UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING THE USE OF WRITING PORTFOLIOS IN ONE FRENCH IMMERSION CLASSROOM

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Introduction

This study grew out of my desire as a teacher to develop, implement, and critically analyse and assess my teaching practice of using writing portfolios to improve the accuracy of the written French of my Anglophone Grade 11 French immersion students.

I had three principal goals in using the teaching format of writing portfolios: (a) to provide regular corrective written feedback to my students in order to improve the linguistic accuracy of their written French, (b) to explore how the combined activities required of the students in their writing portfolio improved their written French, and (c) to enhance my students' responsibility as second language writers.

In this twelve week study, I analyzed writing portfolios submitted by my students in order to describe their writing, and to learn whether there were improvements in their writing over the period of 12 weeks during which I provided corrective feedback on their writing. I also analyzed my written exchanges with students about their writing, as well as their written comments arising from reflection about their writing in French to seek evidence of learner awareness and autonomy, and developing learner awareness and autonomy. Through this process, I explored my own professional practice to understand better the effects of my teaching on my students' writing accuracy in French and on their growth and awareness as learners.

Rationale

I observed that my students, year after year, regularly made errors in the accuracy of their written French in the domains of verb conjugations, spelling, agreements and sentence structure. These errors were numerous and significant enough that the students' writing could not be characterized as truly the French language. Rather it was an interlanguage, defined as language production which is at an intermediary stage of development. It is characterized by a dependency on structures, semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonics of the dominant language (Lyster, 1987; Selinker, 1972, 1981, 1993), English in this case, because full mastery of the second language structures has not yet occurred (Corder, 1973 de Villiers & de Villiers, 1978, Selinker, 1993).

In addition, this student population was not typical of second language learners, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, because they had experienced intense and sustained language instruction in French immersion throughout their entire education. The French language has been both the medium and the focus of a fundamental portion of their education. From Junior Kindergarten through to the conclusion of secondary school, in logical accordance with their developmental level, these students have had instruction in and exposure to authentic language examples of grammar, spelling, vocabulary enrichment, listening, and reading, and have had continuous opportunities to speak and write with accuracy.

I offer some examples from my students' work here to illustrate the type of problem to which I refer. Some students write with the infinitive form of the verb instead of the correct conjugation, such as *ils ont aimer*, instead of the correct *ils ont aimé*, or *elle écrire*, instead of *elle écrit*. They may write a form of the verb that does not exist at all, such as *il a mouru*, instead of *il est mort*, or further, the infinitive with a plural, *ils vont les corrigers*, a form which is quite disconcerting to see at this late stage, as it does not exist in the language and the students will have never encountered it in authentic models. Students may draw partly from one form and partly from another, to create a form that also does not exist at all, such as *tu vasait*, instead of *tu allais*, (this latter example taken from student writing which also has an error of agreement with the subject). Errors of structure are common as well, such as *nous besoin*, an attempt at creating a parallel with the English *we need*, instead of *nous*

avons besoin de..., or the even more complex *ce dont nous avons besoin.* These are but a sampling of the errors found in my students' writing.

Given the seeming contradiction between the students' extensive experience with the language and the consistent appearance of significant errors, I considered that as their teacher, I needed to explore further how to improve the accuracy of their written French. In addition, I hoped to increase my students' sense of personal responsibility and autonomy as learners, and guide them towards less dependency on me to correct their written work, and towards greater confidence in their ability to correct their own work.

I chose the format of a growth-based writing portfolio as the foundation for this study, and to improve my students' writing efforts, because I thought portfolios provided the best format to enable development over a period of time. They allow for consistent and repeated opportunities for writing, and provide large amounts of feedback from a variety of sources over an extended time. In addition, portfolios give students a chance to revisit their work, make improvements, and take responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, portfolios of this type allowed me to track progress, view individual growth, and foster student reflection (Baird & Northfield, 1992; Melville, 1996; Santos, 1997). The students in this study were asked to keep their questionnaires and teacher-student dialogue forms (which I had designed) in their portfolio, and to refer to them regularly, as their writing and their awareness of *how* they wrote and how to self-correct developed, in order to support these processes.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided this study:

1) How does the accuracy of language structures in students' written French improve in the context of my teaching practice which is characterized by offering regular corrective feedback in writing portfolios?

2) How do the combined processes I require of the students in their writing portfolio contribute over time to the improvement of their written French?

3) How do the combined processes I require of the students in their writing portfolio enhance learner responsibility?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the present study, the following operational definitions were used. A writing portfolio is a collection of student writing intended to enable growth and change in writing over time. This writing portfolio enables a teacher to provide systematic feedback which supports further student writing. It also houses students' responses to questions, presented in the form of answers to the questionnaire promoting reflection on their writing processes, which can be tracked over time to illustrate a learner's growth in awareness. Students can access this collection of their own writing and feedback to take increased responsibility for improving their writing (e.g., Melville, 1996; Santos, 1997). I defined learner responsibility as having gained both the awareness and the ability to act upon the results of various writing approaches in order to consistently achieve the best results possible.

Outline of the Study

This study can be described as action research, as elaborated upon by Stringer (2004) and Loughran, Mitchell, and Mitchell (2002). This study covered a period of 12 weeks of instruction during which students wrote various styles of articles in French, were encouraged to respond regularly to a writing awareness questionnaire, and to regularly complete a teacher-student dialogue form in which they were to dialogue with the teacher about their writing, their writing process and their understanding of the teacher's feedback. The items which comprised the students' writing portfolios were: an entry-point article which formed the start-point for measuring growth; all drafts of all articles; student-teacher dialogue forms; questionnaires and responses; a written answer to a spontaneous in-class query regarding their writing; and an exit-point personal reflection. I also kept a critical-reflection journal in which I wrote both during the study and during the period of data analysis. My journal writing during the study was kept to a minimum given the workload of the in-class activities. I developed it further during the process of analysing the data generated in the study. Other data consisted of my teaching log in which I recorded the grammatical elements that were taught, an error observation list in which I recorded the language errors that I observed in daily class activities, particularly during the oral expression warm-up activity prior to writing. In addition, a highly important data source is a comprehensive data audit that I completed, which was an analytical list of all language errors produced in all students' series of first drafts of each article, and which noted whether students made the same errors in subsequent writing, or if they eliminated the errors in subsequent writing.

During the study, I introduced some new elements in response to the students' participation in the study. For example, I wrote notes of encouragement when I perceived that individuals needed this support, and I introduced the teacher-student dialogue form at the half-way point. During the study, my greatest efforts were directed at providing written corrective feedback to the student's (usually) third drafts, and offering guiding, supportive or questioning commentary in response to their questionnaire and dialogue form answers. The majority of my diagnostic work came after the period of student production, when I analysed the data.

Literature Review

French Immersion

Literature suggests that students of French immersion produce language which shows consistent errors. Lyster (1987) observed that students in French immersion had communicative competency: they could successfully transmit a message in the target language, but students' language production was consistently characterized by errors, despite efforts to correct these errors. Selinker introduced the term *interlanguage*, now widely used, to linguistics (1969) to describe the phenomenon of incomplete and therefore inaccurate second language acquisition and production. This interlanguage is also characterized by *fossilized errors*. These are errors which develop at a stage of incomplete language learning, which are both seemingly permanent and immune to repair, despite the learners' continued study of the language (Lyster, 1994; Selinker, 1993; Stern, 1982).

