view of the world, and become more aware of problems people have when speaking a foreign language.

On the other hand, students expressed negative feelings towards being able to live in the target community, writing creatively in the target language, being able to read technical literature, being able to understand target language radio broadcasts, and being able to think and behave like target language-speaking people. In other words, these were not perceived outcomes for these early-terminating language learners. It is easy to see why many language learners do not persist if the latter abilities are not goals they have for language learning. Advanced language courses, especially those required of majors and minors, often consist of literature courses, advanced writing courses, and courses that emphasize the use of "realia", or authentic materials from the target country such as radio and television broadcasts or newspapers. It is blatantly obvious then why

many students do not continue foreign language study, given that their own outcomes may strongly resemble those early-terminating learners in Conrad's study.

Conrad's (1997) results validate students' desire to learn a language using a communicative approach or an approach that stresses oral communication and use of the target language in "real" situations. Oddly enough, his results also suggest that students value a structural/form approach, as indicated by strong agree responses to survey statements such as "understanding grammar is useful for my learning", and "when I speak the target language I want my teacher to correct any and all errors I make" (p.120). Does this mean that students want more grammar exercises in their language classes? Probably not at the lower level, which is where they endure the most rote exercises and grammar practice, but as Conrad's study shows, maybe they do want more of it in the second year of language instruction. Perhaps the lower level classes should emphasize communication and the ability to function in everyday situations, leaving the grammar and more precise details of the language to the later classes. Although, Conrad's hypothesis that first semester groups would want more oral and aural skills than fourth semester language groups was not supported by the data.

Lastly, based on the findings of his 1997 study, Conrad suggests the need to increase students' proficiency level in the foreign language and make that the benchmark for fulfilling college language requirements, as opposed to using the arbitrary four semesters to meet the requirement. "Applications of foreign language competence" is the factor from Conrad's survey for which no language group registered an agreement score.

Students are going through the motions in college language classes, but are they becoming proficient in the target language? And what happens when they finish their four semesters? Unspoken words and grammatical structures are quickly forgotten. Essentially two years has been wasted, unless professors can find out how to increase students' motivation for language learning so that they continue to use what they have learned either inside or outside of the classroom. As Conrad indicates "...using e-mail to correspond with native speakers of the target language might prove interesting and beneficial for student learning and motivation" (p. 165). With such technology increasingly available at school, at work, and at home, it may be possible for students to better maintain their language skills through this medium, without needing a professor to constantly provide materials and feedback.

Indeed Conrad's 15 years of teaching experience probably qualify him to construct an instrument for this type of study, however little information is given regarding the validity and reliability of the instrument itself. Granted, many of the items were taken from past studies in this same area, but the samples and language learning environments in those studies were often very different. Given this drawback regarding the survey and the fact that the current study is not cross-sectional but rather focused solely on French students, Conrad's study will not be replicated at present. The researcher believes that while learning about early-terminating language students is somewhat valuable, determining what inspired language majors and minors to continue their studies in advanced language courses is also a worthwhile goal. By consolidating

information from both studies, professors, curricula designers, administrators, and foreign language departments will be better equipped to turn more of the students presently sitting in language classrooms from apathetic language "requirement-fulfillers" to persistent "language learners."

Summary

Before moving on to a description in Chapter Three of how the study was carried out, the reader is invited to revisit the key points and lingering issues presented throughout the literature review. This section begins with the theoretical framework considerations, and follows the same path of topics already identified in this literature exploration. Following the summary, the researcher attempts to graphically link the factors identified in the literature review to the student's ultimate decision regarding the continuation of language study.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) paved the way in foreign language motivation research by distinguishing between language learners with an instrumental motive and language learners with an integrative motive. Oxford and Shearin (1994) suggest that researchers expand this theoretical framework a bit to include need theories, expectancy-value theories, equity theories, and reinforcement theories. Self-efficacy theory, as described by Bandura (1982), involves students' perceptions of their own self-efficacy and how those perceptions affect the manner in which they "attack" difficult challenges, or perhaps a difficult course such as French. All of these theories relate to students' feelings, attitudes, needs, and perceptions, which can affect the degree of motivation they

have for learning a foreign language, and consequently, the decision they make to persist or discontinue in the study of a second language. Characteristics of students, including their beliefs about language learning, play a major role in determining the level of achievement, success, satisfaction, and level of commitment that students have for learning a language (Horwitz, 1988).

In terms of the language-learning environment, Barnhardt (1999) found learner-centered classrooms to be highly motivating. Lowering the affective filter and increasing the level of comfort in the classroom, giving students more choice in the subjects that are covered, as well as more control over their own learning, are also essential. At the same time, Dupuy and Krashen (1998) explain that what goes on outside the classroom is also significant; students need more opportunities to use their language skills outside of the class, as they do when they travel abroad or interact with native speakers on a regular basis.

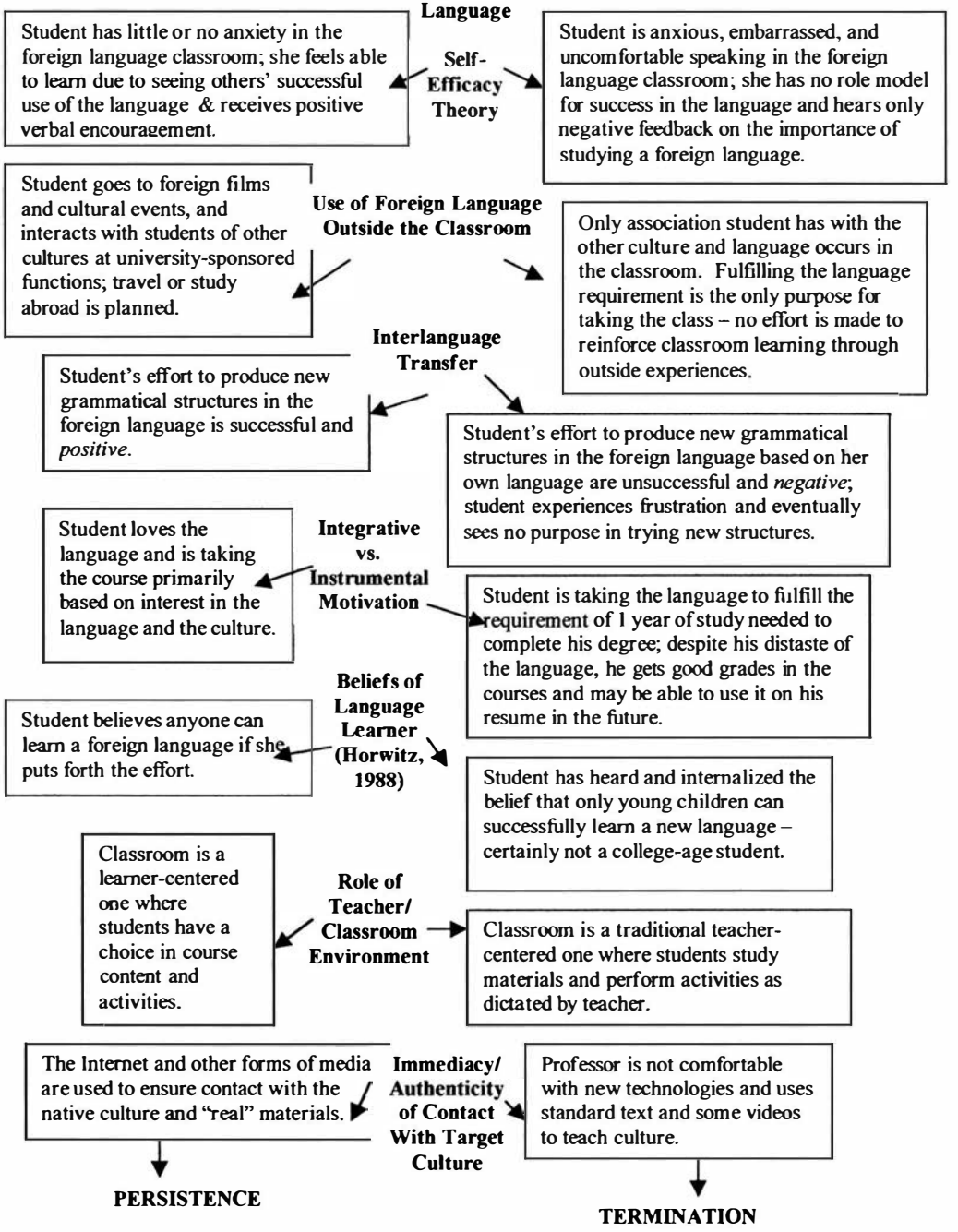
Through the use of technological tools such as the World Wide Web, it is likely that students will, in fact, have more opportunities to use their language skills. Kroonenberg (1994) found that students were less inhibited in their foreign language writing when it was done through email or posted on the class electronic bulletin board. Warshauer (1996) also found evidence that students were motivated by the use of technology in the classroom, but only when it was fully integrated into the curriculum, and not simply "added-on" to existing assignments. Meunier's (1998) examination of the use of computer-mediated foreign language communication (CMFLC) with third year

French and German students points out additional non-motivating factors of technology use. Students were less motivated when their electronic writing was closely structured and monitored, when too much peripheral equipment was used, and when the professor was not comfortable with the technology.

What does the literature say about factors that motivate students to continue the study of a language or factors that cause them to drop out of language study? Bernhardt and Kamil (1998) incorporated English texts on German culture into their syllabus, and at the end of their course, 50% of the students indicated they would declare a German major or minor. Ramage (1986) found that students continued French because they wanted to learn to speak the language better. Her study also showed that students who persisted were intrinsically motivated, and interested in studying culture and interacting with the target population. Kastner (1992) produced similar results regarding the use of culture and its motivating effect on students. Conrad (1997) examined the perceived outcomes of early-terminating language learners and found them to be related to culture as well. Ironically, considering the typical low-level curriculum, student outcomes did not include reading technical literature in the target language, writing creatively in the language, and listening to radio broadcasts in the language. His results also suggested that students wanted more oral communication and more use of the language in real situations. Conrad's hypothesis - that first semester groups wanted more oral/aural skills than fourth semester students - was not supported by his data, but can be revisited in the present study.

The final pages of Chapter Two include a diagram depicting the relationship between various factors and student persistence in studying a foreign language, and a "Definition of Terms" section to aid the reader in understanding the specific terms associated with the study. Chapter Three will describe the procedures of the present study in detail. With the survey instruments that were administered to VCU French students, the researcher attempted to elicit information about student beliefs, perceptions, emotions, and attitudes about their own motivation for language learning, as suggested by the current literature review. The qualitative design of the study gave foreign language students at VCU a voice with which to describe aspects of motivation that related to their own language-learning experiences.

Figure 1: Factors Pertaining to Students' Persistence or Termination of the Study of a Foreign Language



Definition of Terms

- **Extrinsic motivation:** Students who possess this type of motivation are taking a foreign language to achieve an instrumental end, such as receiving a reward (good grades) or avoiding some form of "punishment" (from parents, teachers, or peers).
- **French majors and minors:** Students enrolled in advanced courses, beyond those required for a degree, who have decided to take the 12 or 30 additional credits needed for a French minor or a French major. These students have persisted in the study of a foreign language.
- **French 102 students:** Students enrolled in this course are completing the second course of the one-year foreign language requirement for most degrees at VCU. Students who decide to take further classes are characterized as persisting in language study; students who decide not to take any further classes are characterized as terminating their language study.
- **Instrumental motivation:** Students who possess this type of motivation want to learn the foreign language because of possible resulting factors, such as the acquisition of a better job.
- **Integrative motivation:** Students who possess this type of motivation want to learn the language of another people, interact with them in that language, and become as much a part of the target language community as possible.

- **Intrinsic motivation:** Students who possess this type of motivation are taking a foreign language because they like studying a language, and receive joy and satisfaction as a result.
- **L2:** Abbreviation for "second language." Regarding the participants in the current study, the native language is English, and the L2 is French.
- **Persistence:** Students who experience persistence have continued the study of a foreign language for an extended period of time, beyond the sequence of courses required for a particular degree.
- **Proficiency:** The functional language ability of the student. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages devised the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (See Appendix C) which outline the four levels of proficiency: novice, intermediate, advanced, and superior.
- **Target language/community:** Regarding the present study, the target language, the language the students are trying to learn, is French. At the same time, the target community refers to native French speakers as a whole.
- **Termination:** Students who experience termination have completed the foreign language courses required for a degree, and decided not to continue with advanced level courses.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to lead the reader through the actual process of conducting the present study. The design of the study and the reasoning behind that design are initially discussed, followed by information pertaining to the participants in the study. Next, the researcher explains the instruments themselves, as well as the various data collection methods. Detailed procedural steps are also provided to the reader so that he may replicate the study if desired. Data analysis for both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study follows the procedural information. In the final section of Chapter 3, the researcher acknowledges the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Design

Given that one of the major goals of this study was to hear from college students regarding their decisions to continue or discontinue the study of French, it is obvious why the design was primarily a qualitative one. Heeding Patton's (1990) advice, however – that "triangulation is ideal" (p.187), the researcher utilized a combination of methodologies in order to carry out the present study. A case study design was used since the focus of the dissertation was on a particular group of students at Virginia Commonwealth University. Bogden and Biklen (1998) liken a case study design to a funnel. Using the analogy of a funnel, the researcher surveyed and observed a number of French students, and then narrowed down that group to a manageable size for one-on-one

in-depth interviews and participation in a focus group. From these various methodologies both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed, in an effort to gain the most useful and meaningful information about these students.

Participants

The sample consisted of students at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond, Virginia. VCU is the third largest university in Virginia with more than 23,000 students. Of the 6639 undergraduate students, about 2000 are enrolled in one of the nine languages taught in the foreign language department. While not every degree program demands the completion of foreign language courses, the College of Humanities and Sciences mandates two semesters for fulfillment of its general education requirements. In addition, some programs at VCU require students to continue language study through the 202 or 205 level. The researcher chose French 102 students to represent the non-continuing students because the majority of language students are fulfilling the requirement for a general education degree, and not a more specific program.

In order to fulfill that requirement, students may begin a new language such as Chinese, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, or Russian, or they may continue to study the language they began in middle or high school. Students who began their foreign language studies in high school must take the "Foreign Language Placement Test" if they plan to continue taking courses in that same language at VCU. While they gain no credit towards graduation by taking the exam, students may place out of lower-level courses and thus complete certain graduation requirements.

Depending on which author one references with regards to sampling, purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) and criterion-based selection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) describe the way in which participants were chosen for the study. The researcher surveyed all students in French 102 at VCU during the spring 2001 semester, as well as the French majors and minors. French 102 is the second semester course, following French 101, which completes the language requirement for many programs. The class, along with French 101, is described in the following manner in the online version of the "VCU Bulletin": "Elementary French; continuous course, 5 lecture/recitation hours...elementary grammar, reading, and oral drill." French majors are required to complete 124 credits with at least 30 of those hours in upper-level French courses, including "Survey of Literature," "Advanced Grammar and Writing," "Civilization," "Conversation," "Language Through the Media," or "Foreign Language Internship." French minors must complete 18 credit hours in the language, with 12 of those being at the upper (300-400) level. The latter two groups represent students who have chosen to persist in foreign language beyond the typical college foreign language requirement.

Survey Participants

The sample for the present study consisted of VCU students enrolled in French 102 as well as French majors and minors. Of the 116 students enrolled in the five French 102 sections, 102 students were present and surveyed on the days the researcher administered the survey. This yielded an 88% response rate for the French 102 students. French majors and minors numbered 22 at the time the study was conducted, however four of those students were either studying abroad or living in another part of the state.

Such students were sent surveys twice by mail, by both the researcher and a major advisor. Thirteen of the 22 French majors and minors returned their completed surveys, yielding a response rate of almost 60%. It is important to note however that 2 of the 13 surveys were completed by native speakers. These surveys were discarded based on the notion that such students' motivation, attitude, and reasons for taking the language were affected by the fact that French is their native language. Table I, on the next two pages, shows the demographic characteristics of those surveyed.

Interviewees and Observed Participants

Of the total 113 students surveyed, 14 participated in one on one in-depth interviews with the researcher, and two more students responded to questions in the interview guide via email. Eight continuing students volunteered for an interview. Six of those students were French majors and two were 102 students who planned to declare a French major or minor within the year. Eight non-continuing students were also interviewed - six in person and two via email. All of the non-continuing students were enrolled in French 102. Following the interviews, these 16 students were also observed for approximately 60-90 minutes in their French class. More information relating to the researcher's observations of all interviewed students is found in the section describing research question two and "classroom climate." Table 2 displays additional information concerning interviewed students.

