French–Canadian Immersion Model

The French immersion model was designed around four objectives: (1) to permit students to become functionally competent in oral and written French; (2) to permit and sustain the development of the first language (which in most cases was English); (3) to permit students to learn content appropriate to their age and school level; and (4) to help English speaking students develop an understanding of and respect for the French speaking culture and language while also retaining their own culture and identity (Calvet, 1991), all in an effort to develop bilingualism (the ability to speak French and English as two parallel systems).

Early French Immersion
- Begins in Kindergarten or Grade 1 with 100% French instruction from K through Grade 2. With the introduction of English language arts usually in Grade 3, French instruction drops to about 80% and then continues a decline through 12th grade. By Grade 12, instruction is given in French for about 50% of the school day.
- About 80% of French Immersion students begin in Early Immersion. Immersion teachers in the primary grades have been shown to use teaching methods that facilitate the acquisition and retention of a second language much more so than do teachers of higher grades.
- The decision to enroll in Early Immersion is made by the parents.

Middle Immersion
- Begins in Grade 3 or 4 and usually starts with a level of French instruction around 80%.
- This program is more a blend of Early Immersion and Late Immersion and its effectiveness has been shown to be somewhere between the two.

Late Immersion
- Begins in Grade 6 or 7 with about 60-75% French instruction. All core subjects, such as Social Studies, Science, and Math, are taught in French. English and electives are taught in English.
- Late Immersion students tend to achieve the same level of proficiency as far as reading and writing as Early Immersion students, but their oral expression is often inferior.
- It is generally the decision of the student to enroll in Late Immersion, as opposed to the parents.