Lyster (1987) carried out an interpretive study of errors in which he discovered negative transfer inherent in his students' interlanguage through a comparison of the native language equivalent. Lyster considered that fossilized interlanguage was comprised of a significant number of crosslingual errors, (the erroneous use of first language (L1) structures and vocabulary in the target language) caused by negative transfer from English, as well as a number of intralingual errors (an overgeneralization of

usage within the target language), caused by the students' imperfect mastery of French structure due to their exposure to the whole language at once.

Swain and Lapkin (1986) also noted that immersion students' productive second-language skills (writing and speaking) did not reach native-like levels, and that the way they expressed themselves was very different from their francophone peers. Bibeau (1984) considered that the French spoken by French immersion students was an artificial language riddled with serious errors in syntax, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Hammerly (1982) observed that students' language production was riddled with anglicisms and persistent errors.

Potential solutions include a relearning experience of deconstruction and reconstruction, efforts at drawing students' awareness to these problems, as suggested in more recently developed teachers' aids and publications, such as *The prevention and correction of errors in French: A systematic approach* (Harvey, 2004), which focuses specifically on fossilized errors.

Writing Portfolios
Literature shows that writing portfolios allow for the incorporation of the various elements I needed to combine in this study: the language-based and metacognitive aspects required in guiding students' writing; the provision of corrective feedback in forms such as student-teacher conferencing; written comments on students' writing and students' responses to these comments; the use and effectiveness of peer-editing; exploration of learner growth and reflection; and notions from PEEL, such as learner responsibility.

Froc (1995) explored how teachers can use the writing process to help students develop the target language, and advanced Vygotsky's notion of inner speech (1978, 1986) as being fundamental in guiding students' writing. Through mediated learning, the teacher guiding the students, the learner will be able identify errors and eventually use self-correction as a way to leave the interlanguage state. Froc had success with individual writing conferences.

Portfolios generally include writing produced throughout all stages of a writing program and which record the cumulative effects of and responses to corrective feedback (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). Portfolios provide evidence of growth and development and allow students to look back at earlier work, to reflect upon what they have already accomplished, and to revisit their work and make improvements. Portfolios also allow the teacher to track progress, view individual growth, and foster student reflection (Baack, 1997; Melville, 1996).

Corrective feedback from teachers
Fatham and Whalley (2001) explored teacher feedback to students' writing, contrasting focus on form, versus focus on content, and explored research on teacher feedback to students. In all, they noted that students who received feedback on form made more improvements on form that those who did not receive this feedback (1985). Their findings substantiated those of Lalande (1982) and Robb et al. (1986) for second language (L2) learners, who found that writing accuracy did increase with teacher feedback that gave the location of grammar errors. Leki (2001) undertook a literature search and discovered that students may have trouble understanding teachers' corrections, or may make a correction to an individual error, but not be able to correct the same error in future writing. My study seeks to provide clear feedback which is immediately useful to students. Ziv (1984) determined that when the teacher intervenes while the student is writing and revising, the final product shows improvement over the intermediate drafts. Jenkins (1987) had students respond in writing to the comments she made on their papers, giving students the opportunity to enter into written dialogue with the teacher.

Corrective feedback from peers
Byrd (1994) proposed that writing was a group act, given the dialogical nature of writing and reading between author and implied reader, and that therefore group interaction was a natural part of writing. The in-class reality of time use and teacher availability make peer-editing a wise route towards supporting student writing, reinforcing language concepts, and creating a co-operative environment. Wauter (1988) noted that when both a peer editor and a teacher make a similar observation, it can reinforce the corrective message. Lardner (1994) found that better revisions and more changes

occurred as a result of peer editing than from self-correction, and those doing the editing ended up further improving their own writing.

Supporting learner growth in responsibility

Literature on the PEEL project (Project for the Enhancement of Effective Learning), an Australian example of teacher collaborative action research, includes Good Learning Behaviours (GLBs) in students and specific teacher procedures that foster one or more of the GLBs. One of the aims of the project, which most aligned with this study, is the objective to foster students' independent learning through training for enhanced metacognition (Baird & Northfield, 1992). They define metacognition as comprising a person's knowledge about learning, awareness of the nature, purpose, and progress of current learning, and the control of learning approach, progress, and outcomes through informed, purposeful decision-making.

Mitchell (2005) affirmed the value of senior students taking more control of their learning and reducing their dependence on the teacher, and argued that one aspect of this involved students actively monitoring their understanding. The PEEL studies (e.g., Baird & Northfield, 1992) emphasized the communicative aspect of feedback, and discussed the use of communication and feedback sheets whose objective is to have teachers and students enter into a written dialogue in which students and teachers comment on students' work.

Teaching responsibility and reflection through the writing portfolio

Baack (1997) explored the use of writing portfolios in second language composition classes and commented that they provide a mechanism by which students can assess their own strengths and weaknesses as writers. He observed that student ownership of their work and self-assessment were enhanced with the portfolio program, that portfolios allow for a self-reflective format, and that having students write about their reflections encourages students to demonstrate the degree to which they have become conscious of their own writing strengths and weaknesses. Baack considers that towards the end of a portfolio writing program, students and teachers will see a development among students for self-analysis, and they will learn that students have developed the critical capacity to learn and to think.

Melville (1996) noted that portfolios allow students to explore their own writing development, personal style, and recognition of preferences, strengths, and weaknesses, and that this process reinforces their sense of responsibility for their own work and the value of the final product. Santos (1997) stated that there are benefits of assessment and reflection in the portfolio which come as a result of seriously approaching the reflective task, and with helping students develop the metacognitive and communicative skills to document their reflections.

Brookfield (1995) wrote that learner reflection in portfolios encourages students to examine their efforts and the consequences of their actions. The act helps them to see connections between their goals and beliefs about their learning and their actual learning behaviours and to make adjustments accordingly. Sweet (1993) argued that reflecting on a portfolio may help increase students' understanding that they are responsible for their work and for the results of their efforts.

Methodology

Approach

My intent was to investigate issues that would help me "effectively and efficiently engage the complex world of the classroom" (Stringer, 2004, p. 2). Action research focuses on developing and improving the professional practice of teachers by encouraging active reflection on methods and processes which are ongoing in the classroom. It enables teachers to be participants, observers, and researchers who develop, observe, and seek feedback to evaluate critically and improve their practice (Loughran, Mitchell, & Mitchell, 2002).

A qualitative approach was used in this study to enhance my understanding of my students' experience of my teaching. I also sought to deepen my understanding of both my own and my students' learning, actions, and experience directly from the individuals involved in the development and implementations of certain teaching practices. The teaching practices in this study focused on a writing portfolio program for French immersion students, which provided them with extensive

corrective feedback on their writing. Merriam (1988) argued that "research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied shows the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 3).