Table 1: Demographics of French 102 Students & French Majors and Minors Who Completed the Surveys

AGE		
Age Ranges	Number of Students in Range	Percentage of Students in Range
17-19 years	41	36.3%
20-22 years	45	39.8%
23-25 years	14	12.4%
Over 25 years	13	11.5%
Total	113	100%
LEVEL OF FRENCH		
Levels	Number of Students in Level	Percentage of Students in Level
Major	8	7.1%
Minor	7	6.2%
Requirement	84	74.3%
Elective	14	12.4%
Total	113	100%
STATUS AT VCU		
Level at VCU	Number of Students in Level	Percentage of Students in Level
Freshman	27	23.9%
Sophomore	31	27.4%
Junior	29	25.7%
Senior	20	17.7%
Special/Graduate Student	6	5.3%
Total	113	100%
GENDER		
Sex	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Male	31	27.4%
Female	82	72.6%
Total	113	100%

Table 1: Demographics of French 102 Students & French Majors and Minors Who Completed the Surveys (continued)

COLLEGE AT VCU		
College at VCU	Number of Students in College	Percentage of Students in College
Humanities & Sciences	67	59.3%
Mass Communications	13	11.5%
Other	20	17.7%
Missing Values	13	11.5%
Total	113	100%
GPA		
GPA Ranges	Number of Students with GPA	Percentage of Students with GPA
3.5-4.0	34	30.1%
3.0-3.49	37	32.7%
2.5-2.99	31	27.4%
Below 2.5	8	7.1%
Missing Values	3	2.7%
Total	113	100%
PAST GRADES IN FRENCH		
Type of Past French Student	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
A/B student	72	63.8%
B/C student	32	28.3%
C/D student	9	7.9%
Total	113	100%
EXPECTED GRADE IN FRENCH - SPRING 2001 SEMESTER		
Expected Grade	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
A	56	49.6%
B	48	42.5%
C	5	4.4%
D	3	2.7%
Missing Values	1	.8%
Total	113	100%

Table 2: Interviewee Demographics

Student (Pseudonym)	Age	Current Level of French Study	Beginning of French Study	GPA	Focus Group Participant	Studied/Visited Abroad	Class Where Observed
Continuing Students							
1. Bree	24	Major	College freshman	3.3	No	Study abroad	FREN 422-Cinema; FREN 301-Advanced Grammar & Writing
2. Eryn	21	Minor	8th grade	3.82	No	Study abroad	FREN 422-Cinema
3. Jen	27	Planning to major	Junior high	3.21	No	No	FREN 102
4. Laurette	20	Major	7th grade	3.4-3.6	Yes	Planning to study abroad	FREN 301-Advanced Grammar & Writing
5. Laurie	21	Major	College freshman	3.95	No	Study abroad	FREN 422-Cinema
6. Mandie	18	Major	8th grade	3.8	Yes	Planning to be an exchange student	FREN 301 - Advanced Grammar & Writing
7. Rebecca	22	Major	8th grade	3.something	No	Planning a semester or summer abroad	FREN 102
8. Selthy	21	Planning to minor	10th grade	3.0	No	No	FREN 102
Non-Continuing Students							
1. Alceste	26	French 102	8th grade	3.9-4.0	Yes	Visited	FREN 102
2. Christina	24	French 102	10th grade	2.3	No	No	FREN 102
3. Margie	19	French 102	3 years in high school	3.8	Yes	Visited	FREN 102
4. Nique	21	French 102	9th grade	2.5	No	No	FREN 102
5. Noelle	21	French 102	2 years in high school	3.0	No	No	FREN 102
6. Sally	29	French 102	2 years in high school	3.6	No	Visited	FREN 102
7. Vaneta	21	French 102	3 years in high school	2.73	No	No	FREN 102
8. Yasmine	20	French 102	8th grade	2.5	No	No	FREN 102

Focus Group

By referring to Table 2, the reader is able to see that of the 16 interviewed students, four agreed to involve themselves further in the study by participating in a 90-minute focus group meeting held the final week of classes. Following the interviews, the researcher requested students' attendance at the focus group meeting, at which time students indicated their preference for continuing further in the study. Again, an even number of continuing and non-continuing students were chosen. The researcher then contacted all of the students with prospective meeting dates, and as a result of the difficulty in coordinating schedules the final week of classes, only six students could participate (the researcher had hoped for six to eight). However, on the actual evening of the focus group meeting, only four students were present. Demographic information about those students is found in Table 2 on the previous page.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Maxwell (1996) discusses the importance of "internal generalizability" for qualitative studies, stating that the researcher's conclusions should be generalizable within the setting of the particular study. On the other hand, "external generalizability" is less important given that the researcher was trying to tell a story about participants' feelings, attitudes, and motivation in a certain situation. In the words of one VCU French professor, "VCU students are a mixed bag," and one of the delimitations of the study was that the conclusions about these students were not generalizable to a larger population. Nevertheless, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) construct of "transferability" did apply to the present study in that the results were transferable to other seemingly similar populations,

or to other students in large, urban, public colleges. Through the use of triangulation involving multiple data gathering methods, the researcher strengthened the study's applicability or utilization in other settings (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Another limitation of the present study related to the background of the researcher. Having been employed as a high school French teacher, the researcher's experiences and beliefs may have colored both the development of survey items and the questions in the interview guide. Every effort was made to diminish the researcher's preconceived notions of motivation issues that may have evolved from interaction with her own former French students. The researcher's beliefs were mentioned here because of the very nature of qualitative research – constant decision-making and judgment calls were necessary in every step of the process. By keeping a field log and field journal as recommended by McMillan and Schumacher (1997), the researcher carefully recorded the interactions with participants and the settings, as well as the feelings, decisions, and judgments that resulted from those interactions. Fortunately, the researcher's knowledge base and experience related to foreign language students at the high school level as opposed to those at the college level, so there were fewer expectations and ideas about this particular age group.

Another limitation of the study related to the instruments themselves, except for the human researcher instrument already addressed above. With regards to the surveys as well as the interviews and focus group meeting, the responses were self-reported. There was no way of knowing what may have happened in that student's life, previous class, or

even years ago that may have lead them to interpret the questions and/or answer them in a certain way.

Lastly, as a participant observer, it is always possible that the participants were not acting as they normally would because of the researcher's presence, and were therefore distorting the data (Patton, 1990). In addition, the researcher could only record field notes about actual physical activities, rather than the mental activities of the students that were probably the most important and telling. Nevertheless, triangulation of focus group and interview notes in which students did share their feelings, with the classroom observations, better enabled the researcher to gain information about the whole picture of language learning and student motivation.

Instrumentation

In a qualitative study, the primary instrument is the human researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Such a researcher must immerse himself in the setting where the participants of the study are located. Upon doing so, use of the secondary instruments begins; secondary instruments of the present study included surveys, one-on-one in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion, and classroom observations. Marshall and Rossman refer to participant observation as an "essential element of all qualitative studies" (p.78). Based on that belief, the researcher immersed herself in the setting and gained firsthand knowledge from the participants through the classroom observations. Nevertheless, when actually present in the classroom setting, the researcher role is one of "classroom observer", and not "participant observer," thus precluding live participation in the ongoing activities of the class. Survey distributor, focus group facilitator, and

interviewer are some of the other roles that the researcher played in this study; subsequent paragraphs reveal detailed information about the instruments that were used to act out those roles.

While there are instruments available from studies in this area, such as Gardner's (1985) "Attitude and Motivation Test Battery," Ramage's (1986) "Language Learner's Motivational and Attitudinal Survey," and Conrad's (1997) "University Student Opinion on the Foreign Language Learning Experience Survey," none encompass all of the issues this study addressed. The researcher designed two similar surveys (included in Appendix A) – one for French 102 students (81 questions) and one for French majors and minors (80 questions). Survey items consisted of both questions taken from the previous dissertations mentioned above, as well as Likert-type items and open-ended questions formulated by the researcher. These supplemental questions were based on the specific research goals of the present study, the researcher's experience both as a French teacher and a recent 102 level language student, and discussions with members of the faculty in the foreign language department prior to beginning the study.

In addition to requesting basic demographic information, the surveys assessed such factors as interest in foreign languages, attitudes toward learning French, motivation orientation, and the use of technology in the foreign language classroom. Specifically, the Likert-type questions are grouped into four subdivisions: 1) "I am studying French because...," 2) "How I learn best," 3) "Attitude and Motivation," and 4) "International importance of French." The open-ended questions were more probing, for example, asking students to describe their ideal classroom environment for studying French.

Other questions addressed the level of frustration that students experience in trying to learn a foreign language (as related to interlanguage transfer and self-efficacy theories), as well as ways in which professors and language departments might increase student motivation. Having students list all of the tasks and activities they have encountered during their study of French was an attempt to identify those types of activities that tend to be the most or least motivating for students. By the same token, students were asked to check off the types of technological tools they had encountered in their foreign language classes, and then indicate the specific ways in which the technology was utilized. These types of questions were the same for both French 102 students and French majors and minors. The questions that differentiated the two groups were based on their desire to persist or terminate language study. For example, language majors were asked to discuss their reasons for continuing language study, while 102 students were asked their reasons for discontinuing language study, if in fact, that was the case.

The survey for French 102 students was piloted in the summer 2000 session, in a French 102 class at VCU. Surveys were distributed to the 13 students present in the classroom on July 27, 2000. Instructions included responding to the survey, as well as critiquing the questions and content for clarity, and suggesting changes in format, layout, and word choice (Thomas, 1999). Just over half (7 out of 13) of the surveys were completed and returned the following day; no substantive or cosmetic changes were recommended. Since additional open-ended questions were developed for the 102 survey, after the initial pilot, the survey was redistributed to a French 102 section in the

fall 2000 semester in order to field test the supplemental questions. While a few changes were made to clarify wording, no substantive changes were made. The survey for French majors and minors was critiqued by one of the French major advisors so as not to deplete the small sample size of majors and minors for the actual study.

Questions found in the interview guide (see Appendix B) represented an attempt to probe deeper into and clarify issues that arose from the literature review, past studies, and the survey designed for the present study. All interviewees were asked to describe in-depth, their attitude towards the French language and culture, their ideal classroom environment for language learning, the level of proficiency they felt they had developed in French reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, and the types of activities and tasks they found motivating or non-motivating, both inside and outside the classroom.

Syllabi for the various courses (acquired either at the time of interview or directly from the professor) and contents from the Web Course in a Box sites were the last two pieces of the instrumentation puzzle. Content analysis of these documents provided additional insight into the types of activities that occurred in the classrooms at the various levels of study. How much technology was used in delivering lessons and what kinds of rules governed classroom behavior, were some of the other questions that this type of analysis helped to answer.

Procedure

In the third week of the spring 2001 semester, the researcher contacted all French 102 professors via email and a written letter, requesting 20 to30 minutes of class time in which to administer the surveys. All five of the French 102 sections were

surveyed between January 31, 2001 and February 12, 2001. Each professor allowed the researcher approximately 30 minutes to explain the study to the students and to distribute the surveys. The researcher awaited the completion of the surveys and then collected them before leaving the classroom, in order to increase the response rate. While in the classroom, the researcher tore the final page containing student contact information from the surveys so as to ensure anonymity when data analysis began.

Once all of the French 102 sections had received the survey, the researcher contacted those students who had volunteered for an in-depth interview about their study of French. Through the use of email, volunteers were thanked for completing the survey and asked if they planned to continue or discontinue their study of French after French 102. Students who were *not* continuing were identified and placed in a "Possible Interviewee" table kept by the researcher. Students who indicated their plans to major or minor in French were also placed in the pool, in case the desired sample number of declared majors and minors did not volunteer. Students who were unsure about their future in studying French were not entered in the pool.

Previous paragraphs describe the survey process for French 102 students. Administration of the French major and minor survey occurred in a slightly different manner. After discussing the possible options with the two French advisors, it was decided that the researcher would leave the surveys for the advisors themselves to distribute in their classes at an appropriate time, and have students return them upon completion. Advisors then placed the completed surveys in a box in the Department of Foreign Languages for the researcher. Surveys were also mailed twice (by the researcher

and one of the major advisors) to the two majors studying abroad in France for the semester and the two majors living in Southeastern Virginia.

While awaiting survey responses from the French major and minor group, the researcher conducted in-depth one on one interviews with non-continuing French students who had volunteered to participate further in the study. At the time of the interview, students signed the consent form (see Appendix B) and chose a pseudonym for anonymity purposes. In all, eight non-continuing students were interviewed by the researcher, two of whom participated via email. While email communication was not the preferred method for conducting the interviews, the researcher would have been unable to collect any interview comments from these students without this system because the pool of volunteers had been exhausted. Students interviewed via email were sent the questions from the interview guide and asked to express consent, choose a pseudonym, and respond with detailed answers. The researcher also requested the opportunity to follow-up with the interviewee regarding unclear responses.

As the researcher interviewed non-continuing French students, the question arose concerning *continuing* French 102 students and their thoughts on the issues the study addressed. While the continuing group was originally intended to include only French majors and minors, the researcher decided to interview two continuing students who were still at the 102 level, but who were in fact planning to declare a French major or minor within the year. Again, this decision was made based on the overall goal of hearing from French students at various levels of study.

At the end of each interviewing session, which were all tape-recorded with students' permission, participants were asked to complete the "Post-Interview Information Request Form" (see Appendix B) on which they indicated their pseudonym and their preference for participation in a focus group at a later date. The researcher hired a professional who transcribed the interviews as they were completed. Once the transcriptions were finished, the researcher checked them against the recorded interviews to ensure accuracy. In addition, the researcher recorded thoughts in a field journal over the course of the interviews, describing the participants' demeanor, some demographic information, and interesting points of view or comments that were expressed.

At the completion of the interview students were also asked to contribute documents for further analysis. The researcher specifically asked students to provide examples of activities or lessons completed in their French classes, along with the syllabi for French courses in which they were enrolled. While students spoke in detail about classroom activities, no documentation was provided for content analysis. However, the researcher did collect syllabi for each of the French classes, as well as information from the Web Course in a Box sites, once professors provided access.

When the researcher knew which 102 students were going to participate in the interviews, the scheduling of classroom observations began. Comparing what students said about their own motivation and how it related to the classroom environment, with what was actually observed in the students' classrooms, allowed for triangulation of the data. The researcher observed each of the five sections of French 102 as well as the two upper level French courses that contained all of the majors and minors who were

interviewed. Field notes were kept in an effort to "describe the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed," (Patton, 1990, p. 202).

While it is true that "student motivation" was a difficult phenomenon to observe, the researcher included in the field notes observable indicators of intrinsic motivation as identified by Stipek's (1998) research and Wlodkowski (1999, p. 326): Learners:

- Begin activities without resistance
- Prefer challenging aspects of tasks
- Spontaneously relate learning to outside interests
- Ask questions to expand their understanding beyond the learning at hand
- Go beyond required work
- Find joy in the process of learning – the studying, writing, reading
- Are proud of their learning and its consequences

Again, while observations of these characteristics in students was important, it was most beneficial when combined with self-reported indicators of student motivation obtained through the surveys, interviews, and focus group discussion.

The focus group meeting took place during the last week of classes. Six students confirmed their participation in the 90 minute meeting, however only four students were present that evening. Two of the group members were French 102 students who were not continuing their study of French beyond the 102 level, and the other two members were French majors. Questions and discussion were based on survey and interview results,

with a slant towards students' beliefs about the importance of learning a foreign language, factors that motivated them to do so, and suggestions they had for increasing foreign language enrollments in the advanced courses. In addition, the researcher read information from the spring 2001 ERIC/CLL News Bulletin regarding the international education policy initiative, and provided students with select quotes taken from the literature review (see Appendix B) to spur discussion.

Data Analysis

There were essentially two parts to the data analysis – the quantitative portion from the survey, and the qualitative portion from the open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus group meeting, and classroom observations. The survey consisted of questions that used Likert scale responses (strongly disagree, moderately disagree, slightly disagree, neutral, slightly agree, moderately agree, and strongly agree) as well as questions that asked students to give the frequency of an action they perform (such as spending time on French homework). Questions regarding demographic data and other general information (do you plan to take French after you have fulfilled your requirement?) yielded nominal data.

For the demographic and background questions, frequency tables were calculated, and the results arranged in Table 1 – Demographics of Survey Respondents. Next, the researcher grouped all of the Likert-type items on the survey based on their relation to the four research questions. Mean scores of all Likert-type items were then analyzed using Item 63 as the independent variable. Item 63 relates to students' plans to continue or discontinue the study of French: "Do you plan to take French after you have fulfilled

your language requirement?" Response choices included the following: a) Yes, for a major in French, b) Yes, for a minor in French, c) Yes, as an elective, d) Yes, for fun, e) No, but I do plan to take up a different language afterwards, f) No, I do not plan to take French or any other foreign language. In order to simplify the analysis, the six possible responses were collapsed into two – "Yes, I'm continuing French," or "No, I'm not continuing French." After the mean scores were tabulated, the researcher identified potentially meaningful (one to one and a half points) differences between continuing and non-continuing students.

Returning once again to the goal of the present study, to encourage college students to describe in their own words their reasons for persisting in or terminating language study, it is obvious why the major portion of the analysis was qualitative. Bogden and Biklen (1998) believe that the data analysis process begins with the searching and arranging of interview transcriptions, focus group transcriptions, and field notes from the classroom observations. Once all of the interviews had been transcribed, the researcher checked them against the recorded interviews to ensure accuracy. After editing the transcriptions as well as the notes from the classroom observations and the focus group meeting, the files were converted into text format and entered into the HyperResearch software program as sources, and preliminary analysis began. The four cases in HyperResearch included: continuing student interviews, non-continuing student interviews, observations, and focus group. Inductive analysis and data management, as alluded to above, began with the coding of categories or recurring topics that emerged from recorded interaction with the participants. The codes were then either grouped into

larger segments, or broken down into smaller "sub-codes," and units of data were labeled accordingly.

Actually, this qualitative analytical process was a cyclical one in which the researcher interacted with the data constantly, reviewing both present and past transcripts while continually making decisions about further data analysis. In fact, the researcher coded every source once and then when the number and names of codes had been altered, returned to all of the sources for recoding purposes. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) term "mutual simultaneous shaping" evokes a cyclical image as well – referring to the interaction of the human instrument with the data, and the ways in which both are affected as a result of this constant interaction. Finding significant patterns or relationships between the categories, based on the researcher's notion of significance and meaning, was the goal of this type of analysis (Patton, 1990).

Once the researcher had completed the coding process and formed some preliminary assertions, a HyperResearch report containing the code names and the accompanying source material, was given to a peer reviewer. The purpose of this step in the qualitative process was simply to revisit the data at another point in time with a fresh pair of eyes. A peer reviewer who was familiar with the topic and content of the dissertation was selected to cross-examine the data. The reviewer holds a Bachelor of Arts in French, with an endorsement in Secondary Education, and, at the time of data analysis, the reviewer worked as a researcher for a local education consortium, while maintaining continuing graduate student status as well. The peer reviewer independently reviewed the researcher's codes as well as student quotes with the goal of creating a

summary of findings by research question. More specifically, notes were taken by research question using the language of the informants, then after analysis of the notes, discussion was added to draft a summary report. Lastly, the peer reviewer read the researcher's preliminary assertions to ascertain where there was agreement or disagreement with regard to overall findings.

The next chapter entitled "Findings," describes the actual data that was collected throughout the study. Chapter Four begins with a vignette or hypothetical conversation between a continuing and a non-continuing student. The conversation is based on student quotes and interview data from the current study. In the second half of the chapter the reader will find information concerning data analysis and observed trends.

Chapter Four - Data Analysis

Chapter Four begins with a vignette describing a conversation between a continuing and a non-continuing French student, based on the data collected in the present study. Secondly the researcher presents the results of the data analysis, saving the discussion and recommendations for Chapter Five. The purpose of this study was to examine what motivates students enrolled in college level French classes to persist in their studies beyond the 102 level. Additionally, students who planned to terminate their study of French after the 102 course were questioned about their reasons for discontinuing. The study addressed the following research questions that will be discussed in the order presented below:

1. How do college students at different levels of language study perceive their motivation for language learning?
2. How do students describe the relationship of certain activities, the classroom climate, the role of the teacher, and the use of technology, to their motivation for language learning?
3. What specific reasons do students completing their language requirement give for not continuing with their foreign language studies?
4. What factors do language majors and minors attribute to the decision-making process that led them to continue with the advanced courses?