Context

This study took place in an urban, Anglophone secondary school in Eastern Ontario. The school has a strong focus on academics, and many students value academic success. There is strong support for studies in French immersion. The focus group was my grade 11 French immersion class, wherein 16 students participated in the study. At the time of the study, I had been teaching French immersion and Spanish classes, focusing on language and literature, for a period of 18 years. I held the degrees of honours B.A. in French and Spanish, and a B.Ed; teaching qualifications in French, Spanish, English, and ESL; the graduate degree of M.A. in Spanish language and literature, and was concluding the graduate degree of M.Ed.

Elements of the Research

I include the objectives of the portfolio writing process (Appendix A, in translation), a list of the portfolio contents (in Tables 1 and 2 below); the self-correction guideline (Appendix B); the evaluation schema for the portfolio (Appendix C); and a timeline of the study in the form of my teaching log (Appendix D). I also include a description of elements of French language instruction provided to the students. I offer a description of how I supported the student writing process, and how I introduced Good Learning Behaviours to the student. I further describe how I provided feedback to the students regarding their learning and their writing in the form of written comments on their articles (which addressed both form and content, but for the purpose of the study, I report only on the comments regarding language form), their teacher-student dialogue forms, and their questionnaire responses.

The Writing Portfolio

The educational objectives of the portfolio were to provide a format which would guide students towards sustained improved writing in French. I had anticipated that when the students participated in the process of reflection encouraged by the teacher-student dialogue form as well as the questionnaire, they would increase their awareness of their writing strengths and weaknesses, and could use this information actively to continuously guide them towards further improved writing. This approach is reflected in the writings of Lipp and Davis-Ockey (1997), Santos (1997), Sweet (1993), Baird and Northfield (1992), and Loughran, Mitchell and Mitchell (2002).

The writing production objectives were that students would write one full article weekly on a topic and in a style of their choice, based on the topic guidelines, and in which they were to focus on accurate written language. They were to follow the format of writing (a) a first draft which they edited in the form of self-correction, then (b) writing a corrected second draft which was further edited by a peer, followed by (c) writing a corrected third draft upon which I offered constructive feedback in the form of comments and corrections. The students were to polish five finished pieces of their writing that they judged to be their best. Students could go back and edit any piece of writing as many times as they wished, once they had gone through the three step process of developing a final draft.

Students were to respond to a reflective questionnaire, which was introduced at the beginning of the study, upon completion of each third written article. In so doing, they were to think critically about and analyze the quality of their writing, gain an awareness of patterns in the feedback, be it from self, peers, or teacher, and actively apply the information and guidance offered in the various sources of feedback towards their next efforts at writing.

I introduced a teacher-student dialogue form at the half-way point in the study to gather data on my students' response to my corrective feedback. I learned that I needed to know that they understood my comments and directives. Students then completed an exit-point personal reflection piece based on their experience with and critical reflections on the utility of the writing portfolio and on their growth as writers and learners.

Portfolio Contents

I intended that each student's writing portfolio contain the following pieces of student writing: (a) an initial piece of entry-point writing which was to be the basis against which all future writing was compared in terms of quality and mastery of the French language in this study; (b) 12 finished articles

which were comprised of three drafts eachSone first draft, student (self)-corrected; one second draft, peer-corrected; and one third draft, teacher-correctedSper week, over a period of 12 weeks; (c) the writing awareness questionnaire completed every third week; (d) teacher-student dialogue forms which contained feedback on each article, which were introduced after the seventh week of the study; and (e) a final exit piece of writing. The students and I quickly discovered that this was an unrealistic amount of writing either for them to complete or for me to comment on. No student completed all these writing tasks; however, many consistently produced multiple-draft articles and numerous questionnaire responses. I divided the student writing portfolios into two groups for analysis according to the student response. I called one Cluster One, and the other Cluster Two. Tables 1 and 2 show the actual data set. I arrived at the following numbers by counting the contents of their submitted writing portfolios.

Table 1

Cluster One: Content Summary of Submitted Portfolios

Number of Students	Number of Entry- Point Articles Submitted	Number of First Drafts Submitted	Total Number of Articles Submitted	Number of Question- naires Submitted	Number of Teacher-student Dialogue Forms Submitted	Number of Final Reflection Pieces Submitted
8	5	50	161	19	2	4

Table 2

Cluster Two: Content Summary of Submitted Portfolios

Number of Students	Number of Entry- Point Articles Submitted	Number of First Drafts Submitted	Total Number of Articles Submitted	Number of Question- naires Submitted	Number of Teacher-student Dialogue Forms Submitted	Number of Final Reflection Pieces Submitted
8	7	41	64	1	0	3

One of the objectives of my use of writing portfolios, in addition to increasing accuracy in form, was to increase students' responsibility for the accurate application of the language form rules. I made the assumption that the evidence of effort given by the students to their writing–as indicated by the quantity, the quality and the improvements–to the teacher-student dialogue form, and to the questionnaire, was indicative of the degree to which they took responsibility for their own improved writing in French. In addition, I assumed that there was a positive connection between this increased responsibility and the degree to which my students made changes in their writing based on both my feedback and their own observations about their writing which in part were guided by the questionnaire and teacher-student dialogue form.

Language Instruction and Support
continuous support to students in their writing by instructing, being available for corrections, providing time in class for writing, self-editing, peer-editing, and conferencing with me. I modeled how to correct one's own writing, in conjunction with the writing correction checklist. Students followed the process of self-correction of their first draft, peer-correction of their second draft, and teacher-correction of their third draft. The process of modeling the corrective process was to support the development of the students' metacognition, as the objective was student growth in understanding which forms and structures of their writing were correct and incorrect, and linguistically strong and weak.

Each week, I worked with as many students as possible, conferencing with them, correcting their third drafts, and reading their responses to the questionnaire. I tracked their progress and offered feedback to them. My corrective / guiding feedback varied, depending upon the type of error. A simple error, such as adjective agreement, received a simple correction, such as my writing *féminin* beside a word, to indicate the necessity of a feminine agreement, which I expected the student to correct

independently, as a follow-up to my feedback. A more complex error elicited a more complex response, such as grammatical explanations and illustrations, which I wrote in the margins of their papers. At times, I rewrote full sentences for the student as a model of the accurate form. This more complex and supportive approach is reflected in the research by Fatham and Whalley (2001).

Instruction in Good Learning Behaviours

As this study was growth-based, the original point of comparison for each student's individual growth was his or her entry point piece of writing. I also looked for growth from article to article. I made it clear to my students from the beginning of the study that our goal with the portfolios was their individual growth and development. We discussed the notions of responsibility, personal growth, and factors contributing to learning maturity and self-sufficiency. I introduced the following Good Learning Behaviours (GLBs) (Loughran, Mitchell, & Mitchell, 2002) through discussion, and presented them as assets in any learning situation: (a) "Seeks assistance" - tells the teacher what he/she does not understand; (b) "Checks progress" - refers to earlier work before asking for help; (c) "Plans work" - anticipates and predicts possible outcomes; (d) "Reflects on work" - makes links between activities and ideas; (e) "Links ideas and experiences" - offers relevant and personal examples; and (f) "Develops a view" - justifies opinions (p. 7). The GLBs most linked to my study were "Checks progress," "Plans work," and "Reflects on work" (p. 63). We translated these GLBs into actions for good writing tactics, such as actively looking at the comments and corrections, seeing what the repeated errors were, and then paying extra attention to these forms in the students' subsequent writing, in order to avoid repeating the error.

The in-class instruction followed a process of my providing language instruction in various forms, followed by student writing. It was a repeated process of instructional input, followed by reflection, practice, and output, followed by feedback and then further reflection, practice, and output. Students had access to authentic language materials and supports, both written and oral, such as television, radio, songs, newspapers, magazines, and literary texts.

Student Writing Process and Teacher Support

I provided extensive and repeated corrective written feedback, in French, to the students on their third draft, which preceded their final polished draft, to be completed at any time before the submission of their best five articles. The feedback was in the form of corrections on the page to the form of the language, guiding comments to support students' understanding of the language structure also on the page of writing, and comments on the student's questionnaire response pages, on the teacher-student dialogue form, and on the student's tracking sheet (see Appendix E), such as *I see improvement in your use of the pronoun 'en' between the first and fourth article - keep it up!* I intended for students to be both instructed and encouraged by the feedback.

I asked the students to complete the writing process and critical reflection questionnaire every third week. I asked questions such as: *Identify what you did well in this article?* and *What developments do you see between this piece of writing and your last?* I hoped that these questions would encourage activity in their writing process, rather than passivity, and guide the students towards self-awareness supporting self-correction. I was anticipating that this would create a self-sustaining continuous cycle of improvement. Thus, this process was intended to lead to further awareness while writing and to more correct forms in subsequent first drafts, producing self-aware writers who did not repeat errors that had been corrected and who were sufficiently aware of the correct forms to use them in the first drafts of subsequent articles.

Teacher Feedback and Student Responses

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Teacher responses to student questionnaires and teacher-student dialogue forms
I offered responses which supported student comments, and which also pushed students towards further development, thoughts and conclusions, such as responding to one student's comment that she really enjoyed writing letters, with the suggestion that she write in French to those who could read French; and to another student's comment that he wanted to read more in French to see the model, that yes this was indeed a good support for writing; and to another's growing awareness that she mixed verb tenses that she had accurately identified one of the weaknesses in the accuracy of her form. In addition to responses to the questionnaire, I provided feedback through the teacher-student dialogue form, on which I asked three specific questions, to which students responded, and to which I in turn offered further comments. I asked: *1) What one comment on your writing would you like me to clarify? 2) What is the main suggestion you take from my comments on your writing? and 3) How does this help you understand how your writing process in French differs from your writing in English?* I then developed a fourth question, but placed it as the third in the series: *What steps will you take to implement the suggested changes?* (Although few students actually responded to the form, the fact that they saw and read these questions may have encouraged them to think about these questions.)

The objective of this was to aid students in clarifying their understanding of my suggestions for writing improvement, and to guide me towards understanding how students interpreted my comments and translated them into corrective action. This was key to my understanding my own practice, because I have always operated on the assumption that my comments were clear and that students would indeed be able to make corrections based on my guidance. Feedback from my students would guide me in improving their writing and in understanding how students responded to my teaching.

The Data
To meet my research purpose of examining my teaching practices and efforts at improving accuracy in my students' written French, it was necessary to gather data on the experiences of the learners as well as on the reflections of the teacher-researcher. I used data generated by my students: their writing itself and their comments on their writing and regarding the portfolio, generated by the teacher-student dialogue form, the questionnaire, and their final exit-point reflection piece. I also accessed data which originated from me, such as my reflective journal, and most importantly, a complete data audit of all of the students' writing. To create this data audit, I analyzed every first and third draft of each article written by each student and noted errors, as well as good language use, and improvements over the course of the study. This audit led me to divide the students into two clusters, based upon evidence of engagement and learning.

Data Analysis
I sought evidence to respond to each research question. I created a case study, in addition to a broader analysis of the two clusters, to allow for meticulous analysis and description of the developments in language production accuracy and in learner growth. In order to answer the first research question, I gave particular attention to the first and third drafts of writing. I analyzed the series of first drafts in order to determine the effect of my guiding comments and corrective feedback offered in the preceding third draft. By analyzing the data to see the effect of my feedback on their writing, article by article and student by student, I was able to describe the effectiveness of this feedback. Because the feedback was precise, and the analysis of the students' writing meticulous, consistently comparing the presence of an error with the absence of the error in subsequent writing, I concluded that it was possible to establish a link between the feedback and the improvement in students' language production accuracy.

To answer the second question, I analyzed the students' own comments about their perception of their learning, and of the value of the writing portfolio in the improvement of the accuracy of their written French.

To answer the third question, I analyzed the students' comments about their intended actions to correct and improve their written French. These comments were found in the students' responses to the teacher-student dialogue forms, in the questionnaire responses, and in their final exit-point reflection pieces. In carrying out my analysis, I used the method of constant comparison for data analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Patton, 1990).

I sought evidence of (a) the improvement in the accuracy of the language structures, and (b) improvement in learner awareness and responsibility. In order to find evidence of the former, I analyzed the writing according to categories of language, such as verb form and agreements, looking for consistent application of rules that I highlighted in my feedback. To find evidence of the latter, I analyzed the students' comments in both the dialogue form, the questionnaire, and their final reflection piece, looking for students' statements of understanding of my objectives for their learning, for their plans of action to improve and sustain the improvement in their language production, and for their statements of growth in awareness of how they wrote.

Findings

(Please note that all the translations from French to English are offered by the teacher-researcher to facilitate the reader's comprehension. All student writing was completed in French, some examples of which are offered here in French.)

Cluster One

In response to Research Question #1: *How does the accuracy of language structures in students' written French improve in the context of my teaching practice which is characterized by offering regular corrective feedback in writing portfolios?,* students in Cluster One showed notable improvement in the accuracy of the use of the French language in their writing, which may be due to their participation in the broader portfolio writing program, including the multiple draft process and guided reflection activities. Technical improvement in terms of accuracy of language was observed in the categories of (a) verb forms and related structures; (b) agreements; (c) vocabulary and expressions; and (d) structures, sophistication, and quality of overall language.

My case study student, "Elizabeth," improved the consistency of her use of verb forms, which I defined to include both mode and conjugation, as well as related structures, such as prepositions and placement of pronouns. I included these last two items with the verb forms because the verb form essentially determines the placement of the pronoun, and the verb itself determines which preposition it takes. Secondly, she improved in the application of agreements, in relation to adjectives, gender article and agreements with preceding direct objects in composed tenses as well as agreements with past participles in the intransitive verb grouping, commonly known as the "MRSVANDERTRAMP" verbs. Furthermore, there is evidence of growth in her vocabulary. She increased variety, precision and sophistication of her lexicon, working to eliminate anglicisms and to introduce more authentic turns of phrases. Finally, there is an overall improvement in the quality of her written language which is characterized by fewer English-based structures, as well as by a combination of the results of the above developments, such as fewer errors in all domains, a greater variety of sentence structures, such as subject-verb inversion, and the use of more complex structures. All of these developments show movement away from interlanguage and render her final written product both improved and more authentically French.