Vignette

It is a rainy March weekend in Richmond and foreign film enthusiasts and students alike have gathered at the Byrd Theatre in Carytown to take part in the ninth annual French Film Festival. Students enrolled in all levels of French at VCU are required to attend the festival, view two films, and then write a synopsis of such films in French or English, depending on the level. During one of the breaks where audience members have an opportunity to hear from the film director and ask questions, Jane and Paul are conversing in the theatre lobby. Jane is a French major who helped organize the festival as one of the requirements for her French Film class. Paul is a French 102 student completing his final course for the language requirement. He does not plan to continue his study of French beyond this semester.

Jane: Wow, it is so exciting to be in this environment! Did you just hear those three women outside speaking French? It's like Richmond has been transformed into this quaint French town. I just love hearing the language spoken and hearing the accents of native French speakers – it's such a beautiful language.

Paul: I guess. I don't understand anything they are saying. They speak way too fast. If my professor even speaks French at all in our class, it's really slow and "dumbed down." I'd never be able to understand a real French person speaking. That's why I think it's

stupid for us to even have to take this language – we'll never be able to speak it or understand it well, and what's the point anyway? I'll never use it.

Jane: What do you mean you'll never use it? Lots of companies want employees who can speak another language besides English. You'll also be able to travel to many French speaking countries, and read signs, menus, ask for directions, and understand basic sentences and phrases that people are saying.

Paul: Actually, I'd be a little more interested in French if we did learn practical information like that. Instead of having spontaneous conversations and discussions about French culture, we just go through our French book, page by page. It's so boring. Our professor tells us the page to turn to and we repeat sentences after she reads them, or we do fill-in-the-blank grammar exercises.

Jane: That does sound awful. My classes are nothing like that. I'm taking a French film course and a French literature course, and most of the time we look at different types of authentic French media and have discussions or write about what we experience. We use the Internet a lot when researching for our papers, but we also use it to view and listen to French television and radio broadcasts, and that's really neat. I can't understand every word, but it's so gratifying when I can get the gist of what the newscaster is saying.

Paul: It would be great to use the Internet like that for French – it would definitely help make it a more interesting subject to perform real tasks on the Web. Instead, our professor just adds on what she calls Internet assignments to the regular assignments. All

that means is additional quizzes and drill practice exercises in Web Course in a Box. That kind of practice helps on the tests because those questions are in the same short answer format, but it doesn't help develop speaking or listening skills.

Jane: Paul, you know you aren't limited to what your professor tells you to do. Simply go to the Internet yourself. The radio and news broadcasts are easy to find, and there are all kinds of other popular French magazine sites and international sites like the one for the United Nations that have information in French. I found lots of cool stuff that way, including some French music that I downloaded, along with the lyrics to see if I could understand them.

Paul: Yeah, but you are really into the language and the culture and you have this desire inside that makes you want to do all that stuff. I don't have any kind of motivation within that makes me want to learn French. I'm taking it because I have to and that's it. I never even realized how difficult a freshman course could be! I do enough now just to get by and pass the course for the credits, but if I was really into it and wanted to become fluent, it would take all my time, including time on the weekends and outside of class. You have to really practice speaking and listening to native speakers, and you have to want to really learn the language. Not to mention the great professor you need to have! That's another problem - my professor now, just like all the ones in the past, don't seem that into French either. Sure they follow along in the text, but they don't use other materials, and bring in speakers, and assign us French pen pals in another university or anything like that.

Jane: What about the French Film Festival? Your professor assigned that and it's a great outside-of-class cultural activity.

Paul: Don't even get me started on this festival. Yes, it's a neat idea and I probably would have come anyway because I like foreign films. There's just something about being told that I have to attend an event for part of my grade in French, when it's outside of class time and it costs money. I work on the weekends and don't have a great deal of extra time or spending money; I know there were lots of other students in my class who felt this was a burden as well. Maybe if we had some choice about attending this festival or performing some other outside activity, that might be better. But my professor would never go for that probably - she never gives us choices about our assignments, who we work with in groups, or even what kinds of stuff we might like to study over the course of the semester.

Jane: No wonder you don't think too highly of the language - your experience doesn't sound like a very positive one. Have you ever given any thought to traveling abroad or doing a study abroad? I did that last year, and it made all the difference in the world. That's when I decided to declare French as my major. I wasn't even that "gung ho" about French or going to France - I just wanted to get out of Richmond for a while. But it didn't take long for me to fall in love with the language and the culture. It's amazing the level of confidence in your listening and speaking abilities that you gain from spending time there. Maybe if you learned more about the experience you'd think about trying it...?

Paul: How am I going to learn more about it? We don't ever get any kind of information on fun stuff like that. Of course, you could provide me with all the information in the world, but without the thousands of dollars it takes to go, it wouldn't do me much good.

Jane: It doesn't cost that much! And besides, when you do a study abroad, you pay your tuition to VCU and then part of that money goes toward your international experience, and then there are loans, so it really is feasible.

Paul: The next film is getting ready to start, so I guess I better go back in so I'll have something to write my paper about. I just hope we don't have to say anything in class about the films. I'd much rather just write something.

Jane: I thought you said you wanted to practice speaking more and have more spontaneous conversations, like we do in the upper-level courses.

Paul: Sure, it sounds like a great idea, but at this point I don't like to speak aloud in class. I sound stupid. We've never practiced speaking, but some other people in the class obviously had great professors and are into French, so they speak really well. Those students are the only ones that speak in class, and they always raise their hand and answer questions, so the rest of us that can't speak French don't have to say a word. If I was younger and had an ear for languages I might actually put some more effort into this whole process, but since I'm 22 years old, I don't think I'm going to be able to learn a whole other language, unless I actually move to France!

Jane: Funny you should mention that. I have a job lined up at the embassy in Paris next year, so maybe in a couple of years I'll see you again at this festival and you won't even be able to tell me from a native speaker!

Paul: I look forward to it, and the day when I can come to this without being told that I have to!

The vignette above was written for the purpose of describing how the major themes of this study apply to "real" students in a "real" language learning setting. The remainder of Chapter 4 explains the actual findings on which those themes are based.

Data Analysis by Individual Research Questions

Before data analysis based on the research questions is presented, it is useful to articulate which open-ended items in the surveys relate to particular research questions. The following item numbers refer to the "Survey for VCU French Majors and Minors," although the same open-ended questions are also found in the survey for 102 students.

Research Question	Item Number on Survey
Question 1	70
Question 2	64,65,66,67,71
Question 3	72
Question 4	62,63

Specific Likert-type items from the survey were also grouped and analyzed based on the four research questions. In the paragraphs that follow, these specific items are shown in tables in the quantitative analysis portion under each research question.

Question 1: College Students' Perceptions of Their Motivation for Language Learning

The data discussed in the following paragraphs were derived from students' responses to a variety of questions asked during the interview:

- How do you feel when people say that studying French is a waste of time?
- What could professors do to increase enrollment in upper level French courses?
- Generally speaking, how would you describe your attitude towards the French language and culture?
- How would you describe you own motivation for studying French? (Focus Group)

Value of learning a second language.

While both continuing and non-continuing French students mentioned the career opportunities available to bilingual candidates, many students also mentioned the inherent value that comes from being able to speak another language. Continuing students referred to "feeling good" about themselves and having a "feeling of fulfillment" from being able to relate to another culture and speak another language. One French major, Laurie, stated it in this manner: "It's just very soothing to me to speak another language, to have control over another way of thinking."

While it may appear to be quite a leap from students' feelings about speaking French to their perceptions of motivation for language learning, examining what students

had to say about intrinsic motivation makes that leap more credible. Jen-C[1] believes that "motivation is internal," and Alceste-NC, a focus group participant, declared that one has "to have a lot of personal motivation to be interested in the subject [French]." While Jordan-NC does not intend to continue her study of French, she believes that students can easily succeed in achieving an "A" in French with reinforcement from the teacher, patience, and "a desire to learn." Vaneta-NC's feelings demonstrate the difficulty in trying to separate portions of data and code them, or label them according to specific characteristics. She indicated that "French [was] a good language to learn, but not only [does one] have to be motivated to learn it, [one has] to have teachers who are willing to work with you and teach it properly." Again, Vaneta-NC validates students' beliefs that motivation for language learning is internal, but she also sheds light on other factors affecting motivation as well. The researcher addresses such factors in the next section on Question 2.

When asked to describe her attitude towards the French language and culture, Laurie-C stated quite simply, "I'm enamored." Continuing students responded to the same open-ended question on the survey with a variety of positive adjectives, but also others that offer some insight into their perceived level of motivation: *persistent, discouraged but stubborn, challenged, very motivated to learn, very determined,* and *will never stop learning until fluent*. Secondly, continuing students referred to an attitude

[1] The student's pseudonym with a "C" after it denotes a continuing student. Likewise, in the same sentence, Alceste-NC denotes a non-continuing student.

based on extrinsic motivational reasons such as wanting to travel to France, wanting to graduate, and wanting to use French in both the business world and in times of leisure.

Non-continuing students listed more negative phrases and adjectives than positive ones: *have to do it* [study French] *for credit, frustrating, soured, hopeless,* and *pessimistic.* In descriptions of their attitude, many non-continuing students mentioned actually liking French, liking learning a new language, and thinking it was useful, but at the same time, they described the difficulty of learning French, the excessive time and sense of commitment needed to study it properly, and the belief that it was too late to begin language learning.

Student beliefs about language learning.

This last notion referring to the correlation between age and language acquisition is the subject of much debate among language theorists; participants in the present study expressed their thoughts about the issue as well. Continuing and non-continuing students alike mentioned their belief that younger people are able to better and more quickly learn a second language:

- *In a lot of other countries they start at a much younger level where it would probably be a lot easier to do the speaking.*
- *I'm too old to learn it.*
- *You take kids when they're two...that's when kids learn languages.*
- *The language acquisition device kicks off at like 9 I think.*

- *It's harder to learn a language when you're older.*
- *I think it's too late to learn a foreign language and be good at it.*

Students also believe that "time and study commitment," as it was called in the researcher's coding, affects their perceptions of motivation. Briefly, this refers to the notion that students are somewhat shocked when they begin studying French, at the amount of hours and effort that must be afforded a "freshman" course, particularly considering the basic (at best) level of French that is achieved; this topic will be addressed in the section "Question 3 - Reasons Students Give for Terminating French Study."

Finally, since the research question relates to students' perceptions of their own motivation, the researcher asked interviewees what they believed foreign language departments and professors could do in order to increase student motivation and consequently increase enrollments in the upper levels. Suggestions by continuing students and focus group participants centered around taking action at the lower levels, as students are getting their first taste of college French. The following ideas were suggested:

- Begin a French club
- Show screenings of French films on campus
- Promote study abroad

- Begin programs to educate students at the lower levels on the importance of knowing a second language, and how to use such an asset in the future.
- Emphasize the language as a means of communication, rather than a means to fulfill a requirement.
- Move beyond the use of standard media with cartoons, movies, etc.
- Incorporate childlike activities into learning the language at all levels

Quantitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis (using 113 student surveys) for the first research question was based on eight Likert-type items from the survey – numbers 29, 33-36, 39, and 46 (See Appendix A). The scale was 1=strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, and 6=strongly agree. The independent variable involved students' plan to continue or discontinue the study of French, thus comparisons were made between the mean scores of continuing students and the mean scores of non-continuing students.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 1	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
29	4.88	4.06
32	4.61	3.24
33	4.90	4.00
34	4.46	4.46
35	4.96	2.97
36	5.16	2.78
39	3.84	4.78
46	2.60	3.57

With almost two and a half points difference between them (5.16 and 2.78), the mean scores varied the most for item 36, again indicating continuing students' strong internal desire to learn French. The second meaningful difference with almost 2 points variance (4.96 and 2.97) involved item 35, indicative of continuing students' desire to learn French for pleasure. Interestingly enough, mean scores for item 34 were exactly the same (4.46), signaling both groups' satisfaction with the course, as long as something was learned. The final meaningful scores varied by almost one and a half points (4.61 and 3.24) on item 32. Continuing students more strongly agreed that they make a conscious effort to use as much French as possible in the classroom, especially considering non-continuing students' expressed anxieties over speaking aloud in class.

Question 2: Relationship among Activities, Classroom Climate, Teacher, and Use of Technology to Motivation for Language Learning

Given the broad scope of this question, the researcher divided it into four sections for analysis purposes. Each of the sections below examines the relationship between students' motivation and the following: a) activities (both inside and outside the classroom), b) the classroom climate, c) the role of the teacher, and d) the use of technology.

Activities both inside and outside the classroom.

On the topic of activities, the interview guide contained questions such as the following:

- Can you give examples of activities, inside or outside the classroom, that you find most beneficial and motivating to learning French?
- What kinds of activities do you find less satisfactory and non-motivating when studying French?
- What, if any, types of activities do you engage in outside of French class that allow you to use your knowledge of French or French culture?

A French major who did not study French in high school but rather began studying it for the first time at VCU, articulated her answer about beneficial classroom activities clearly:

> *Well, my first few years, when I was not very fluent at all, I think speaking with other people that were French speakers that were very patient with me, that wanted to show me, I think at the same time, that it was a beautiful way of communicating and that it opens up doors to other opinions and other world views. I think that really kept me going, that I was going to be open to a whole new community of people that I wouldn't ordinarily be able to speak to... Using the language in a context, the context of a real means of communication, not as a means of filling in blanks on a test and that sort of thing. I think it was using it in that context that really motivated me to continue.* (Laurie-C)

Laurie's response is consistent with other responses from both continuing and non-continuing students, in particular the phrase about using the language in context and

not as a means of filling in blanks. Using the textbook and accompanying workbook as the basis of the course and the basis of all activities performed during the class period is the single most non-motivating factor for students. One non-continuing student suggested that this lack of oral communication and speaking practice in the classroom deters even more students from continuing in French, claiming that the text and written exercises make it harder for students to see the functionality of learning a second language. Christina-NC also referred to wanting to use the language more to communicate rather than to complete exercises. When asked what activities she found most non-motivating, she indicated the following: "Going by the book...I'm one that's all for routine and schedules and stuff, but every now and then I would like to have something different. Everyday we start on the same page where we left off the day before. Every day she says something and we repeat it...the word gets stuck in your head, but you really don't learn how to use it, when to use it, [or] why you would want to use it."

While there is certainly value in knowing which activities students wish not to engage in during class time, there is especially value in knowing the types of activities they do find motivating and beneficial to language learning. The following activities, some of which came from their high school experiences, were suggested by students in French 102 courses:

- Going outside of the classroom to use the language in a "real" environment (Selthy-C described visiting a local art museum and taking a guided tour in French and being able to speak to the guide in French when asking questions.)
- Playing games such as Bingo to learn numbers and other basic information.
- Using music as a medium for learning; i.e. singing songs such as "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," or more complex songs for which the professor has provided lyrics to the students.
- Using other forms of media such as films, slides from actual travel to France or Francophone countries, and novels, thereby delving into more of the French culture in addition to the French language.
- Having theme parties or classes that included a cultural activity such as cooking a French meal.

A few of the items listed above describe activities students have engaged in during their French study at VCU, but many of the activities were from pre-college language learning experiences. In contrast, majors and minors listed motivational activities that they were currently performing in their spring semester classes. Mandie-C referred to the grammar software critiques that she and her classmates were undertaking for a French professor. Students were asked to use the different programs and assess which one would be the most beneficial and worthwhile for VCU to purchase for mass language student usage. Performing 20 hours of community service is another activity

that students in the Advanced Grammar and Writing course (FREN 301) praised. While the number of hours was non-negotiable, the specific activities that students chose were individualized. Some students met weekly with "speaking partners" or other non-English speaking VCU students, French-speaking if possible. Other students tutored in French as needed, and provided aid in the Foreign Language Lab. In this same advanced writing course, students also referred to the peer editing exercises they were engaged in as motivational. "Peer editing" in this sense referred to students' critiquing of other students' works before turning in final drafts to the professor.

Another motivating experience students described originated during their enrollment in advanced literature and poetry courses. They reported that being able to actually read the literature in the language in which the author wrote it, and being able to discuss its meaning and significance with other students and the professor reinforced the fact that language learning was actually occurring. "You realize that you know a lot more about the language than you thought you did and you realize that your comprehension is a lot better than you thought it was...that sort of inspires you to say ok, I really am learning this other language...I can understand this other language, so maybe I should pursue it more" (Laurette-C).

Beneficial and motivating activities performed outside the classroom were also discussed. The French Film Festival, held every spring at the Byrd Theater in Richmond,

was cited by many as a rare opportunity to experience and enjoy the French culture without having to travel to France:

> *It's almost like being in this weird small little culture for a couple of days when you're hearing French even outside of the movies. You're walking outside...to get something to drink and there's people talking in French over there and there's people talking in French over here, which is interesting because you realize that even just from a business aspect, you could work with these people eventually, and being able to speak their language would help* (Focus Group Participant-C)

This was the researcher's first time attending the Festival, and the student's description above was quite accurate – students, local merchants, "regular" people were conversing in French as if they were viewing films in Paris as opposed to Richmond, Virginia. Despite the reservations that students had regarding the requirement to see at least 2 films, which will be discussed later, the response to the festival was largely positive. Advanced students raved about the "coolness" of the opportunity "to sit at the table with the directors and be able to speak with them and ask them questions about their work" (Eryn-C).

Along these same lines, another highly recognized outside motivational activity was actual travel to France or a French-speaking country for pleasure and/or study abroad. As Bree-C indicated, "study abroad made all the difference in the world," and according to what students said, that may also be the case with regards to its relevance to

motivation. Unfortunately, many students mentioned a significant drawback as well, the high cost of travel and study abroad. "Money is a huge issue, and I think tons more people would do it because first of all you get to go to a foreign country and that's just cool, but money is the major issue. But there is a huge difference of the level of confidence and competence when you have done the semester abroad. I know plenty of people who when they did the 101 level were awful...but they did the study abroad and it made a huge difference" (Focus Group Participant-NC). The only piece of disconfirming evidence relating to the benefit of study abroad came from Mandie-NC, and it is important to note that she was referring to a visit to France rather than study over an extended period: "It was a frustrating experience in general...everyone that I spoke to was nice, but as a whole society, they were so annoying and it was a huge setback to my whole French learning career."

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis (using 113 student surveys) for the first part of question two, the relationship between instructional activities and student motivation, concentrated on 8 Likert-type items – numbers 18, 21, 22-25, 28, and 52.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 2 (Part 1)	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
18	5.30	4.87
21	4.70	4.06
22	4.80	4.49
23	3.60	4.02
24	4.32	3.83

Survey Items Related to Research Question 2 (Part 1)	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
25	4.34	3.71
28	5.08	3.71
52	5.00	4.35

There was only item on which the two groups' scores varied almost one and a half points (5.08 and 3.71), and this was item 28. Understandably, continuing students with their higher confidence level in speaking French more strongly agreed that they wanted more interaction with native French speakers. Non-continuing students were situated between agreement and disagreement on the scale, perhaps signifying both their awareness that additional practice was needed with "real" speakers, and their awareness that their competence and confidence levels in speaking French were too low to benefit from conversing with native speakers.

Classroom Climate.

All of the motivating activities described above share a common characteristic - they involve using the language in a "real" situation, as an authentic means of communication in a purposeful situation. The types of instructional activities that professors utilize, however is not the only piece of the motivational puzzle with regards to the classroom. The climate inside the classroom plays a role in students' motivation for language learning as well. Document analysis of the French 102 syllabi revealed the importance of this concept: "In order to speak freely, everyone must feel comfortable in

this class, and such an atmosphere is based on mutual respect." To learn more about the classroom environments in which students were situated, the researcher asked the following questions:

- Could you give me an approximate percentage of the amount of English spoken in your French class, versus the amount of French, and how do you feel about that ratio? (Interview Guide)
- How likely are you to initiate questions and/or comments in French during the class, and what might you say? (Interview Guide)
- Please describe your ideal classroom environment for studying French (amount of French spoken, types of activities performed, characteristics of professor and other students, etc.) (Survey)

The amount of French spoken in the classroom was not an issue for the continuing students, as all of their advanced courses were conducted almost entirely in French, much to their liking. Observations of the French Cinema course and the Advanced Grammar and Writing course confirmed that this was in fact the case for these two classes. Of the non-continuing students, many indicated a preference for approximately 20-30% of the class to be conducted in English, however that percentage went as high as 50% for those who preferred a half English/half French classroom.

While only a couple of students indicated the percentage of English spoken in their 102 class was really that high, one 102 student expressed quite the opposite

experience in her class: "I would say we speak 2% English and that is no exaggeration... We have to ask permission to speak in English, and I think that's good. My apprehension is with the directions. I need to have directions in English as well as French; I am too stressed out or my level of anxiety is too high" (Sally-NC). This concern was one of several pertaining to the use of too much French in the classroom. Almost all students believed the use of oral French was essential to effectively learning the language, but at the same time they stressed the need for professors to use English when explaining difficult grammar concepts, or even to explain simple concepts, if it was obvious the class was not understanding the material in French.

Another factor that related to the classroom climate is the student's likelihood of asking questions aloud during class. Six of the eight interviewed continuing students indicated that they were likely to initiate questions during their French class. Interestingly, the response was much the same for non-continuing students, with five of the eight indicating a likelihood of asking questions during class. The difference lies in the way the questions were being asked - non-continuing students stated that they asked questions because they were allowed to do so in English, whereas advanced students always asked their questions in French. Only three non-continuing students admitted that they were not likely to ask questions; their reasons for not doing so follow:

- *...I feel kind of stupid. I know it's dumb to feel that way but I feel kind of slow that sometimes I don't know what's going on. But if it's really pressing*

and I really want to know, I'll raise my hand and ask her during class. Otherwise, I'll wait until after and just kind of go to her on a one-on-one basis. I do try in French sometimes, but the majority of the time I just do English (Vaneta-NC)

- *I never raise my hand to answer questions even when I think I know the answer. I really do not feel comfortable saying things in class because of possibly not knowing what the others do. My favorite phrase is "Je ne sais pas," (I don't know) or "Je ne comprends pas," (I don't understand) because half of the time when asked a question I do not understand...* (Jordan-NC)

More about students' anxiety level in the French classroom will be discussed in the next section on hindrances to continuing foreign language study.

Lastly, with regards to describing the ideal language classroom environment, students listed several other suggestions, many of which have already been or will be discussed further in another section: more oral discussion and dialogue, group work, more visual aids (maps, slides, magazines), required participation by all students, more cultural activities, more interactivity, a more creative atmosphere, and even more written and workbook activities. Fifty survey respondents mentioned the French professor. The ideal classroom would include a professor who spoke clearly and loudly, explained concepts thoroughly in English if necessary, and was patient, encouraging, understanding, organized and outgoing. In the next section the researcher presents

findings on the relationship between the role of the teacher and student motivation. Perhaps one French major said it best, "...I think the teacher reflects a lot; if the teacher is not motivated, it's hard to get the students motivated" (Bree-C).

As the reader may recall, the researcher also performed many classroom observations as a way of triangulating the data collected through the surveys and student interviews. With regards to the classroom climate (the amount of French spoken, the overall attitude and personality of the students and professor), the researcher found the French classroom environment to be almost exactly as students described. Seating charts drawn by the researcher revealed that while all three continuing 102 students sat in the front of the classroom, many of the non-continuing students sat in the front as well. Seating was not an issue for the advanced French students because the class enrollments were so small, everyone could be characterized as sitting in the front. Along those same lines, the researcher tallied the amount of times interviewed students participated during the observed class. Again, such tallies did not pertain to the advanced level courses, which could be characterized as a conversation in French between all students and the professor. To give an example of the seemingly similar participation levels of some continuing and non-continuing students, one can examine the number of times Sally-NC, Alceste-NC, and Jen-C participated during a 75-minute class: 15 times, 9 times, and 5 times respectively. Results were similar for all of the French 102 observations. On a final note, the following chart shows observed actions identified by the researcher as

"motivational" or conversely, "non-motivational" signs, however many were carried out by both continuing and non-continuing students alike.

Motivational	Non-Motivational
Student takes notes, copies from the board, follows along with the text	Student sits with the book open perhaps, but does not appear to be mentally engaged.
Student repeats words/phrases aloud as requested by professor.	Student makes no attempt to repeat after the professor.
Student compares/relates new content to previously gained knowledge.	Student asks no further questions/makes no comments about new material.
Professor notes orally student's tendency to write emails in French to her, after class and during the week, in order to ask questions.	
Student engages in spontaneous participation.	Student participation is minimal - in some cases, only when asked a direct question by the professor.
Student comes to class with homework completed and all other materials necessary for class.	Student has to share text with another student because he forgot his own text.
Student begins classroom activities as soon as they are assigned (i.e. immediately gets into groups and begins dividing up tasks and asking pertinent questions).	Student reluctantly begins activity at a slow pace, or chooses not to participate altogether, simply remaining in seat.
Student uses glossary or French dictionary during the class to get the definition of words she does not understand.	Student may have text open, but never uses the glossary or tries to answer posed questions by using information from the text.
Student answers often in French and occasionally tries to ask a follow-up question in French.	Student typically uses English when he responds, and always asks questions in English, if at all.
Student is aware of upcoming deadlines and/or tests and quizzes.	Student acts as if she has never heard of the assignment that is due or the test that is approaching.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis (using 113 student surveys) for the second part of question two, relating to the classroom climate, was based on Likert-type items 15-17, 30 and 31.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 2 (Part 2)	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
15	3.88	2.05
16	4.10	3.08
17	3.38	3.98
30	4.52	3.60
31	3.04	3.43

The largest variance in the mean scores was on item 15 (3.88 and 2.05), with non-continuing students disagreeing with the idea that they learn best in a classroom where only French is spoken. The mean score of continuing students (3.88) is between disagreement and agreement with the same statement.

Role of the Teacher.

In addition to describing the ideal classroom environment, which stimulated many students to talk about their professors, interviewees were also asked to list characteristics of an effective French professor and/or conversely, characteristics of a less effective French professor. The following are examples of continuing students' responses:

- *I think a great professor is very motivated and very in love with the language. Because right now...everyone's scoffing at the idea of learning a language and*

you really have to just ignite some sort of spark in a student and it may not necessarily be a love for a foreign language but it's going to be a love for learning, or like me, a love for communicating. (Laurie-C)

- *For a French teacher obviously good language skills, patience...and just an interest in the language and culture, and creative because you can't learn it out of a book, so they have to be able to come up with activities that will interest people.* (Eryn-C).
- *I think [professors] are good [when] they are truly interested in the subject they are teaching...I can sit there when they're teaching something and you can tell they're really excited about it and it makes me excited. It makes me want to learn why they're so excited about it.* (Laurette-C).

French majors also referred to the closeness of the French Department as a potential factor in student motivation. Bree-C made reference to a certain professor who constantly asked her if she was going to continue taking French and in particular, if she was going to take her course the following semester. The same student expressed gratitude for the approachability and closeness the small French faculty shared with the students. "I think we've got a really good faculty, but it's a small faculty; I think we could use a lot more. There's so many adjuncts, it would be nice if some of them were more permanent. But the few people that we do have, they're really involved - I'm basically on

a first name basis with most of them. They give you their home phone numbers...it's just kind of a very tight knit faculty, so I think that keeps me motivated."

Professor control was another factor examined with regards to the role of the teacher and student motivation. The factor appeared to have two distinct definitions in students' eyes. In one sense "professor control" referred to the amount of control the professor had over the actual content and instructional leadership in the course. In another sense, "professor control" referred to classroom management and the ability of the professor to keep things running smoothly in the classroom. Students' ideas about these two concepts were very clear.

For the first time this year, students in all levels of French were required to attend two films at the French Film Festival, and then complete a writing assignment and perhaps engage in oral discussion (at the advanced levels) based on the films. Generally speaking, attendance and the assignment accounted for approximately 10 percent of students' final grade. As the following quotes demonstrate, students greatly resented this exertion of professor control over the course, especially since they had to pay a fee in order to attend the festival. It is important to note that the cost of attending the films seemed to irritate students the most, as many indicated that they worked on weekends (the festival was Friday through Sunday), and they simply did not want to pay an extra ten dollars for taking the French course. Students also had the option to attend the

additional festivities such as dinner with the film directors and see all of the films for a total of 25 dollars.

- *Personally, I would have gone anyway because I enjoy them [French films], but it's just something about somebody telling me that I have to - that pissed me off.* (Alceste-NC)
- *...Forcing people to go - a lot of people in my class were really mad about that. I mean they ended up going but they were really mad* (Margie-NC)
- *Activities that I see as less motivating are when we are required to do something instead of being asked if we are interested...such as the French Film Festival.* (Nique-NC)

Whereas non-continuing students protested assignments such as attending the French Film Festival, continuing students often cited the variety of choice they had in assignments. For example, in the advanced writing course, students were able to choose from a selection of topics rather than being required to write on a certain subject. In this same course, as previously mentioned, students chose the type of community service they wished to perform in order to meet the 20 hours required for the course. Here Mandie-C refers to the peer editing exercises discussed earlier from the writing class: "It wasn't something that was originally in the plan, but as a class we decided that that would be really good, and it's been really helpful. We read through and critique style."

The previous paragraphs describe the type of "professor control" that students do not wish to see in their French classes. Examining the other type of "professor control," linked to classroom management, is essential as well. Again, most of the comments listed below occurred when students were asked to list favorable or unfavorable characteristics pertaining to French professors.

- *Stricter. That they know how to handle a class, they can keep it under control, and get the class to do what they want them to do.* (Selthy-C)
- *Someone that's not too lenient, someone that's not too strict, compassionate I guess...someone that has understanding of what it means to be a student.* (Laurie-C)
- *I really don't feel like I've learned very much...She's a real nice teacher but she's very very lenient.* (Christina-NC)
- *...She didn't know a lot of what was going on and she got used by a lot of the slacker students, and we didn't do a whole lot of work - we didn't learn a lot.* (Alceste-NC)

Congruent with the researcher's initial desire to steer away from the teaching of French and focus on students' learning, there were only a couple of Likert-type items that related to the "role of the teacher" – items 19 and 20. There was less than a half of a point difference between the mean scores of continuing and non-continuing students; both

groups slightly agreed that they wanted their teacher to correct mistakes they made in their spoken and written French.

Use of Technology.

The final portion of Research Question Two involves the possible relationship between the use of technology in the French classroom and student motivation. Generally students had a favorable attitude towards the use of technology, however there were some mixed feelings about Web Course in a Box. Web Course in a Box (WCB) is a course authoring tool that allows professors to put course syllabi online, along with supplemental readings and multiple-choice grammar quizzes and exercises, so that students can access them with their computer and a password. In terms of WCB usage, mostly French 102 students described using it in their classes, while the French majors and minors discussed other uses of technology more frequently. A technology question was asked on the survey as well as in the interviews:

- What types of technological tools (computer programs, Internet, WCB, video-streaming, etc.) have been used in your study of French? Please describe how it was used and how that affected your learning and/or your desire to learn French. (Interview Guide)
- Please check all of the following technological tools that have been used in your French classes here at VCU: Internet, E-mail, WCB, Tape Recorder,

Online grammar exercises and quizzes, VCR, Electronic Bulletin Board, Online video, Teleconference/lecture online with native speaker. (Survey)

- What has been your favorite technological tool used in learning French? Please describe specifically how that tool was used as a language learning aid. (Survey)

Document analysis also revealed information about technology use on the standard French 102 syllabus used by all of the professors in the study: "Students are required to use the Department of Foreign Languages Learning Center to develop their communication skills. They will take advantage of the audio tapes, instructional software, computer-based drills, and taped news programs (SCOLA) made available to them."

On both the Major/Minor Survey, as well as the French 102 Survey, all of the items were checked at least once, with electronic bulletin board, online video, and online teleconference/lecture with native speaker, being the least utilized (one or two checks total for both groups). Most selected was WCB with 101 checks, and the Internet and tape-recorder followed at 85 checks each. With regards to WCB, many students also listed it as their favorite technological tool. The WCB benefits most often cited were the immediate feedback provided when completing exercises and the additional practice opportunities it provided outside the classroom. At the same time, students also found

WCB to be simply an extension of the textbook and an additional way to prepare themselves for the rote material found on tests.

Granted, the courses that French majors and minors are enrolled in and the nature of their advanced skills may have dictated their diverse technology uses, however their responses are worth noting as well. In particular, Laurie-C referred to her use of a laser disk series entitled "Dans La Peau Francaise" (In French Skin): "You got to watch these people having discussions, French people, and doing all this body movement...and so you learned their movements along with their language...and now I pay a lot of attention to body movements to help me understand too. This was part of a class, but I think maybe I abused it almost because it was fun. Some of them were like heated lovers' arguments and it was really interesting; it wasn't just like hey, how are you doing?" Kara-C referred to using the Internet as a way of searching for additional information about authors and works she was studying in her French literature course. Students in the French Cinema course obviously discussed the value of viewing French films, including the weekly repetition of films without subtitles, which increased listening skills. At the time the researcher observed this course, students were using a VCR as well as a DVD player and some online videos as part of their final presentations for the class. Other students, even continuing 102 students, talked about using the Internet to listen to French news programs and radio broadcasts, as well as undertaking practical tasks such as searching for apartments in France.

Most of the questions relating to technology were open-ended, however two Likert-type items on the survey were analyzed quantitatively – numbers 26 and 27. The mean scores for both groups were again very close. For the most part both continuing and non-continuing students like watching French videos and French telecasts, however they were both somewhat undecided (continuing: 3.6, non-continuing: 3.29) regarding the use of additional Internet and other forms of technology in their language learning.

Question 3: Reasons Students Give for Not Continuing with Their Study of French

When continuing and non-continuing students alike discussed the use of technology, their attitude was rather indifferent. Nevertheless, when some of those same students were asked to articulate their reasons for discontinuing the study of French, they were often very sure of their responses which included the following:

- *I don't have an ear for it*
- *Not enough room in my schedule*
- *Not interested in French*
- *More interested in my major*
- *I'm not really learning it*
- *Not enough time to develop the language, to adequately prepare for the extensive learning ahead*

The questions that students were responding to were interview questions such as "Why have you decided to end your study of French," and "Are there any factors that would

persuade you to continue (room in schedule, certain type of course, etc.)?" In addition, other student comments that related to Research Question Three came from items on the interview guide such as "How adequately prepared, with regards to your French listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, are you to use your French outside the classroom," and "What advice would you have for incoming freshman regarding the study of French at VCU?"

Students' Feelings of Preparedness for Upper-Level French Courses.

These latter questions relate to students' reasons for not continuing because many non-continuing students indicated that they had not followed the advice they were hypothetically giving freshmen beginning their study of French. For that reason, students did not feel prepared to go on to the more advanced levels; essentially they had done as little as possible to simply "get by" and complete the requirement. The following are examples of advice students gave, but often admittedly did not heed themselves:

- *If they're really serious about it, they would have to talk to the teacher, talk to the foreign language department, and they would have to work really hard themselves. If they were really serious about speaking it and learning it properly, laying the foundation from the beginning. They would have to make a commitment to themselves and to their teacher that they would actually study every day for a certain amount of hours...if you were really serious*

about it you would put in the effort, especially over the weekend, you would do a lot of work for the class. (Vaneta-NC)

- *You do have to put a little bit of time into it. It's a four-credit class...It's a whole other language so you have to put some extra time into that class as far as doing the activities and learning the vocabulary. There's so much to learn that you do have to put some extra time into it.* (Rebecca-C)
- *Take it* [French] *as soon as you get here. Take it every single consecutive semester, and don't take it lightly.* (Christina-NC)
- *Make sure that they do a lot of reading on their own outside...and to speak a lot, read a lot of French - it's really hard to do that.* (Selthy-C)
- *I would advise freshmen to ask questions, to get help outside of class, and to find resources that may help them more such as the WCB, the Internet, perhaps another student who knows or understands French somewhat better.* (Nique-NC)
- *Plan to study an hour and a half to two hours at least for every hour of French class and that is the bare minimum...so be prepared.* (Sally-NC)
- *I thought it would be an easy grade but later found out that great effort must be incorporated to get that. Now I do not believe it is easy. Well, it could be if the student takes the time required to make an "A".* (Jordan-NC)

Again, one of the questions the researcher asked interviewees was how prepared they felt about their ability to speak, listen to, read and write French. Student responses seemed indirectly related to discontinuing language study. If students felt inadequately prepared in the lower level courses, how would they perform in the more advanced levels? What would be the purpose of continuing? Of the students interviewed, all of the continuing students expressed feeling prepared, comfortable, and fine about speaking French. A few of these same students expressed concern over grammatical errors they often made, but were quick to point out that they could still understand and be understood. Often times, they also felt more prepared in the other skills such as reading and writing than they did in speaking. Researcher observations did in fact reveal that the majors and minors spoke freely in the classroom without apparent worry for perfect grammatical usage.

On the other hand, all of the non-continuing students stated that they were "not prepared at all," "they didn't know much," or that they could only perform basic oral tasks such as "asking for a certain number of items, letting a person know they didn't understand, asking where something is, or saying hello and goodbye." Many French 102 students attributed this lack of ability to the significant emphasis that is placed on written work as opposed to oral activities. In addition, students realized the increased difficulty of listening and speaking French, in comparison to reading or understanding written

words where "you can see the conjugation of the word and the root of the word and try to decipher things from context."