In my data audit, which was based on a meticulous word by word examination of the students' writing, I wrote regarding Elizabeth's entry point article: *summary of errors and what I am looking for in her growth: after article #1*
1) attention to placement of pronouns
2) using a dictionary for accurate vocabulary
3) attention to accurate prepositions, and whether they are needed at all
4) attention to the past participle
5) not mixing "tu" and "vous"

Her writing in general was already quite accurate, but very safe and limited in scope, using straightforward structures such as subject, verb, complement. Throughout the process, I encouraged her to try to stretch her vocabulary selections and to employ a greater diversity of structures, such as inversion, longer sentences, and colloquial terms. I observed such language use and improvements as: a self-correction in adjective agreement where she added "e" to *je suis occupée*; she accurately self-corrected an error of mode - she initially wrote the indicative *Je doute que tu **sais,*** and needed the subjunctive, then re-wrote on her draft *Je doute que tu **saches***. In her next article, she correctly included the subjunctive *il faut que les gens **puissent***. Elizabeth continued to incorporate expressions that were more truly French: *il s'agit de*; *je me sers*; *dont on a besoin.* Elizabeth began to include more interesting vocabulary throughout the process, using such vocabulary and expressions as: *saupoudrez*; *la noirceur*; *parfois*; *moindre*; *soucis.* In the data audit, I wrote: *Elizabeth transferred instruction from article #4 (error #3) to a correction in article #5 - in her first draft of #5, she wrote "du temps tranquille" - wonderful - "du temps" is masculine, and one might think, as she did in #4, that there would be no double consonant and "e" following, - such as the model of "gentil / gentille" - but "tranquille" is invariable in that manner; she took this correction in and applied it in her first draft of the next article. She then differentiated between the gerund and the adjective - "fatiguant" and "fatigant" - ie) "upon tiring, while tiring", and "tiring" adjective - this is hard to do - the proof that she did this is that she crossed out the "u" in her first draft, which was self corrected.* Therefore, I noted progress in the accuracy of writing, seemingly based on my feedback

Additional observations of the effect on student writing of the portfolio process are evident in the following excerpts: Student #6 showed improvement and utilized my feedback from article #5 in article #6. My principal feedback was to give attention to reflexive vs. non-reflexive structure and agreement with the participe passé, and in article #6 she showed very good improvement - her written French is much more authentic: *La rumeur largement répandue qu'ils sont impolis est souvent mentionnée. C'est clair que cette déclaration n'est pas ciblée envers la population entière de la France, et c'est simplement une généralistion conclue d'une comparaison de deux cultures ... beaucoup plus fortes que celles de l'Amérique du Nord.* She even made an advanced stylistic plural agreement with "on" - *on est beaucoup plus affectés.* Another student, Student #7, showed progress. The following excerpt from the data audit with my annotations provides evidence of this improvement: *Article #3: good use of tenses; gender good; GOOD - did a self-correction for adjective agreement - changed "un situation controversé" to "une situation controversée." "Mais, il y en a aussi des arguments pour l'autre côté dans ce débat" - changed to " Cependant, il y a également des arguments pour l'autre côté au cours de cette discussion." (Much better) - good word "l(e) la teneur" - switched "vont gagner" to "gagneront". Self corrected his passive voice (English style) to active voice (French style): "c'est prouver[é] que..." "On a prouvé que". Self-corrected his less sophisiticated "ils vont gagner" to "ils gagneront". Self-corrected from: "c'est un fait qu'ils ne vont pas à certains établissements" to "C'est un fait que la seule raison pour laquelle ils..." and changed " Donc, c'est mon opinion que dans le futur" which is grammatically correct already, to "Par conséquant il est mon avis qu'à l'avenir..."* Therefore, one can clearly see that this student, #7, notably improved his writing over the course of this portfolio program.

In response to Research Questions #2, *How do the combined processes I require of the students in their writing portfolio contribute over time to the improvement of their written French?,* and #3, *How do the combined processes I require of the students in their writing portfolio enhance learner responsibility?*, I found that students in Cluster One showed a positive overall response to the portfolio writing program. Their writing and writing behaviour showed modifications and improvements, and it appeared that they employed GLBs such as checking progress, planning their work, reflecting upon their work, and linking preceding learning experiences with this writing and reflective process. This was in evidence in the attention they gave to their writing and to their questionnaire responses. Examples of students' thoughts and observations as provided in their own words from their questionnaires and exit-point reflection papers include: an indication from Elizabeth's first questionnaire that her biggest focus in her second article was the correct conjugation of verbs and gender: *J'ai prêté de l'attention au genre des noms et à la conjugaison des verbes.* She wrote that she considered her language in her second article was more sophisticated than that in her first composition: *La langue dans cette composition est un peu plus sophistiquée que celle de la précédente.* She also wrote that she was beginning to anticipate certain errors and that she would work to avoid them - this was exactly what I wanted: *...je pense que je commence à anticiper mes*

erreurs potentielles comme des erreurs de genre, de conjugaison et de structure, comme trop de répétition. Elizabeth also wrote on her Teacher-student dialogue sheet that she: *is working on the sophistication of the writing; that* [she] *intend*[s] *to take further time to write*; and *that this reflection and teacher dialogue process helps her think in French, to get into the language while combining and thinking actively about grammar, language, ideas.* In my data audit, regarding the Teacher-student dialogue form, I wrote: *she states that she is now working at thinking about expressions that one finds only in French - I think that this is very important because it shows how she is now finally moving away from being so English based - many of her errors have been anglicisms - it is a huge cognitive leap and linguistic leap to actively recognize that the difference between English and French in indeed exactly what characterizes French as a different language - it seems obvious, but sometimes it is, for students, like working with unknowns - they delve into a realm where they cannot depend upon English - to me, this shows movement beyond the false safety of the interlanguage, into a more true acquisition of the French language."*

In addition, an excerpt of the Case Study student's final reflection indicates clearly her thoughts regarding the positive effect of the portfolio writing process on her writing improvement (represented here exactly as she wrote it): À *regarder la qualité de mon écriture de ma première composition comparée à celle de ma dernière, c'est clair qu'il y a une différence... Je ne peux pas nier que ce procédé m'a aidé en ce qui concerne la sophistication de mon écriture. Le domaine dans lequel je vois une amélioration substantielle est dans la variété de structures que j'emploie. ...Je suis assez fière de mon progrès ce semestre et j'espère pouvoir retenir tout ce que j'ai appris en faisant ce portfolio.* (Please see Appendix G for a complete transcript of the case study student's final reflection.)

Other students in Cluster One indicated similar observations about their own growth in awareness and ability in their writing. Student #3 wrote (my translation): *I definitely worked to find and correct my errors because I wanted to learn to no longer make them. I used a dictionary and a "Bescherelle" many times during my self-corrections and that helped me a lot. What was new for me was that I really looked for my errors and then used the dictionary and the Bescherelle, which is something I don't do often.* Her objectives in writing were: *to write as well in French as in English, meaning without anglicisms and with nuances*. She later wrote: *I know myself much better as a writer now; I have learned that I like big, impressive words and that I have problems with gender in French. I have learned by making mistakes. I think that these questions have helped me to really think about the errors I need to avoid making.* Therefore, her personal reflections on the questionnaire led her to insight about her own writing.