Quantitative analysis for question 3 was performed on items in the survey that related to student attitude and motivation, particularly with regards to students' feelings about the usefulness of French and their own perceptions of their ability to speak and learn French. Likert-type items analyzed were numbers 47-51 and 53.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 3	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
47	3.76	3.21
48	3.88	3.17
49	3.06	3.83
50	2.70	3.21
51	3.20	3.06
53	3.76	4.14

No significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups were found. There was only .14 points difference between continuing (3.20) and non-continuing (3.06) mean scores on item 51 relating to the ease of learning French. Both groups disagreed that French is easier to learn than other languages. Continuing students articulated their love for the language and culture, obviously despite their belief that the language is not easy. All of the non-continuing students the researcher interviewed took French in high school, and continued to take it to fulfill the language requirement for that reason alone.

Question 4: Factors that Persuaded Majors and Minors to Continue into Advanced Courses

As previously discussed in the section on Question One, many continuing students displayed an integrative motivation as well as expressed a strong belief in the importance of knowing a second language. Many non-continuing students also held the belief that second language learning was important, but to the extent that they had gained exposure to it for a couple of years, not that one needed absolute fluency in French for it to be of value. Students' expressed such opinions when asked the following questions:

- What are your reasons for taking French at VCU? (Interview Guide)
- Why have you decided to continue to take French courses beyond the number required for most general bachelor's degrees? (Interview Guide & Survey)
- How do you feel when people say "studying French is a waste of time," or that "everyone around the world is learning English anyway, so what's the point of studying another language?" (Interview Guide)
- Do you plan to use your knowledge of the French language and culture after you graduate? If so, please give specific examples of ways that you intend to use this knowledge. (Survey)

Importance of Knowing a Second Language.

The following quotes exemplify participants' belief in the importance of knowing a second language. The words are those of students who have become or will become French majors and minors. Again, the emphasis is not so much on the French language itself, but rather the open-mindedness and empathy for other cultures and people that comes from studying another language.

- *It's absolutely necessary to guard this language diversity because speaking to someone in their own language is a lot different that speaking to them in your language...I mean I haven't mastered the French language, but I can express myself in it. But what I say in English is far different that what I say in French.* (Laurie-C)
- *Basically, I just feel a person who knows different languages is a high commodity in the job field and I love foreign languages and French is real exciting. There's so much more to it than the language, there's also culture and traveling...it's so valuable to learn another language besides English. And I think French is an awesome language; it's widely spoken everywhere so that's why I'm interested in it.* (Rebecca-C)
- *I think that there should definitely be some programs at the lower level courses to educate students on how important it is to have a foreign language, whether it's a minor or whether you just take a few extra classes beyond the*

required level. I think it's very important to have those skills, especially because the world is becoming significantly smaller now through the Internet and through everything else, and that being able to speak an extra language is very helpful and it will help you do much better in a professional environment. (Laurette-C)

Future Plans to Use French.

This final quote alludes to another factor in students' decision to continue into advanced French classes. Of the eight continuing students interviewed, two of them had made plans to live and work in France the following year, however the other six had concrete ideas on how they would use this skill as well. Mandie-C intends to be a high school French teacher, Eryn-C hopes to use her French in working for a museum, citing that "it's a necessity in the art world to speak a second language fluently, and right now French and German [are] the most desired." Laurette-C plans to combine her French major with her statistics major and go into international business while Rebecca-C plans to accompany her major with a minor in political science and work for the government as a translator or diplomat. Selthy-C plans to use her French mostly when traveling and Jen-C simply has that innate desire to study French: "I would like to combine the Mass Communications and French together, but I don't really have any practical reasons for pursuing it as a major other than enjoyment."

Reasons for Taking French.

One can also understand the factors behind students' decision to continue French study by analyzing their reasons for taking French. Again, two of the eight students interviewed mentioned "really liking the faculty," and the "wonderful teachers" at VCU. A couple of the other continuing students stressed the importance of "keeping up fluency" and not losing what they had learned of the French language thus far. Laurie's interest initiated as a cook at a restaurant when she was in high school; that love of food and cooking led her to learn French so that one day she might study in a French cooking school. As for the others, they simply fell in love with the language and gained enjoyment from studying it: "I really liked it and I just kept going and [thought] I could just keep doing this for...the rest of my life," (Mandie-C, future high school French teacher).

The additional students who responded to the Major/Minor survey questions regarding reasons for taking French and intentions for future use gave answers similar to those of interviewed students. Instrumental reasons included study abroad, an international business career, marketability, being engaged to a Frenchman, enrollment in a Montreal law school and teaching French to one's children. There were also many integrative reasons listed as well: interest in culture and travel to Francophone countries, love of French literature, admiration for people who speak another language, falling in

love with the sound of French, and personal fulfillment gained from communication with people of another culture.

Quantitative Analysis.

Quantitative analysis (using 113 student surveys) for the final research question was based on several Likert-type items from the survey: 1-14, 37, 38, 40-45, 54-59, and 73. One mean score varied almost 3 points between the continuing and non-continuing students – item 41 on taking French only because foreign language credits are required to graduate. Continuing students' score (4.95) paralleled their integrative motivation for taking the language that supplements their instrumental reasons. Non-continuing students' score (2.06) parallels their motivation for taking French as well – to fulfill the language requirement.

On the first set of survey items concerning reasons students study French (1-14), four of the groups' mean scores varied by two points.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 4	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
1	4.24	2.79
2	4.00	1.90
3	5.34	4.11
4	5.41	4.06
5	4.82	3.10
6	4.20	2.37
7	5.28	3.27
8	5.36	3.86
9	4.58	2.60
10	5.37	3.90
11	5.42	3.81
12	4.40	2.51

Survey Items Related to Research Question 4	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
13	3.86	2.19
14	4.86	3.35

Continuing students slightly agreed (4.0) that they wanted to be able to live in a French speaking community (item 2), whereas non-continuing students moderately disagreed (1.9). Continuing students' indicated their desire (5.28) to be able to read French media, while non-continuing students disagreed (3.27) with their having a desire to do the same. Continuing students' scores were also notably higher for items 9 and 12. They indicated their wish to be able to complete a written application in French (4.58) and consequently to be able to work in a French-speaking community (4.40). Non-continuing students' scores were again, almost 2 points lower on these items respectively: 2.6 and 2.51.

Another reason continuing students may have for advancing to the upper level classes is seen in item 40, relating to the prestige of being able to speak French. Mean scores for this item varied by 1.14 with continuing students' score at 4.38 and non-continuing students' score at 3.24.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 4	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
37	4.00	3.13
38	5.62	4.79
40	4.38	3.24
41	2.08	4.95
42	4.18	3.32
43	4.98	4.83
44	3.58	3.11
45	4.30	3.30

Survey Items Related to Research Question 4	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
54	5.37	4.83
55	5.52	4.70
56	4.60	3.98
57	5.24	4.97
58	4.20	3.21
59	4.70	4.29

One final reason that students continue may have to do with their perception about the amount of French they have retained up to this point. Continuing students agreed (4.3) with item 45, whereas non-continuing students were closer to disagreement (3.3). If students do not feel they have a strong recollection of what they have learned in the past, and the ability to build on that past knowledge, why would they attempt further advancement? Vaneta-NC's statement and reason for discontinuing, about not having laid the proper foundation for learning French at the beginning, resonates here as well. Along these same lines, the researcher believes there is noteworthy information found in the scores for item 73.

Item 73 was based on students' perceptions with regards to the manner in which enrollment in lower level French courses at VCU had prepared them in a) overall proficiency, b) grammar, c) reading, d) writing, e) listening, and f) study skills. The scale for this question was slightly different: 1=very poorly, 2=poorly, 3=adequately, 4=well, 5=very well. No score for either group was above 3.77, and that score was for continuing

students and overall proficiency; non-continuing students' mean score was 3.21 for overall proficiency.

Survey Items Related to Research Question 4	Continuing Students' Mean Scores	Non-Continuing Students' Mean Scores
73A	3.77	3.21
73B	3.64	3.28
73C	3.75	3.43
73D	3.59	3.16
73E	3.75	3.21
73F	3.70	3.18

Summary

The visual on page 148 serves as a summary for the results section of this dissertation. Based on the data collected during the spring 2001 semester at VCU and the students that the researcher surveyed, interviewed, and observed, the diagram represents the continuing French student and the non-continuing French student. As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) stress, the goal of qualitative research is to "capture perspectives accurately," (p.7) and Patton's (1990) words remind the researcher of this as well: "Capturing the precise language of participants is an important way to record participants' own understanding of their experiences" (p. 229). While the quotes throughout the chapter have attended to this advice, the pictorial depiction on the following page serves as a summary for those quotes.

The final chapter, "Conclusions and Recommendations" appears after the diagram. Here the researcher uses the report of the data found in this chapter to revisit

the research problem and questions and make practical recommendations based on the data. Recommendations for further research are also noted in the final chapter.

The Continuing French Student & The Non-Continuing French Student

CONTINUING

It's just very soothing to me to speak another language, to have control over another way of thinking.

Using the language in a context, the context of a real means of communication, not as a means of filling in blanks on a test and that sort of thing. I think it was using it in that context that really motivated me to continue.

I've been to the film festival before, but this is the first time that I went to the dinner, so it was really cool to sit at the table with the directors and be able to speak with them and ask questions about their work.

I try and keep the class going, it helps me; it keeps everything energetic. It keeps me from becoming bored with the subject. I try and read ahead and do the required readings and be prepared. And I have a tendency to ask a lot of questions.

I had a lot of trouble in the beginning with the grammar and even studying abroad. I really did not know anything. I've really learned and now I'm getting A's. Study abroad made all the difference in the world.

I just feel really good about myself when I'm able to speak fluently in another language. I just can't stress enough the feeling of fulfillment of being able to go and live in another culture and speak their language.

I just feel a person who knows different languages is a high commodity in the job field and I love foreign languages and French is real exciting. There's so much more to it than the language; there's also culture and traveling... it's so valuable to learn another language besides English.

Between conversation courses, grammar courses, and literature courses, I feel very comfortable speaking French with other students, with other professors, and even outside with complete strangers that I just met along the way in France.

NON-CONTINUING

My reason for taking French at VCU is because it's a requirement.

Everything is straight out of the book, she reads it; we repeat it. It's so monotonous and it's really, really boring.

I'm too old to learn it.

Personally, I probably would have gone to the Film Festival anyway because I enjoy them, but it's just something about somebody telling me that I have to that pissed me off.

I never raise my hand to answer questions even when I think I know the answer. I really do not feel comfortable saying things in class because of possibly not knowing what the others do.

Money is a huge issue. Tons more people would do it but money is the major issue. But there is a huge difference in the level of confidence and competence when you have done the semester abroad.

I have not reserved enough time to develop the language, meaning that all I do is cram the information into my head long enough to get a good grade and then forget it later. Going on to a higher level would not be beneficial; I probably would not do well.

I'm having trouble just grasping the language. I don't have an ear for it.

I'm not prepared. Most of the things I cram in my head at the last minute are forgotten, especially the meaning of certain verbs. The only thing I can think of using is how to ask for a certain number of items, letting a person know I do not understand, asking where something is, and saying hello and goodbye.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to utilize the data described in Chapter Four and relate it to the specific research problem and research questions identified in Chapter One. The format of this chapter is similar to the format of the preceding chapter - conclusions and discussion are included for each research question. Implications for university foreign language departments, French professors, and future French students are also identified, along with recommendations and suggestions for future research in this area.

In the present study, the researcher addressed the problem of declining French enrollments in the advanced, upper-level French classes at the college level. In relation to that problem, the goal of the study was to ascertain from student interviews and survey responses, those factors that motivate students to continue taking French beyond the number of language courses required for their degree. At the same time, non-continuing students' voices was also an important component in learning how to encourage more of these very students to continue and consequently to increase the sagging upper-level enrollments.

Question 1: College Students' Perceptions of Their Motivation for Language Learning

As indicated in the data analysis, continuing students, seemingly possessing an instrumental motive, mentioned several ways in which they might use their French in the

future with regards to their career. Perhaps more notable however, was the common belief held by both continuing and non-continuing students regarding integrative motivation. Both groups of students clearly felt that an internal motivation to learn the language and to learn about the culture was the key component to continuing foreign language study. Current study participants would not agree with Gardner and Smythe's (1975) belief that integrative motivation can be developed, but that may be directly related to the fact that they themselves have not developed such motivation as a result of studying French. While Gardner and Smythe do not give specific instructions for developing integrative motivation in students, one could assume from students' responses in the current study that the professor plays a key role in such development. The relationship of the professor to student motivation became obvious when students responded to open-ended questions such as "Why are you discontinuing your study of French?" with responses that were based primarily on the French professor. More about the "role of the teacher" is discussed in the next section on research question two.

Horwitz (1988) reported that how students perceive themselves as language learners, as well as how they believe languages are learned, may greatly affect their level of achievement, success, satisfaction, and most importantly, their level of commitment to learning the language. The author would have reported similar results had she been studying VCU French students. Both continuing and non-continuing students identified their age as being a factor in their difficulty with learning the language, stressing the need for foreign language study to begin at a much earlier level in this country, as it does in other countries.

Horwitz further reported that beginning university French, German, and Spanish students were fairly optimistic in terms of the amount of time required to sufficiently learn another language, and the level of achievement they would attain. The current researcher speculated that in reality the process was much more time consuming and involved. Both continuing and non-continuing students confirmed such speculation when asked to hypothetically offer advice to incoming freshmen facing the task of studying French at the college level. Advice centered around the development of study habits such as the following:

- Maintaining routine contact with the professor and members of the department
- Making a commitment to study every day for a certain number of hours
- Doing additional outside reading; searching for resources and authentic materials that allow practice in reading and comprehending oral and written French.

One student even commented that she thought "French would be an easy grade, but later found out that great effort must be incorporated to get that."

In light of the advice given by French students, it might appear that "debunking the French-is-harder myth" (Friedich, Eykyn, & McKeithan, 1997) would in fact not aid in increasing French enrollments at the upper levels. An important distinction must be made however between the myth referenced above and the comments made by students in the present study. The *French-is-harder* myth refers to learning French in comparison to learning Spanish. VCU students expressed the desire to hear from professors very early in the program, or perhaps even before entering the classroom, about the dedication

and time commitment that was needed to successfully learn a certain amount of French. Given this desire, the researcher suggests that professors and departments ensure that French students are aware of the extensive preparation that is required, both inside and outside the classroom. They should also provide them with lessons on learning a language and lessons on the study skills that make such learning possible. One VCU French professor mentioned her use of H. Douglas Brown's (1989) A Practical Guide to Language Learning - A Fifteen Week Program for Strategies of Success, as a means for providing students with such tips on language learning. Brown's work deals with issues such as foreign language learning anxiety, practical contexts for using one's knowledge of a foreign language, the importance of having self-confidence, discovering one's own learning style, and understanding the difference between left and right brain functioning.

Question 2: Relationship among Activities, Classroom Climate, Teacher, and Use of Technology to Motivation for Language Learning

Activities both inside and outside the classroom

With regards to activities inside and outside the French classroom, the difference between continuing and non-continuing students came in the form of what they had experienced rather than what they actually wanted. Both groups stressed the need for activities that were practical and spontaneous, as opposed to written or rote exercises based solely on the textbook and the workbook. What is notable may be that some continuing students were drawing on high school experiences as well as college experiences, while non-continuing students were drawing largely on middle or secondary school experiences in order to describe beneficial and motivating activities. This is not to

say that non-continuing students referred to their study of French in high school as favorable - in fact, most of them implicitly stated one of two reasons for continuing to study French at VCU as a means of fulfilling the language requirement. First, the student had previously studied French so she thought it would be the easiest language, or second, the student had placed out of French 101 because of her score on the placement test, and had to complete only one additional French course.

In Chapter Four, the researcher lists various "classroom" activities that students deemed motivating and beneficial to language learning. Comparing that list to another list gives further credence to current participants' suggestions. In November of 2000, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State formed a partnership to promote International Education Week. A bipartisan resolution expressed the Congressional belief that an international education policy was needed. Furthermore, *the resolution urges the United States to develop a policy that [would] promote international exchange, increase the number of U.S. students who study abroad, and ensure that college students know a second language and have knowledge about a world area, among other objectives* (Devaney, 2001). The following activities are found on the International Education Week Kit web site (http://exchanges.state.gov/iep/activities.htm):

- Call on Fulbright and other exchange alumni, and current participants to share their experiences
- Deliver cultural presentations and/or invite foreign students to share their language and culture in school classrooms

- Build classroom to classroom connections between a local school and an international school
- Arrange a museum tour and reception with speakers linking museum holdings to a given country (also suggested by a continuing student)
- Recruit local professionals with overseas experience to give career talks
- Explore international aspects of the arts - music, film, theatre, visual arts, literature, dance - by creating, performing, or studying artworks with a foreign component

The bipartisan resolution mentioned on the previous page included a plan for more study abroad at the college level, and such a plan would be welcomed greatly by many of the students in the present study. Dupuy and Krashen (1998) reported that language students are divided between the "haves" and the "have nots." The "haves" are *those with superior preparation, far more than the institution officially demands*, while the "have nots" are *those who have only the required preparation.* Not only was the researcher able to distinguish between such students in the observed French classes, but perhaps more importantly, the students themselves were able to distinguish between students who had studied abroad and those who had not. As one student noted, "it makes all the difference in the world."

While the researcher understands that funding to increase affordable study abroad programs for students may be a monumental issue, what can be done now, and what students actually suggested, was the marketing of existing opportunities. Having students who studied abroad for a summer or a semester in France visit lower-level classrooms

and describe the day to day life, living conditions, the university, and weekend activities, is just one way for marketing such a motivational, beneficial activity. Two of the French majors in the current study had never studied French before they arrived at VCU - it was the desire and ability to participate in a study abroad program that initially steered them into the foreign language department for their degree. Their experience in France was the key component to their decision to continue studying and major in French; unfortunately, not all students can afford to study abroad. Feasible improvements in this area might include more marketing of available programs, especially scholarships or funding opportunities available to students. In addition, a French club as suggested by an interviewed student, might be a way to organize group fund raisers and gain the necessary resources for a brief trip abroad, during the spring or winter break. Laurie-C suggested that even a shorter stay abroad had benefits: *I think also that travel abroad should be encouraged...especially for students that maybe don't have the money or the time to spend a whole year abroad. Any amount of time you can go spend in a country, maybe it's not going to help your language skills tremendously, but it's going to help your view of the culture.*

Classroom Climate and the Role of the Teacher

There are several factors that the term "classroom climate" entails, and according to the students in the present study, the most important factor is the professor. The goal of this research was not to critique French professors, or even to examine their methods of instruction in the classroom, but rather to listen to what students had to say about their language learning experience and then observe them in that setting. As qualitative

research often demands, the researcher allowed the data to direct the study as it progressed. Repeatedly students mentioned the importance of the professor, both in terms of motivating them to continue with French, or alternatively, possessing characteristics which were portrayed as less favorable in students' model of an effective French professor. The recommendations throughout this section evolved from students' own words, and interestingly enough, many of their suggestions are grounded in basic pedagogical skills of which all professors should be aware.

The amount of French spoken in the classroom versus the amount of English is another classroom climate factor about which students feel strongly. Continuing students expected and enjoyed having their advanced courses taught solely in the target language, and many 102 students who planned to continue believed speaking French as much as possible is essential for learning the language. The students' survey responses indicated that some English is also needed, especially when directions are being given for a test or quiz, or when students are not understanding a difficult concept because they do not understand the French terminology being used to explain it. The survey statement was "I learn best in a classroom where only French is spoken and no English is allowed." The continuing students' mean score was 3.88 (as opposed to 2.05 for non-continuing students), with 3.0 meaning slightly disagree and 4.0 meaning slightly agree. It can be said then, that even advanced students who are presumably much more adept in speaking and understanding French, are reluctant to agree that they learn best when no English is allowed.

Another factor that affects the climate in the classroom is the comfort level that students feel with regards to speaking aloud and contributing to the class. Krashen (1982) uses the term "affective filter" to describe the mechanism that siphons out meaningful, communicative aspects of the language, and hinders students' retrieval of such information. While the researcher did not find significant discrepancy between continuing and non-continuing students in terms of their likelihood to ask questions during class, the reasons the three non-continuing students gave for not speaking were revealing. They described a classroom which produced a high affective filter in them - one in which they did not feel comfortable speaking aloud, or asking questions. In addition, when they did ask questions, the reported the use of English if their professor allowed it. Again, in terms of recommendations, it would seem basic pedagogical skills apply. Have students engage in socialization activities at the beginning of the semester, so they begin to learn about other students, and become accustomed to working with everyone in the class, not just those friends they choose to collaborate with when required to work in groups. One professor that the researcher observed used knowledge about students' hobbies, interests, friends, and weekend activities when practicing oral grammar drills, and the class reacted enthusiastically and positively.

Secondly, it is imperative to give students the tools they need in order to be able to ask questions during class. One non-continuing student referred to the phrases her high school French teacher had taught her, such as "Comment dit-on...en francais?" (How do you say...in French), or "Qu'est-ce que c'est le mot....?" (What is the word for...?).

Such vocabulary allows the student to continue to speak in French, while at the same time allowing them to ask questions and interact more during class.

Recommendations in previous paragraphs relate to techniques that professors should use in the beginning of the semester (socialization activities and providing students with vocabulary and phrases for asking questions in the target language), but there is also another suggestion which would occur at that time as well. Non-continuing students in the present study were adamant about being required to perform certain functions such as attend the French Film Festival for a grade. It is imperative to note that the overall reactions to the festival itself were extremely positive - it was simply the inability of lower-level students to choose to attend that was viewed as negative. Unfortunately funding is once again an issue. Anything that could be done by the department to lower the cost of tickets or to provide students with some type of special pass would help decrease the level of animosity.

In addition to admittance funding for the French Film Festival, the issue for lower-level students was "professor control." French majors and minors gave numerous examples of activities they performed for the class, in which they had some degree of choice regarding the process or the final product. For example, students could choose tutoring others in French, having a conversation partner whose native language was not English, or critiquing French software programs, as a means of completing their 20-hour community service requirement for their French literature course. Mandie-C described how her class had collectively decided at the beginning of the semester, to add peer-editing as an activity they did each week when writing assignments were due. Lower-

level students referred most often to having to go through the textbook page by page, as opposed to having choice about their assignments or even variety with regards to the types of learning opportunities their professor facilitated. The upcoming section on the "Use of Technology" gives some insight and recommendations for using multimedia as a way of varying classroom activities.

Lastly, in relation to the role of the teacher, students wanted their voice heard on another issue - that of professor control over the classroom. Non-continuing students (analogous to lower-level students in the current study), listed "too lenient, "needs to be stricter," "needs to know how to handle a class," when asked about characteristics of effective and less effective professors. Polishing one's classroom management skills would be one recommendation, but previous recommendations might apply as well. Bored students (who resent the constant use of the text) tend to become distracted and consequently become distractions to the rest of the class. At the same time, developing a comfortable, learning-conducive classroom environment in which students respect the professor and one another, makes the classroom inhabitants less likely to disturb others when teaching and learning are occurring.

In light of the recommendations that are pedagogically related, the researcher must qualify that while she has no experience teaching at the college level, she has completed four of the six courses required for the PFFP certificate at VCU. The PFFP or Preparing Future Faculty for the Professions Program is designed to help graduate students gain the teaching skills they will need as a professor in higher education. The program is mentioned here because it is one of the few across the country that recognizes

the problem students in this very study seem to have recognized - professors may possess the content and the knowledge base needed to teach a course, but it does not necessarily follow that they have had the chance to develop teaching skills to create an effective instructional climate. Courses in such a program like the one at VCU include one-credit seminars on the Academic Profession, Seminar in College Teaching, Seminar in Teaching the Professions, and an internship with a mentor professor. It is not the researcher's recommendation that all French professors return to college to earn such a certificate, but it is, however, the researcher's recommendation that all persons entering the teaching profession have some training, workshops, or courses in basic pedagogical skills.

Use of Technology

In survey questions and interview questions alike, the researcher used the term "technological tools" to include course authoring tools such as Web Course in a Box (WCB), a tape recorder, email, CD-ROM, VCR, online chat capability, and electronic bulletin boards. While non-continuing participants in the study listed WCB as their favorite tool, that could be directly associated to their lack of using other types of technology in the foreign language classroom. On the other hand, French majors listed several technological tools that they had used to aid them in learning French:

- Laser disk series "Dans La Peau Francaise" (on communicating with body language and gestures, in addition to the spoken language)
- Internet connection to search for additional information on authors (for a literature course) and other cultural aspects

- Using DVD players and VCR's to view French films
- Internet connection to listen to French radio or news broadcasts

One would think from the multitude of examples cited by advanced French students that they overwhelmingly preferred the use of technology in the classroom, however that was not the case. According to their mean scores of 3.6 and 3.29 respectively, both continuing and non-continuing students appeared somewhat indifferent about using technology to enhance their language learning.

As indicated in the literature review, Warschauer (1996) distinguished between two ways of integrating computers and technology into the foreign language classroom. The first way suggests that professors can activate students' motivation by encouraging them to use computers for writing and communication, and most importantly, by integrating computer use into the regular curriculum and routine classroom activities. The second way, also the least preferred by his study's participants, involved adding computer-enhanced lessons on top of the regular assignments. From the students' voices in the current study, it would seem fair to say that WCB fits into the second format described here. Students used WCB primarily to access practice quizzes and reading comprehension exercises which mirrored many of those performed in class.

Watson (2001) conducted a study with 20 community college students enrolled in an online French fluency improvement course. Technological tools used throughout the course included:

- Online network
- Email among colleagues and with the professor

- Synchronous electronic online chat for up to twelve hours per week
- Asynchronous communication area
- "Web site of the Week" including a critical thinking question, and
- French hyperlinks embedded in the course materials

Particularly relevant, given the findings of the present study, are the flexible guidelines for the course. Students were provided with native French-speaking contacts and encouraged to use all of the technological tools provided as often as they wished. While they were told to use French for all communication in the course, they were given no dates or deadlines and were told to complete the assignments as they wished (by the end of the semester), in the order they preferred. As one might expect, those students who participated the most, most improved their level of fluency as well as the complexity of their sentences, and their development of specialized vocabulary.

While the findings of Watson's (2001) study may not be surprising, there are some portions that relate to the present study. To demonstrate the components of Watson's study that should be heeded in developing multimedia instruction for the French class, it is useful to also look at Meunier's (1998) findings with regards to the comments that students had about technology and its non-motivating effect. Engaging in electronic conversations and assignments was not motivating for Meunier's students because such activities were too tightly bound and monitored by professors; in addition, the computerized discussions were also non-motivating because students felt they were simply add-ons to regular class work. The researcher believes that the present study and

other recent studies provide evidence for using the following tips when integrating technology into the French curriculum (some of which apply more broadly as well):

- Provide students with choices regarding assignments and the types of technology they can use to complete them
- Incorporate technology into assignments; do not simply draft another syllabi with added-on Internet research assignments or a requirement for participating in an online discussion "x" number of times.
- Realize that college students are adult learners and help them understand that they must take some responsibility for their own learning. Corresponding with native speakers and communicating with colleagues in French via email are exceptional ways of practicing writing in authentic situations, but monitoring every word and recording the number of times students write makes the environment more controlled (which students appear to resent).
- Take time during class to introduce lower-level students to French web sites, or sites such as the United Nations web site, which provide information on using the language in practical contexts. In addition, as many professors in the current study did, take students to the language lab at the college on a regular basis, and demonstrate the variety of tools that can improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Question 3: Reasons Students Give for Not Continuing with Their Study of French

In the discussion of the first research question involving students' perceptions about their own motivation for language learning, the researcher addressed many of the

issues which arose when non-continuing students were asked..."Why are you discontinuing your study of French?" While reasons such as "not enough room in my schedule" and "not enough time to prepare for the extensive learning ahead" are based on factors that are beyond most professors' and departments' control, some of the beliefs that students had could be addressed at the beginning of college-level French study. For example, students said they "did not have the ear for it," or they were "too old to learn French." Such myths should be addressed and "debunked," to use Freidich, Eykyn, and McKeithan's (1997) term once again.

Other reasons non-continuing students gave for terminating their language study included both the inability to actually use the language and the time commitment that was needed in order to ensure some degree of success. This issue was also addressed in the first research question discussion. However, the researcher would add that this is an issue that must be examined immediately so that students have the skills needed to study a language, as well as a realistic view of the amount of time they must devote to French in order to gain a certain level of proficiency. Students in the present study felt frustrated because they could say only basic phrases and converse on a very primitive level, and Horwitz' (1988) students' optimism indicates the feelings many students have initially, before they reach this frustration level. Horwitz' participants believed they "would learn to speak the language very well" in a maximum of two years time. It is no wonder students become frustrated and begin to believe they are wasting valuable credit hours by studying a language they will never master.

Question 4: Factors that Persuaded Majors and Minors to Continue into Advanced Courses

The researcher was interested in hearing and understanding the reasons that majors and minors gave for continuing to study French, beyond the number of foreign language courses required for their degree. Many students indicated the ways in which knowing another language might help advance their career, while others stressed their intrinsic interest in the language itself and the people that speak it, and almost all students commented on the inherent importance of knowing another language. One would expect continuing students to value such a commodity, but non-continuing students?

In Chapter Four, the researcher identified quotes from continuing students regarding the high value they placed on being able to speak a second language. At this point, it may be wise to look at non-continuing students' thoughts on this concept - perhaps to gain insight on how to develop these feelings further, to the point where some non-continuing students might become continuing students. The following quotes are from non-continuing students regarding the importance of knowing a second language:

- *It's going to help you with English too, because it helps with the grammar to learn the direct objects and indirect objects. I think it's still useful to know other languages for diplomatic purposes.* (Margie-NC)
- *I don't think studying a foreign language is a waste of time; you get a lot out of it, more than you would expect than just knowing a language. I think knowing about other people and other people's culture is very important,*

and I don't think that we should expect everyone to learn ours and not learn anything about anyone else's. (Christine-NC)

- *...It opens up your mind I believe...your intellectual stimulation is so increased because you don't feel like you're just an American person, you can actually travel abroad...I think you might even have a sense of accomplishment, like wow, I've learned a whole other language - that's incredible. Where in other countries it's the norm, you're striving above that and at VCU, that's like a mini New York City, it's a multicultural melting pot. There's a guy in our class who knows seven languages, a girl in our class whose parents are from Africa and Germany. It's amazing, it's really cool.* (Sally-NC)

Seven out of the eight non-continuing students interviewed believed that studying French was valuable; however for a couple of the students, the value came from the sheer fact of learning something new, and being exposed to "something different." In general the participants were interested in learning about other cultures, other ways of life, and other subjects and topics that relatively few people study. It is the researcher's recommendation that French professors discuss students' feelings at the beginning of the course (perhaps by brainstorming ways in which knowing another language is important), and make continual efforts to develop positive feelings throughout the semester. "Playing devil's advocate" is another way to instigate discussion on this matter. For example, the researcher asked the question, "How do you feel when people say that

studying French is a waste of time, or that everyone around the world is learning English anyway, so what's the point?"

When explaining the importance of knowing another language, many continuing students also indicated how they were specifically going to use their French in their careers. Non-continuing students could only speculate about general ways in which knowledge of the French language might be useful: teaching, when traveling to a French-speaking country, in an international law position, and if an employer had French-speaking clients. Having guest speakers who occasionally or always use French in their careers visit the class is one way of enlightening students. An employer who values and hires French-speaking graduates could discuss the aspects of interviewing and marketing one's bilingual attributes. Another idea, which would be concurrent with upper-level French community service requirements, might involve French majors speaking to lower-level students about the variety of interesting advanced classes, and the specific ways that they intend to use their French degree.

Reasons students were studying French, as indicated by the first page of questions on the survey (items 1-14), clearly varied for the two groups of participants. Continuing students considered working and living in a French-speaking country a likely possibility, and in light of that, believed also in the importance of being able to read French media and being able to complete a written application in French. Non-continuing students' mean scores were much lower for such questions. The reason for this may be that in the lower-level courses in which they have been enrolled, they have not had the opportunity to learn about study abroad or working in another country;.

According to the surveys and interviews, such students also did not feel adequately prepared to use their French in real situations. With regards to reading or understanding French media - lower-level students most likely have not been exposed to the different types such as films, newspapers, magazines, and sites on the World Wide Web, and therefore have not developed a desire or interest for comprehending them.

Finally, the level of confidence and feelings of preparedness that continuing students had about their ability to communicate in French was another reason for the decision to progress in their language study. While many students did not state this directly, they alluded to their confidence and ability to "survive" abroad as important factors in motivating them to continue to study French. Being able to understand French directors at the French Film Festival and comprehend difficult literature in the language that it was originally written, were some of the feats that allowed students such confidence and motivation.

On the other hand, examining the responses to item 73 on the survey may lead the reader to a different conclusion about students' feelings of preparedness to use the language. Responses to item 73 indicated students' perceptions with regards to the manner in which lower level French courses at VCU had prepared them in a) overall proficiency, b) grammar, c) reading, d) writing, e) listening, and f) study skills. As described in Chapter Four, 3.77 (between "adequately prepared" and "well prepared") was the highest mean score, and that score was for continuing students and overall proficiency. In general, all of the scores were slightly low and much less varied between continuing and non-continuing students than one might expect.

The researcher has identified two reasons for this closeness in scores for each of these areas. The first reason is that continuing students see themselves as proficient and prepared to function using their French, despite the grammatical errors they may make. For the most part, their goal is to understand and be understood. The second reason is a logistical one. Many majors and minors did not answer item 73 and all of its sub items because they did not take lower level VCU French courses; some students transferred to VCU, while others placed out of the lower level courses with advanced placement test scores from high school.

Recommendations

The researcher has provided the reader with recommendations throughout the discourse of this chapter, however, there is also a diagram on page 161 which offers some suggestions as well. The diagram is based on the Continuing and Non-Continuing French Student diagram found in Chapter Four. With the Chapter Five visual representation (Taking the Diagram One Step Further), the researcher has attempted to use the characteristics of each type of student and outline the paths that continuing and non-continuing French students take throughout the course of their language study. In addition, recommendations have been added at the bottom of the page - the hope being that by following some of the recommendations, the path of the non-continuing student would at some point meet with and merge with the path of the continuing student. Again, the recommendations are based on specific suggestions of continuing and non-continuing participants in the present study.

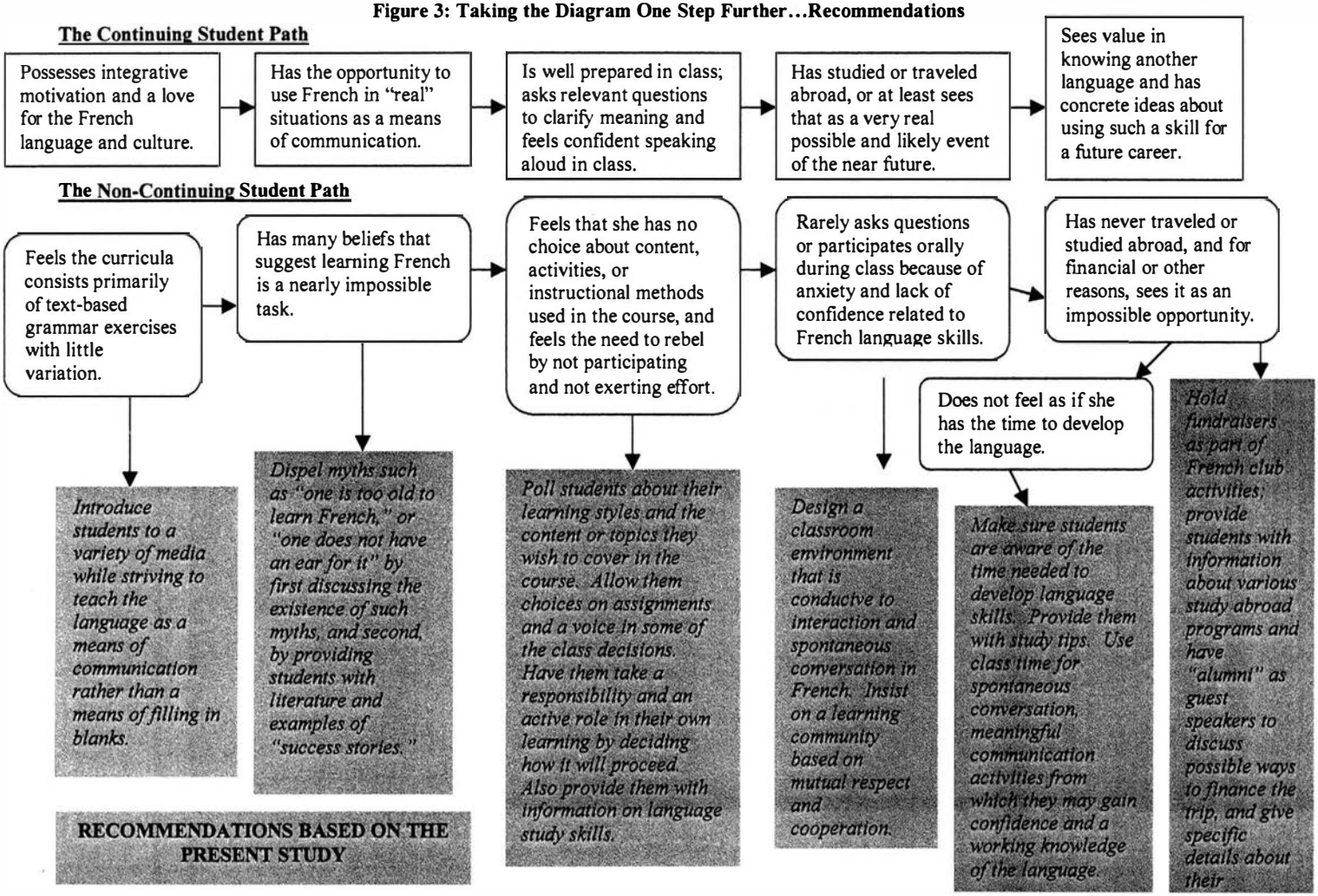
Further Research

The purpose of this study was to empower foreign language professors and departments with knowledge about students' perceptions of the motivating factors behind their decision to continue or discontinue the study of French at the college level. The voices of French majors and minors, as well as the voices of non-continuing students, have provided the researcher with important information about their preferred classroom environment, characteristics of an effective language professor, types of learning activities, and overall attitude and feelings about the French language and culture. Nevertheless, additional studies are warranted. Given the key role the professor plays in motivating students (according to this study), more research is needed in the area of foreign language teacher education, as well as the teachers' use of technology in the foreign language classroom.