In addition, Student #7 wrote on his first questionnaire response: *For me, the value of these questions is that they make me think about what I write and create goals for my future writing.* On his last questionnaire response, he wrote at length: *In my efforts at self-correction, I looked for ways in which to improve my French vocabulary and to correct my grammar and spelling. I found a number of areas where I was able to improve my vocabulary and I also found some grammar and spelling errors. I corrected everything that I could; I did that so that my work would be the best possible, because that is very important to me. I used a Bescherelle and an English-French dictionary to make my spelling and grammar corrections as well as to help me improve my vocabulary; I think I did these corrections effectively. ... I am satisfied with this composition because I think that it shows my opinions and my thoughts on the subject and also because I think that it is a better effort with my vocabulary than previous articles. ... I am proud of this composition because it is effective in showing my opinions and also because I improved with respect to my vocabulary. ... For me, in this composition, I actively looked for the most sophisticated vocabulary that I could use, something I hadn't done in the past. ... The development that I see between this composition and the last one is that my vocabulary improved a lot. I hope that another reader could be able to see these developments and I believe that it's true that they could do that. In my opinion there is a large enough difference between the two compositions. ... I believe that yes, I can now predict my spelling and grammar errors and I also see some of my organizational and spelling weaknesses. ... I think that this process of reflection has helped me to recognize what my weaknesses are and how to improve them, as well as my strengths. I am certain that this will help me in my future. ... I believe that I always think that I have done a bit better than I really have, but this process of reflection has helped me to discover my faults and to improve them. ... My learning objectives are to develop a writing style that is more French and not English - that is to say, to improve my use of vocabulary and structures - as well as to express my thoughts with greater organization and clarity. ... If I continue to do more*

reading in French, my writing will become more French and with greater practice my organisation and clarity will become better. ... The value of reflecting upon these questions is the identification of my strengths and weaknesses as well as a plan to improve these weaknesses. This student's writing provides evidence of the student's view of the importance and role of the portfolio program in improving his writing, in helping him to set goals for future writing, and in accurately determining the quality of his writing. These were amongst my objectives.

My findings show that the students in Cluster One clearly participated actively in the portfolio writing program, and were fully engaged in the writing and reflection process. Through these supports for their learning process, they developed enhanced responsibility for their writing and learning. The multiple sources of data show consistently that student growth and development took place in their written use of the French language as well as in their understanding and appreciation of the objectives of the writing portfolio. Students took responsibility for working to apply lessons and corrective techniques learned about their writing in French, which were initially new, and not a regular part of their writing routine, and which became an integral and repeated part of their writing process in French. Their efforts resulted in increased learner responsibility.

Cluster Two
Cluster Two represented a group of students who participated in the writing portfolio, but who showed less interest, engagement, and progress than the students in Cluster One. Although I instructed and supported the students in Cluster Two as much as those in Cluster One, these students accepted less responsibility for their own writing and learner development. There was a broad range of writing activity in this cluster. Although the students did write in varying quantities, as a whole, the students in this cluster did not show evidence of an understanding of, nor an appreciation for, my larger objectives for them. The students in Cluster Two, in general, did not participate in the combined requirements of the writing portfolio, and did not show evidence of increased learner awareness and responsibility.

In addition, because these students had many errors in their writing, I wrote, essentially on every page, both the guiding comments of *using a Bescherelle and a dictionary will help you with accuracy*, and encouragement in the form of comments such as *you can do it, just take more time next time*, *follow the correction guide*, and *remember to seek peer-editing*. As an example, I offer Student #1, Cluster 2. Her initial writing was characterized by many errors of basic structure, verb form, and vocabulary. Her first article is structured as English and is close to incomprehensible in French. For example, she wrote: *Notre société ne peut pas sembler obtenir assez de cela grande, noir, boîte dans ce que nous reposons avant pendant au moins quelques heures chaque jour et devenons des zombis à ce que les personnes sur l'écran le disent?* My principal corrections to article 1 addressed the structures, verb forms, expressions, and vocabulary. Another example is *C'est ces types d'expositions qui je me sens suis seulement une perte de temps.* My corrective feedback to her was a re-working of the sentence: *C'est ce genre d'émission qui me mène à sentir que je perds mon temps*. Essentially, each sentence had substantive errors and required considerable reconstruction. I modelled the accurate reconstructions for the student as she needed the support and was not able to make the substantive changes on her own at this stage.

In her second article there were still simple, English-structure based sentences: *J'ai ri ainsi dur j'ai pleuré.* This is a completely literal transposition of English, and is fully interlanguage: *I laughed so hard I cried.* My feedback to her was to re-write the sentence as *J'ai tant ri que j'ai pleuré.* The "ainsi" is literally "so" as in "therefore." I tried to make positive observations where possible.

As a further example, I offer Student #3, who wrote minimally. She wrote one entry point article and three articles, each with one rough draft that was self-corrected. This was one of the students to whom I wrote a note of encouragement as I observed that her general in-class behaviour and participation in the portfolio showed little effort. My note stated that I had observed that she regularly had very good ideas which revealed solid thinking and that I appreciated her contributions in class. I believe that my note did bring about a renewed, if temporary, increase in effort. In her entry point article she used simple language structures. She showed a good initial effort at using past and present tenses. There were errors, however, in tense choice and verb form. There was a reasonably good vocabulary choice. There were numerous gender errors and structural errors. She had a reasonably good beginning: *Il était une fois [qu']un petit garçon [qui] vivait*. The first *qu*" is not necessary, while

she needs *qui* before the verb as its subject. Her tenses needed attention: *s'appelle* should be *s'appelait*, and *brille* should be *brillaient*. This verb needs to be both plural in number / form and in the imperfect tense; essentially there is a double error here. There is also an error of gender. She wrote *le même routine* whereas it should be *la*. There are further errors of form: *Pierre demande* [a demandé] *le femme* [à la femme] *qu'est-ce qui a passé* [ce qui s'est passé]. This latter is a bigger error. She needed être as the auxiliary verb. The structure should be *ce qui* not *qu'est-ce qui*. As well, her usage of vocabulary needed improvement as she used *les gouttes d'eau salé*[e] - *salted water drops* - instead of *tears - larmes.* I drew attention to and provided the correction of all these errors.