Another area that merits exploration is the study of French at middle and secondary levels. Fourteen of the sixteen students interviewed in the current study began French as middle or high school students. There has been a great deal of discussion within this paper on the topic of myths that French students had about learning French, and consequently, the importance of having college professors address them as soon as possible. It is probable that such myths had their origination before the students began their collegial study of French, and for that reason, studies should be performed with some or all of the following participants: high school French teachers, French students, parents of students, and guidance counselors. Further research regarding "bridging the

gap" between secondary foreign language study and college level foreign language study also appears necessary.

Figure 3: Taking the Diagram One Step Further...Recommendations



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APPENDIX A

Survey Instruments

Information Given to 102 Students Before Administering Surveys

Hello. As a doctoral student, I am currently beginning the data collections for my dissertation on persistence in the study of French at the college level. Two groups are being examined – those who continue the study of French beyond the required level, and those who terminate the study of French after they have met the requirements for the general education degree. It makes no difference which one of those categories you may fit into – I want to hear from every French 102 student and every French major and minor here at VCU if possible. Your participation in my study is completely voluntary, the surveys are anonymous, and all responses will be kept confidential.

In addition to these survey responses, the major portion of my data will come from personal interviews with students. If any of you have the time and inclination to help my further, a brief 20-30 minute interview would be greatly appreciated. It would be conducted in English of course, and you would be asked to elaborate on some of the information requested here regarding the study of French. Interviews will take place on campus at your convenience, maybe in between classes or right before or after a class. There is a place for you to fill out your contact information on the last page of the survey if you think you may be interested in helping me. If you will notice, this page is not double-sided, so that it may be torn off immediately. In this way, the survey responses will still be anonymous when analyzed.

I'll be quiet now so that you may get started – the cover letter attached to the survey tells you a little more about the study. It should take about 15 minutes to complete the survey, and again, thank you so much for your time and effort. Please bring the surveys up to the front when you are finished. Thank you.

2001 Spring Semester

Dear fellow VCU students:

Bonjour! As a doctoral candidate in VCU's School of Education, I would like to thank you in advance for helping to provide the data for my dissertation. I am conducting this research in order to learn more about why some students persist in the study of a foreign language, while others discontinue their language study immediately after their language requirement has been fulfilled. By doing this study, I hope to learn more about the reasons why students do not continue to take advanced language courses. Having such information available will enable universities, departments, and professors to develop marketing strategies or make changes within the language program so that continued foreign language study is more appealing to more students.

Unfortunately, professors and departments are often so busy teaching that they do not have the time to ask students for their views on language learning-related matters. In order to obtain such information I invite you to participate in this research project by completing the attached survey; your participation is completely voluntary. The survey is in English and takes about 15 minutes to complete. Your opinions and views are valuable. It is my hope that our participation in this project will lead to more effective teaching and learning in college foreign language courses.

I know how busy you are and appreciate the time that you are taking to complete the survey. Please know that the survey is anonymous and your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you are interested in this topic, and would like to help the researcher in an even greater capacity, please indicate your willingness to be interviewed at a later date. On the last page of the survey you will find a place to provide your email address or telephone number so that the researcher may contact you. Merci beaucoup!!!

Sincerely,

Caroline Kirkpatrick
VCU Doctoral Student

Survey for VCU French 102 Students

Directions: Please respond to the following statements by circling the number that most closely corresponds to your personal opinion or feeling. Select only one answer for each item. There is also a comments column if you need to explain an answer. Your options are:

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

I am studying French because:

1) it will be useful in my career activities.
1 2 3 4 5 6

2) I want to be able to live in a French-speaking community.
1 2 3 4 5 6

3) I want to travel to and in French-speaking places.
1 2 3 4 5 6

4) I want to be able to read, for example, French signs and menus.
1 2 3 4 5 6

5) I want to be able to read literature in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

6) I want to be able to read technical literature in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

7) I want to be able to read/understand French-language media (newspapers, film, radio broadcasts, etc.)
1 2 3 4 5 6

8) I want to be able to request information (for example, directions to a park) in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

9) I want to be able to complete, for example, a written application in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

10) I want to be able to understand, for example, directions being given to me in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

11) I want to be able to carry on a conversation with French-speaking friends/acquaintances.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

12) I want to be able to work in a French-speaking environment.
1 2 3 4 5 6

13) knowing French will help me find a job.
1 2 3 4 5 6

14) I want to know about the French-speaking world.
1 2 3 4 5 6

How I learn best:

15) I learn well in a class where only French is used and no English is allowed.
1 2 3 4 5 6

16) I feel comfortable when speaking French with a classmate.
1 2 3 4 5 6

17) I do not feel comfortable when speaking French with my teacher.
1 2 3 4 5 6

18) Understanding grammar is useful for my learning.
1 2 3 4 5 6

19) When I speak French I want my teacher to stop me and correct all of my mistakes.
1 2 3 4 5 6

20) When I write French I want my teacher to correct any and all mistakes that I make.
1 2 3 4 5 6

21) I feel that my time is well spent when the focus of studying French is on activities such as giving/asking for directions, ordering from a menu, or reading a newspaper.
1 2 3 4 5 6

22) In class, I like to repeat words and phrases aloud.
1 2 3 4 5 6

23) I prefer structured classroom activities, such as grammar exercises and reading dialogues in the text, rather than activities that are more loose and open, such as unrehearsed conversation.
1 2 3 4 5 6

24) I like working in small groups during class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

25) I like doing written exercises in a workbook.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

26) I do not like watching French videos or French telecasts.
1 2 3 4 5 6

27) I wish that my foreign language class provided me with more opportunities to use the Internet and other forms of technology in learning French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

28) I would like to have more interaction with native speakers of French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Attitude and Motivation:

29) I find most of the work that we do in French class interesting and relevant.
1 2 3 4 5 6

30) Generally, I feel confident in French class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

31) I feel that we generally try to cover too much in a class session.
1 2 3 4 5 6

32) I make a conscious effort to use as much French as possible in the classroom.
1 2 3 4 5 6

33) It strengthens my interest in French to hear stories of people's experiences who have gone to France or French-speaking places.
1 2 3 4 5 6

34) I will be satisfied in this course as long as I learn something.
1 2 3 4 5 6

35) I am studying French for the pleasure of learning French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

36) My desire to learn French is strong.
1 2 3 4 5 6

37) I believe that knowledge of French is a mark of an educated person.
1 2 3 4 5 6

38) Learning a foreign language is a worthwhile thing to do.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

39) I will be satisfied in this course as long as I get a good grade.
1 2 3 4 5 6

40) Being able to speak French carries a certain prestige.
1 2 3 4 5 6

41) I am taking French only because foreign language credits are required in order to obtain my degree.
1 2 3 4 5 6

42) Studying a foreign language helps me better understand my own language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

43) Studying a foreign language helps me to become more aware of the problems people have when speaking a language that is not their own.
1 2 3 4 5 6

44) In my personal life away from school, I experience situations where being able to speak French comes in handy.
1 2 3 4 5 6

45) Most of the French I have learned so far is strong and clear in my memory.
1 2 3 4 5 6

46) Generally, I do not feel motivated to do the work necessary for French class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

47) When I speak French, I think my grammar is accurate.
1 2 3 4 5 6

48) When I speak French, I think my pronunciation and accent are good.
1 2 3 4 5 6

49) When I speak French, aloud in class, I feel self-conscious and/or embarrassed.
1 2 3 4 5 6

50) I feel intimidated because many of my classmates speak French much better than I do.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

51) French is easier to learn than other languages.
1 2 3 4 5 6

52) It is just as important for me to learn about life in France and French-speaking places, and the people, their customs and institutions, as it is to learn the language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

53) There are more useful foreign languages to learn than French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

54) I am interested in cultural differences, the ways different people in the world think and live.
1 2 3 4 5 6

55) Every American should know at least one foreign language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

French is internationally important in the domain of:

56) business and commerce.
1 2 3 4 5 6

57) the arts and literature.
1 2 3 4 5 6

58) science.
1 2 3 4 5 6

59) government and diplomacy.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Directions: Please circle your response to the following questions. In specified instances, more than one response may be allowed.

60) I would say a basic speaking ability in French could prove useful in the following number of countries throughout the world:
1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26+

61) How much time do you generally spend in preparing for a 50-minute French class?
0 minutes 30 minutes I hour 2 hours 3 hours 4 hours or more

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

62) Please describe, in your own words, your reasons for taking French.

63) Do you plan to take French after you have fulfilled your language requirement?
(a) Yes, for a major in French.
(b) Yes, for a minor in French.
(c) Yes, as an elective.
(d) Yes, for fun.
(e) No, but I plan to take up a different language afterwards.
(f) No, I do not plan to take French or any other foreign language.
****If "No" is your response, please go to the next question; if "Yes" is your response, please go to Question #65.**

64) If you are not going to take any French after your requirement, please indicate why not. You may circle more than one answer.
(a) Because I have no interest.
(b) Because I have no time.
(c) Because French has been a bad experience.
(d) Other. Please explain:_____

65) What types of activities have been the most beneficial in your foreign language classes, in terms of helping you learn the language?

66) Please describe your ideal classroom environment for studying French (amount of English spoken, types of activities performed, characteristics of professor and other students, etc.).

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

67) Please check all of the following technological tools that have been used in your French classes here at VCU:

_____ Internet
_____ E-mail
_____ Web Course in a Box
_____Tape Recorder
_____Online Grammar Exercises/ Quizzes
_____Video (shown on VCR)
_____ Electronic Bulletin Board
_____ Video (online)
_____ Teleconference/Lecture Online w/ Native Speaker

68) What has been your favorite technological tool used in learning French? Please describe specifically how that tool was used as a language learning aid.

69) Please list all of the possible ways that you can think of to use French.

70) Are you aware of the types of advanced French courses offered at VCU?

(a) Yes.
Please list those courses that **you are aware of**:_____
Please list any advanced French courses that **you would like to see offered** at VCU:
_____

(b) No.
Please list any advanced French courses that you would like to see offered at VCU:_____

71) How would you describe your overall attitude towards learning French?

72) What could your professor or foreign language department do to increase your motivation for studying French? Please be as specific as possible.

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

73) In what way do you feel the lower level French courses (101 & 102) at VCU prepared you in the following areas of French?

(a) Overall proficiency level:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(b) Grammar skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(c) Reading skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(d) Writing skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(e) Listening skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(f) Study skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well

Student Profile

74) I am
- (a) 17-19 years old
- (b) 20-22 years old
- (c) 23-25 years old
- (d) over 25 years old

75) I am taking French
- (a) as a major.
- (b) as a minor.
- (c) as a requirement.
- (d) as an elective.

76) I am
- (a) a freshman.
- (b) a sophomore.
- (c) a junior.
- (d) a senior.
- (e) a graduate student.
- (f) Other, special student, non-degree seeking

77) Which college/school (for example, *Education, Business, MCV*) are you in at VCU?

_____

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

78) What is your overall GPA?

(a) 3.5 – 4.0
(b) 3.0 – 3.49
(c) 2.5 – 2.99
(d) below 2.5

79) I am

(a) male.
(b) female.

80) In French, so far I have been a(n)

(a) A student.
(b) A/B student.
(c) B student.
(d) B/C student.
(e) C student.
(f) C/D student

81) I expect to receive the following grade in this course:

(a) A
(b) B
(c) C
(d) D
(e) F

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

82) Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview with the researcher regarding the study
of French in college? _____YES *(please give contact information below)*
_____NO

Student email address_____

Student phone number_____

Available days and times for an interview (approximately 30 - 40 minutes):

_____

(for example, Mondays 3-5, Thursday mornings, Friday afternoons)

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

2001 Spring Semester

Dear fellow VCU students:

Bonjour! As a doctoral candidate in VCU's School of Education, I would like to thank you in advance for helping to provide the data for my dissertation. I am conducting this research in order to learn more about why some students persist in the study of a foreign language, while others discontinue their language study immediately after their language requirement has been fulfilled. By doing this study, I hope to learn more about the reasons why students do not continue to take advanced language courses. Having such information available will enable universities, departments, and professors to develop marketing strategies or make changes within the language program so that continued foreign language study is more appealing to more students.

Unfortunately, professors and departments are often so busy teaching that they do not have the time to ask students for their views on language learning-related matters. In order to obtain such information I invite you to participate in this research project by completing the attached survey; your participation is completely voluntary. The survey is in English and takes about 15 minutes to complete. Your opinions and views are valuable. It is my hope that our participation in this project will lead to more effective teaching and learning in college foreign language courses.

I know how busy you are and appreciate the time that you are taking to complete the survey. Please know that the survey is anonymous and your responses will be kept completely confidential. As French majors and minors, it is clear that this is an area of interest to you. In order to help the researcher further, please volunteer to give a brief interview regarding this topic at a later date. On the last page of the survey you can indicate your desire to participate, as well as your email or phone number so that you may be contacted. Merci beaucoup!!!

Sincerely,

Caroline Kirkpatrick
VCU Doctoral Student

Survey for VCU French Majors and Minors

Directions: Please respond to the following statements by circling the number that most closely corresponds to your personal opinion or feeling. Select only one answer for each item. There is also a comments column if you need to explain an answer. Your options are:

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

I am studying French because:

1) it will be useful in my career activities.
1 2 3 4 5 6

2) I want to be able to live in a French-speaking community.
1 2 3 4 5 6

3) I want to travel to and in French-speaking places.
1 2 3 4 5 6

4) I want to be able to read, for example, French signs and menus.
1 2 3 4 5 6

5) I want to be able to read literature in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

6) I want to be able to read technical literature in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

7) I want to be able to read/understand French-language media (newspapers, film, radio broadcasts, etc.)
1 2 3 4 5 6

8) I want to be able to request information (for example, directions to a park) in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

9) I want to be able to complete, for example, a written application in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

10) I want to be able to understand, for example, directions being given to me in French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

11) I want to be able to carry on a conversation with French-speaking friends/acquaintances.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

12) I want to be able to work in a French-speaking environment.
1 2 3 4 5 6

13) knowing French will help me find a job.
1 2 3 4 5 6

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1 2 3 4 5 6

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18) Understanding grammar is useful for my learning.
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19) When I speak French I want my teacher to stop me and correct all of my mistakes.
1 2 3 4 5 6

20) When I write French I want my teacher to correct any and all mistakes that I make.
1 2 3 4 5 6

21) I feel that my time is well spent when the focus of studying French is on activities such as giving/asking for directions, ordering from a menu, or reading a newspaper.
1 2 3 4 5 6

22) In class, I like to repeat words and phrases aloud.
1 2 3 4 5 6

23) I prefer structured classroom activities, such as grammar exercises and reading dialogues in the text, rather than activities that are more loose and open, such as unrehearsed conversation.
1 2 3 4 5 6

24) I like working in small groups during class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

25) I like doing written exercises in a workbook.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

26) I do not like watching French videos or French telecasts.
1 2 3 4 5 6

27) I wish that my foreign language class provided me with more opportunities to use the Internet and other forms of technology in learning French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

28) I would like to have more interaction with native speakers of French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Attitude and Motivation:

29) I find most of the work that we do in French class interesting and relevant.
1 2 3 4 5 6

30) Generally, I feel confident in French class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

31) I feel that we generally try to cover too much in a class session.
1 2 3 4 5 6

32) I make a conscious effort to use as much French as possible in the classroom.
1 2 3 4 5 6

33) It strengthens my interest in French to hear stories of people's experiences who have gone to France or French-speaking places.
1 2 3 4 5 6

34) I will be satisfied in this course as long as I learn something.
1 2 3 4 5 6

35) I am studying French for the pleasure of learning French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

36) My desire to learn French is strong.
1 2 3 4 5 6

37) I believe that knowledge of French is a mark of an educated person.
1 2 3 4 5 6

38) Learning a foreign language is a worthwhile thing to do.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

39) I will be satisfied in this course as long as I get a good grade.
1 2 3 4 5 6

40) Being able to speak French carries a certain prestige.
1 2 3 4 5 6

41) I am taking French only because foreign language credits are required in order to obtain my degree.
1 2 3 4 5 6

42) Studying a foreign language helps me better understand my own language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

43) Studying a foreign language helps me to become more aware of the problems people have when speaking a language that is not their own.
1 2 3 4 5 6

44) In my personal life away from school, I experience situations where being able to speak French comes in handy.
1 2 3 4 5 6

45) Most of the French I have learned so far is strong and clear in my memory.
1 2 3 4 5 6

46) Generally, I do not feel motivated to do the work necessary for French class.
1 2 3 4 5 6

47) When I speak French, I think my grammar is accurate.
1 2 3 4 5 6

48) When I speak French, I think my pronunciation and accent are good.
1 2 3 4 5 6

49) When I speak French, aloud in class, I feel self-conscious and/or embarrassed.
1 2 3 4 5 6

50) I feel intimidated because many of my classmates speak French much better than I do.
1 2 3 4 5 6

51) French is easier to learn than other languages.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	Comments:
1	2	3	4	5	6	

52) It is just as important for me to learn about life in France and French-speaking places, and the people, their customs and institutions, as it is to learn the language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

53) There are more useful foreign languages to learn than French.
1 2 3 4 5 6

54) I am interested in cultural differences, the ways different people in the world think and live.
1 2 3 4 5 6

55) Every American should know at least one foreign language.
1 2 3 4 5 6

French is internationally important in the domain of:

56) business and commerce.
1 2 3 4 5 6

57) the arts and literature.
1 2 3 4 5 6

58) science.
1 2 3 4 5 6

59) government and diplomacy.
1 2 3 4 5 6

Directions: Please circle your response to the following questions. In specified instances, more than one response may be allowed.

60) I would say a basic speaking ability in French could prove useful in the following number of countries throughout the world:
1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26+

61) How much time do you generally spend in preparing for a 50-minute French class?
0 minutes 30 minutes I hour 2 hours 3 hours 4 hours or more

62) Please describe, in your own words, your reasons for continuing to take French beyond the foreign language requirement.

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

63) Do you plan to use your knowledge of the French language and culture after you graduate? If so, please give specific examples of ways that you intend to use this knowledge.

64) What types of activities have been the most beneficial in your foreign language classes, in terms of helping you learn the language?

65) Please describe your ideal classroom environment for studying French (amount of English spoken, types of activities performed, characteristics of professor and other students, etc.).

66) Please check all of the following technological tools that have been used in your French classes here at VCU:

_____ Internet
_____ E-mail
_____ Web Course in a Box
_____ Tape Recorder
_____ Online Grammar Exercises/ Quizzes
_____ Video (shown on VCR)
_____ Electronic Bulletin Board
_____ Video (online)
_____ Teleconference/Lecture Online w/ Native Speaker

67) What has been your favorite technological tool used in learning French? Please describe specifically how that tool was used as a language learning aid.

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

68) Please list all of the possible ways that you can think of to use French.

69) Please list any advanced French courses that you would like to see offered at VCU that are not currently available.

70) How would you describe your overall attitude towards learning French?

71) What could your professor or foreign language department do to increase your motivation for studying French? Please be as specific as possible.

72) In what way do you feel the lower level French courses (101 & 102) at VCU prepared you in the following areas of French?

(a) Overall proficiency level:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(b) Grammar skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(c) Reading skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(d) Writing skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(e) Listening skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well
(f) Study skills:	very poorly	poorly	adequately	well	very well

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

Student Profile

73) I am
(a) 17-19 years old
(b) 20-22 years old
(c) 23-25 years old
(d) over 25 years old

74) I am taking French
(a) as a major.
(b) as a minor.
(c) as a requirement.
(d) as an elective.

75) I am
(a) a freshman.
(b) a sophomore.
(c) a junior.
(d) a senior.
(e) a graduate student.
(f) Other, special student, non-degree seeking

76) Which college/school (for example, *Education, Business, MCV*) are you in at VCU?

_____

77) What is your overall GPA?
(a) 3.5 – 4.0
(b) 3.0 – 3.49
(c) 2.5 – 2.99
(d) below 2.5

78) I am
(a) male.
(b) female.

79) In French, so far I have been a(n)
(a) A student.
(b) A/B student.
(c) B student.
(d) B/C student.
(e) C student.
(f) C/D student

80) I expect to receive the following grade in this course:
(a) A
(b) B
(c) C
(d) D
(e) F

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

81) Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview with the researcher regarding the study
of French in college? _____YES *(please give contact information below)*
_____NO

Student email address_____

Student phone number_____

Available days and times for an interview (approximately 30 - 40 minutes):

_____

(for example, Mondays 3-5, Thursday mornings, Friday afternoons)

Thanks so much for your time and effort – it is greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX B

Interview Guides and Related Forms

Pseudonym _____

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Education
Consent to Take Part in a Research Study

1. **Participant's name:** _____ **Date:** _____

2. **Title of Research:**
Factors Related to Persistence in the Study of a Foreign Language at the College Level

3. **Purpose of Research:**
You are being asked to participate in a research study. Approximately 16-18 students will be asked to participate in interviews and a focus group meeting for the study. The purpose of this study is to identify those factors that are responsible for student persistence in the study of a foreign language, specifically French. Another goal of the study is to examine reasons why students terminate their language study, once they have completed the language requirement for their degree. You are being asked to participate because you are one of the two types of students involved in this study – VCU French 102 students and VCU French majors and minors.

4. **Procedure and Duration:**
You are being asked to participate in a one-on-one interview and/or focus group meeting with the researcher. Oral questions will pertain to your language study experience: activities in your foreign language classes, the use of technology, factors that are motivating and non-motivating in the foreign language classroom, and your future plans regarding the study of the language. The interviews will last 20-30 minutes, and the focus group meeting will last about 60-90 minutes, however you may withdraw at any time.

5. **Risks and Discomforts:**
There are no physical risks or discomforts associated with participation in this research.

6. **Benefits:**
Information gathered in this study may help foreign language professors become more aware of the activities and classroom environmental factors that motivate students to continue their language study. Foreign language departments as a whole may improve as a result of the in-depth information provided by students at varying levels of language study.

7. **Alternative Procedures / Treatments:**
You have the option of not participating in this study.

8. **Reasons for Removal from the Study:**
You may withdraw from the study at any time, by your request. Should you decide to withdraw before the interview or focus group meeting is completed, you will be discontinued from the study.

9. **Voluntary Participation:**
You understand that being in this study is voluntary. Your grade in French will not be affected in any way if you decline to be in or later withdraw from the study.

10. **Responsibility for Cost:**

No costs will be incurred as a result of participation in this study.

11. Stipend / Reimbursement:
You will not be paid any money for participation in this research study.

12. Confidentiality:
All data obtained in this study will be kept confidential. In any publication or presentation of research results, your identity will be kept confidential. There is a possibility that records which identify you may be inspected by authorized individuals and agencies, such as the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, or employees conducting peer review activities. Your consent to such inspections and to the copying of excerpts from your records, if required by any of these representatives.

13. Other considerations:
If new information becomes known that will affect you or might change your decision to be in this study, the investigator will inform you. If you have any questions at any time about this study or your rights as a research subject you may contact Caroline Kirkpatrick, VCU School of Education Doctoral Candidate [redacted]

Consent

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give my consent voluntarily.

_____ _____
Participant Date

Researcher: Caroline Kirkpatrick
VCU School of Education Doctoral Candidate
[redacted]

Interview Guide – French 102 Students

Demographic Questions:

1. How old are you?
2. Are you a freshman, sophomore, etc.?
3. What college/school are you in at VCU?
4. What is your overall GPA?
5. What French class are you in and when/where does it meet?

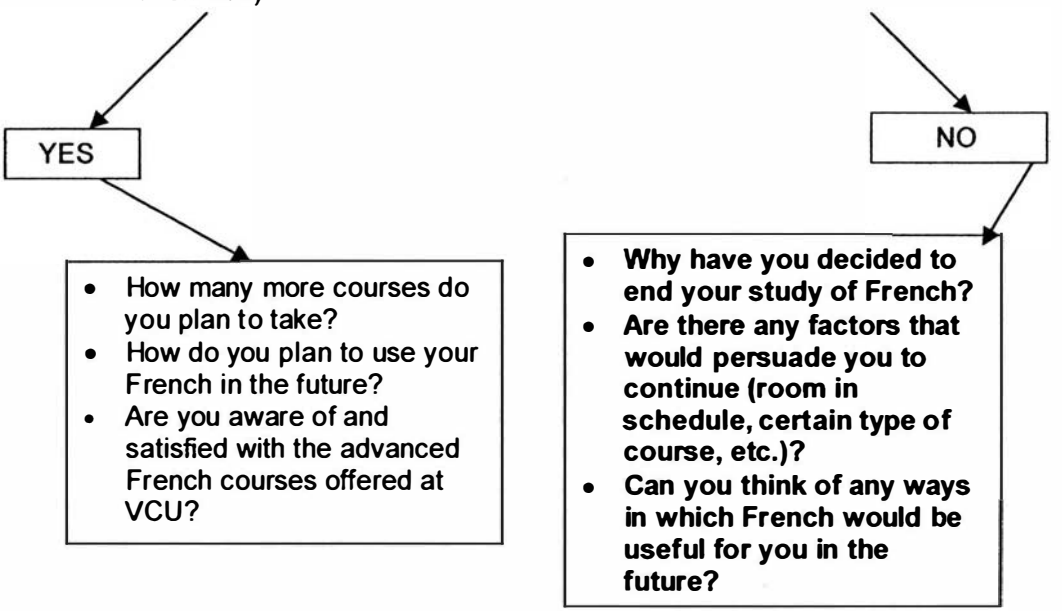
Open-ended Questions:

1. When did you start studying French? Can you think back to your feelings when you began studying French...what were they and are your feelings the same now towards the subject?

2. What are your reasons for taking French at VCU?

3. Have you thought about continuing the study of French after this semester?

   (You indicated in your email that your are not continuing the study of French...)



3. Generally speaking, how would you describe your attitude towards the French language and culture and can you explain why you have that attitude?

4. Can you give examples of activities, inside or outside the classroom, that you find the most motivating and beneficial to learning a foreign language?

5. On the other hand, what kinds of activities do you find less satisfactory and non-motivating when you are studying French?

6. How much culture would you say is examined in your class, and how do you feel about the amount of culture studied vs. the amount of language studied?

7. Could you give me an approximate percentage of the amount of English spoken in your French class vs. the amount of French? How do you feel about this ration? How likely are you to initiate questions and/or comments in French during the class? Can you give me some examples of things you might say or have said in the past?

8. What, if any, types of activities do you engage in outside of French class that allow you to use your knowledge of French and/or the French culture?

9. How would you feel about visiting, living, or working in a French-speaking country?

10. How adequately prepared, with regards to your French listening, speaking, reading, & writing skills, are you to use your French outside the classroom? Can you give some examples of ways that you might be able to use your French in the "real world"?

11. What types of technological tools (computer programs, Internet, WCB, video streaming, etc.) have you used in your study of French? Please describe specifically how it was used and how that affected your learning and/or your desire to learn French.

12. What final grades have you received in French 101 and 102? How do they relate to the amount of French that you feel you can speak, listen, write, and read? *(e.g. If you have received A's, do you feel that you speak French at an A level and can communicate in a relatively adequate manner?)*

13. How do you feel when people say that "studying French is a waste of time" or that "everyone around the world is learning English anyway, so what's the point of studying another language?"

14. What advice would you have for incoming freshman regarding the study of French at VCU?

15. Overall, how would you describe your language learning experience at VCU and why?

16. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about your language-learning experience or your desire to continue/discontinue your study of French?

Interview Guide -- French Majors & Minors

Demographic Questions:

1. How old are you?
2. Are you a freshman, sophomore, etc.?
3. What college/school are you in at VCU?
4. What is your overall GPA?

Open-ended Questions:

1. Are you currently a French major or minor? What degree program are you in at VCU?

2. When did you start studying French? Did you take lower-level courses here at VCU? How do you feel the lower-level 101 and 102 classes prepared you skill-wise for the more advanced French courses?

3. What are your reasons for taking French at VCU? How do you plan to use your French major or minor when you graduate?

4. Why have you decided to continue to take French courses beyond the number required for most general bachelor's degrees?

5. Generally speaking, how would you describe your attitude towards the French language and culture?

6. Can you give some examples of activities, inside or outside the classroom, that your find the most motivating and beneficial to learning a foreign language?

7. On the other hand, what kinds of activities do you find less satisfactory and non-motivating when you are studying French?

8. What suggestions do you have, as a current advanced level French student, for professors and foreign language departments who are trying to increase their enrollment at the upper levels?

9. Could you give me an approximate percentage of the amount of English spoken in your current French class vs. the amount of French spoken? How likely are you to initiate questions and/or comments in French during the class? Can you give some examples of things you might say?

10. What, if any, types of activities do you engage in outside of French class that allow you to use your knowledge of French and/or the French culture?

11. How would you feel about visiting, living, or working in a French-speaking country?

12. How adequately prepared, with regards to your French listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, are you to use your French outside the classroom? Can you give examples of ways that you might be able to use your French?

13. What types of technological tools (computer programs, Internet, WCB, video-streaming, etc.) have been used in your study of French? Please describe how it was used and how that affected your learning and/or your desire to learn French.

14. What final grades have you received in French 101 and 102 courses, and is that consistent with your upper-level course grades? How do your grades relate to the amount of French that you feel you can speak, listen, read, and write? (*e.g. If you have received A's, do you feel that you can speak French at an A level and can communicate in a relatively adequate manner?)*

15. How do you feel when people say that "studying French is a waste of time" or that "everyone around the world is learning English anyway, so what's the point of studying another language?"

16. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about your language-learning experience or our desire to continue/discontinue your study of French?

Post-Interview Information Request Form

Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with me today - your participation and responses are an invaluable part of this study. Upon completion of these interviews, another attempt will be made to learn even more about students' persistence in the study of a foreign language. I am planning to convene a focus group consisting of students who have chosen to persist in French, as well as students who will end their study of French with the 102 class. Your further participation in this focus group meeting (about 60-90 minutes) would be greatly appreciated. Please fill in the information below indicating your preference to be a focus group member.

1. Pseudonym *(for anonymity purposes)*: _____

2. Current level of French: _____

3. Are you a French major or minor? _____ If not, do you plan to continue your study of French? _____

4. I would be willing to participate in a focus group meeting (60-90 minutes) at a later date to discuss issues related to foreign language learning and persistence in foreign language study.

   YES _____ *(Please include contact information below)*

   NO _____

3. Email address: _____

4. Telephone number: _____

5. Date of interview: _____

6. Available times for focus group meeting: _____

Thanks again!

Focus Group for French Students

Continuing Students:

- Kara
- Mandie

Discontinuing Students:

Ryan
Marjie

Please remember the following:

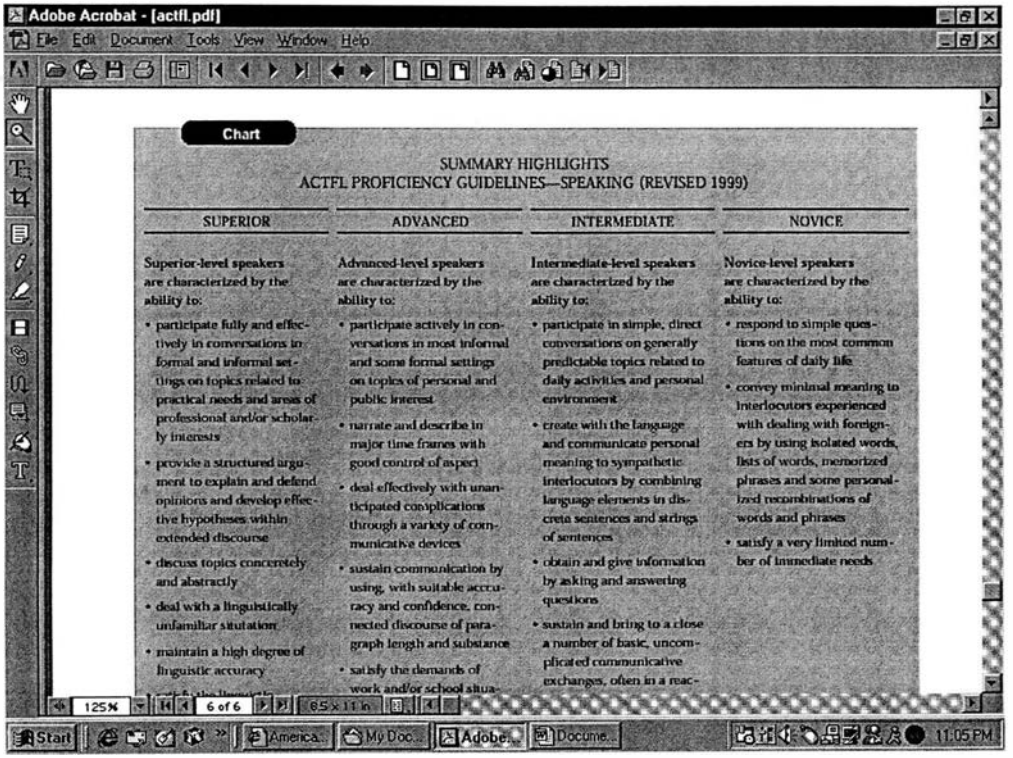
- Don't be shy – speak your mind! The more detail, the better.
- Say your name before you speak to help the transcriber keep everyone straight.
- Speak loudly and clearly – again to help the transcriber.

Quotes to ponder and discuss at some point perhaps:

- *Is it the instructional methodology, the language itself, or...the teacher, that leads to undesirable attitudes on the part of the student?* (Bartley, 1969)
- *Upper division foreign language classes are composed of two groups, the "haves" and the "have nots," and those with superior preparation, far more than the institution officially demands, and those who have only the required preparation. The "haves," those with extensive outside experience, dominate the class and receive higher grades." (Dupuy and Krashen, 1998)*

APPENDIX C

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines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File Edit Document Tools View Window Help
Chart
SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS
ACTFL PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES—SPEAKING (REVISED 1999)
SUPERIOR
ADVANCED
INTERMEDIATE
NOVICE
Superior-level speakers are characterized by the ability to:
• participate fully and effectively in conversations in formal and informal settings on topics related to practical needs and areas of professional and/or scholarly interests
• provide a structured argument to explain and defend opinions and develop effective hypotheses within extended discourse
• discuss topics concretely and abstractly
• deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation
• maintain a high degree of linguistic accuracy
Advanced-level speakers are characterized by the ability to:
• participate actively in conversations in most informal and some formal settings on topics of personal and public interest
• narrate and describe in major time frames with good control of aspect
• deal effectively with unanticipated complications through a variety of communicative devices
• sustain communication by using, with suitable accuracy and confidence, connected discourse of paragraph length and substance
• satisfy the demands of work and/or school situa-
Intermediate-level speakers are characterized by the ability to:
• participate in simple, direct conversations on generally predictable topics related to daily activities and personal environment
• create with the language and communicate personal meaning to sympathetic interlocutors by combining language elements in discrete sentences and strings of sentences
• obtain and give information by asking and answering questions
• sustain and bring to a close a number of basic, uncomplicated communicative exchanges, often in a reac-
Novice-level speakers are characterized by the ability to:
• respond to simple questions on the most common features of daily life
• convey minimal meaning to interlocutors experienced with dealing with foreigners by using isolated words, lists of words, memorized phrases and some personalized recombinations of words and phrases
• satisfy a very limited number of immediate needs
125%
6 of 6
8.5 x 11 in
Start
America...
My Doc...
Adobe...
Docume...
11:05 PM

Vita