In article 1, student #3 showed errors of verb form: *on doit fait ce que les autres voulait qu'ils faisait parce que leur besoin satisfié*. To analyse and correct: *on doit fait* [*faire*] (a basic error) *ce que les autres voulait* [*voulaient* - plural] *qu'il faisait* [*fasse* - subjunctive]... *parce que* [*pour que*] *leur* (English influence - *their* for singular possession - should be *son*) *besoin* (anglicized form) [soit] (verb missing entirely] *satisfié* (should be *satisfait*). Essentially, there were errors at every level of this sentence. She also wrote *alors fait ce que nous fait content*. This is very English. Because she addressed the public, she should have used *vous*. Here she uses *tu* and made errors in the verb conjugation, writing *fait* (*tu fais*), which should ultimately be *faites* (the imperative of vous). In addition, in her second verb she should use *rendre* instead of *fait*. Furthermore, she wrote *Ça ne disait pas que*, [*Ça ne veut pas dire que*], an error of expression, vocabulary selection and tense. She wrote the imperfect instead of present tense, followed by *on n'apprécier pas...* where there is no conjugation at all, which is a basic error. The feedback I offered included an indication of the location of the errors, correction of the errors, and reminders to use both the *Bescherelle* and a dictionary, as well as to make use of the self-correction guideline.

To illustrate Cluster #2 further, I offer examples of Student #4. In article 3, the title has errors *Quest-ce que je veux pour être quand je suis plus vieux?* Although there is some effort in evidence, there still are sentences which seem almost nonsense: *L'école est allé du monde libre est devenu une boule d'effort sur laquelle je ne peux pas tout à fait obtenir*, and *Comme quelqu'un qui est mis sous cette pression je doivent direc que je commence à tomb.* He also wrote *Comment est-ce qu je vais choisi entre s'amuser en tant maintenent come enfant ou plutard come adulte?* There are many deep level errors in these sentences, but these are then followed by some reasonably acceptable sentences as well. *Je n'ai pas décidé ce que je voudrais faire avec ma vie encore, j'ai seulement 16 ans, mais il y a beaucoup de pression exercé sur des enfants de mon âge partout dans le monde.* There are still errors in this sentence, but this sentence is vastly different from the more problematic sentences that preceded it, hence the inconsistency is in evidence.

To conclude examples of student writing which offer a response to Research Question #1, Student # 7 produced one entry point article, one exit point article, five finished copies, no rough drafts, no questionnaires, and no teacher-student feedback forms. Much of her writing in French was generally passable, though there were simple errors. What was most notably absent were efforts at improvement. She wrote: *J'ai un* [une] *passion pour les filmes* [no *e*]. *Je ne sais pas pourquoi mais des temps* [à des moments] *je pense que les filmes* [no "e"] *semblent plut* [plus] *reéle* [réels] *que la vie*. Her following writing has an English structure, written with French words, wherein there remain grammatical errors: *C'est à propos* [Il s'agit] *d'une fille qui s'appelle Buttercup, et elle est la Princess Bride*, (English) *parce que le prince Humperkink pense qu'elle est très belle et il veut qu'elle devient* [devienne] *sa femme, mais il n'est pas un* [une] *personne très gentil*[le]*, il est très méchant.* The quality of writing in the exit piece showed continuing errors and few, if any, visible attempts to work on the form: *Nous vivons dans le monde, alors nous devront* [devrons] *le voyage* (big error - voyager is an intransitive verb in French - it cannot take an object) - (were it the correct verb, it still needs the infinitive form). Student #7 wrote *Si on vive* [vit] *dans un* (une) *seule ville ou province pour tout* [toute] *sa vie, on va oublier beaucoup*. This student also wrote: *C'est une bonne idée de voyager aux payses* [pays] *comme* [le] *Pakistan ou* [à d']*autres 3ieme monde pays* (literally *third - world - countries*; in French one would say *des pays en voie de développement* or at the very least *des pays de troisième monde*, which is less preferable, for reasons of respect. We often discuss culturally acceptable terms.) Here, this student did not show understanding of French having differing structures from English, as opposed to being a word for word parallel to English. In addition, this student wrote *on peut voir leur style de vie, et apprendre comment bonne notre vie est*. In this sentence, the last phrase is a completely English literal translation of *how good our life is*. To conclude, in response to

Research Question #1, the above evidence of the type of writing evoked in Cluster #2 illustrates the lack of notable improvement, combined with a clear presence of interlanguage.

In response to Research Questions #2, #3, the students' own words indicate a limited commitment to the portfolio writing program, and therefore limited benefits to the student. For example, Student #2, commented in her final reflection piece that although she believed she had improved, and that one could observe this improvement, she found that the articles became a "pain" to write and that she just did not feel like writing them. She observed that this was not the case with everybody in the class. She also indicated that she had learned a lot in the class in general and made specific reference to learning grammar. She wrote the following, and I've included my annotations from the data audit: *Depuis neuvième année, nous avons dû écrire des composditions pour que vous pouvez* [puissiez] *observez* [observer] *notre amélioration tout au long du semestre après qu'on a* [ait] *pû* [pu] *apprendre de différentes techniques de grammaire dans la classe*. (good - the last part of this sentence is flawless) *Je pense que puisqu'on est dans l'onzième année, les compositions sont devenu*[e]*s pénible*[s], *alors nous ne voulons les écrire plus* [nous ne voulons plus les écrire] (word order). This student made progress, but it was not particularly rewarding to her. Even so, her writing did improve. Again, as a teacher-researcher, the fact that she did not find her progress rewarding concerned me. Once again, the variability between students is in evidence. In this cluster, a lack of progress and engagement characterized most of the students' writing, despite some students making some progress. Therefore, my findings indicate the students in Cluster Two did not enjoy notable improvement in their writing accuracy, nor in their own autonomy and writers and responsible learners, likely due to a lack of engagement in the combined processes required of the students in the writing portfolio.

Contribution to Literature

This study contributes to research in the area of improvements in second language writing of already very advanced students over a relatively long period of time; in this case, 12 weeks. Leki (2001) affirmed that there was little research on long term improvement in writing. She maintained that most research looked at subsequent drafts of the same piece of writing. Moreover, the study took the nature and type of language production errors into account in determining improvement, as opposed to the number of errors alone. Essentially, I analyzed the quality of the errors as well as the quantity. For example, Kepner (1991) quantified the number of language errors her students made without analyzing the type or seriousness of the error, nor how the type of error may have been indicative of a stage of language acquisition and development. Therefore, this study contributes qualitative analysis of the type of errors made by my students, showing that it is possible for them to make progress in both language learning and acquisition (receptivity), and also in language production while still producing roughly the same number of errors from one written article to the next.

Furthermore, that fact that I have used the portfolio in an alternative manner offers something new to the literature in that I used it for teaching, for providing feedback, and for supporting individual learning and the development of responsibility. This writing portfolio also supports the transition into the greater responsibility and self-guided learning required of students as they mature and pursue post-secondary education.

Finally, I contribute to the literature regarding the correction of fossilized errors and the encouragement of second language learners' language acquisition beyond the interlanguage plateau. As Selinker (1993) considered, it may still be possible to guide students towards correct language production even after their having established fossilized errors and a stabilized interlanguage plateau.

Teacher-researcher Reflections

The strengths of this study include: a very detailed data audit, which was the examination of the development of my students' writing and error analysis, as well as their questionnaire responses; its utility in informing my future practice; and its utility in supporting future studies. The intense scrutiny of language usage and development revealed the effectiveness of the portfolio program, and the trends in students' written language development. Knowledge of this can continue to guide me in future professional practice.

I observed that students who were already self-motivated and open to reflective and critical thinking performed well in this study, and those that had less self-motivation and who needed more support did not reap the same rewards from this portfolio writing program. Therefore, it suggests that teachers may need to pre-teach supports for the process of metacognition. I had, perhaps erroneously, assumed a base-level of independence and responsibility that may not have been in place. It may be that student success in tasks seeking to increase learner awareness and responsibility depends upon student readiness for meeting metacognitive demands. The results of this study suggest to me that it is my responsibility to prepare students for future endeavors of this type.

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Appendix A (In English translation)

The Writing Portfolio

Rationale
The writing portfolio will enable you to improve your mastery of the written language by providing you with the opportunity to practice writing, to receive feedback and to reflect critically on your learning and progress throughout an extended period of time.

Articles
You will choose your writing topic from among the following suggestions, or you may elect to create your own topic, following teacher approval. Students will write one article weekly, following the process of writing: a first draft which is self-corrected, using the self-correction checklist as a guideline; a second draft which is peer-edited, using again the same guide; a third draft which is teacher-corrected; a final good copy.

Questionnaires
Students are to fill out a writing reflection and process questionnaire after completing each third composition. The objective is to become a more aware writer and to actively seek and observe one's own growth in writing.

Evaluation
Students will submit the full portfolio, including all drafts, at the end of the semester before the final exam. The objectives of the program are to improve your writing in French, both content and form, as well as to guide you towards greater responsibility as a learner. Therefore, evaluation is based on the content of your articles, the language of your articles, evidence of growth from the first article to the last, and evidence of growth in learner responsibility. Please indicate which are your five best articles. These will be marked as final products. Marks will also be given for participation in the portfolio program as a whole. Please see evaluation form.

Suggested Approach (weekly)
i)   choose a topic
ii)   create a plan for the development of your idea
iii)   write a first draft
iv)   self-edit following the self-correction guide
v)   write a second draft
vi)   edit by a peer
vii)   write a third draft
viii)   have a teacher writing conference / correction, or submit to teacher for constructive comments
ix)   set aside the article, then come back to it for final revisions
x)   respond to the questionnaire after each third written article
Note: As the principal objective of this writing portfolio is to improve your writing in French and sustain this improvement, it is advisable to work to actively reflect upon your approach to writing, your awareness of your process, of your strengths and your weaknesses. The writing questionnaires will help guide your thinking and awareness in this direction.

Possible topics/writing activities
1. A personal reaction to a newspaper article
        a) read, then attach the article
        b) write a short summary - objective style
        c) write a personal reaction - personal style
2. A political commentary - present either in personal style or third person objective style. Include
        secondary research if possible.
a) Canada's role in the wars of other nations
b) The arts are a necessary to a healthy and balanced life.
c) Reproduction: a right or a privilege?
3. An original poem with formal analysis
4. A traditional literary analysis of a poem
5. A stylistic précis of an article or poem

6. A humourous narrative
7. A fairy tale.
8. An imitation of an author's style (Include a copy of the original author's work)
9. Style matching: Create the beginning, middle portion or conclusion to an already existing text, trying to match styles. You might want to find an article, a poem, a short story in French, and not read part of it, then try to fill in that part yourself.
10. Does society in general govern our actions to too great a degree?
11. Language: an emotional subject (can be linked to our studies on language, culture and history)
12. The value of a multi-lingual society
13. The city government has an obligation to keep the city beautiful for its citizens.
14. My life without television / Life without television.
15. What I would like to do with my life...
16. How the weather affects us...
17. Students and part-time jobs... a delicate balance.
18. The value of photos.
19. How can one reconcile opposing needs: providing housing and preserving green space?
20. Reading opens doors...
21. Travel is an essential part of one's education
22. The new health crisis in North America: youth obesity
23. A life without colour
24. Driving: a right or a privilege
25. Reproduction: a right or a privilege? Fertility treatments: who pays: state or individual?
26. Uniforms at school. / A dress code at school.
27. What is more important to me: leisure time or earning money?
28. My favourite animal
29. If I were an animal, I would be...
30. If my cat, dog... could talk, s/he would say...
31. The legalisation of marijuana.
32. I am alone at home, and all of a sudden I hear a noise in the kitchen...
33. The importance of nature in my life.
34. My reaction to environmental change
35. Our water is not for sale
36. The present day role of the Queen in Canada
37. Is neat handwriting necessary in our technologically based world?
38. In this era of advanced technology, is letter writing a lost art?
39. "Reality" style television shows are but a manipulation of reality and the public who watch them.

Appendix B (In English translation)

Writing Correction Guideline

Did you correct...?

I - Language: grammar
1) The form of the verb? (the subject and the verb must agree)
2) The verb tense? (the tense must agree with the other tenses in your text)
3) Adjective agreements
4) The gender of all nouns

II - The Style of French
1) Did you think in French while writing?
2) Did you end up with a translation of English?
3) Did you employ a variety of verb tenses and structures? (ie: inversion)
4) Did you use a variety of sentence structures? (ie: complex sentences with "si")

III - Vocabulary
1) Did you use the correct word? (Did you look in the dictionary?)
2) Did you spell the word properly? (Double check in the dictionary)
3) Is there a variety, a "richness" of vocabulary? Have you avoided imprecise words such as "thing," or "to do," etc.?
4) Did you include idiomatic expressions in French? Did you make sure that they were applicable to the writing situation?

IV: Content
1) Have you clearly expressed the idea that you wanted to convey?
2) Is the reader able to glean the idea and sense that you wished to transmit?
3) Have you clearly announced your thesis in the introduction?
4) Where appropriate, have you developed your writing, your study using textual proof and secondary sources?
5) Is your writing complete? Have you looked at and addressed all possible / applicable arguments that you could logically and stylistically include in your writing?
6) Are your ideas clear, logical and well founded?
7) Is there a logical development in your ideas / of your argument?
8) Have you written in the format of coherent and linked paragraphs? Or, have you jumped from one idea to another without completing each idea?

Appendix C (In English translation)

Portfolio evaluation   **Name:** _____
Total: /35

The following evaluation format addresses the portfolio as a whole:

Portfolio elements	Levels of accomplishment			
	1 Limited	**2** Moderate	**3** Good	**4** Excellent

Language:
Value: /10
 	
i) vocabulary: accuracy
          precision of expression
       responds to communication requirement
       not an Anglicism
         variety
 	
ii) spelling: accuracy
      mastery of patterns
 	
iii) adjective: agreement
        adjustment of forms: ie - vieux / vieille
 	
iv) accuracy of placement: pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition
 	
v) preposition: accuracy of selection / placement
 	
vi) plural forms
 	
vii) verb tense: accuracy
         suitability
         variety (where appropriate)
 	
viii) verb form: accuracy
 	
ix) natural flow of expression
   natural tone
 	
x) idiomatic expressions: presence
             suitability / accuracy
 	
xi) sophistication: ie) pleonastic "ne"; inversion after "peut-Ltre";
  use of subjunctive				

Style and form: **Value: /5** **Each article:** i) suitable for the article ii) coherent / logical / clear iii) complete iv) evidence of audience awareness v) economy of words vi) variety of structures **Final portfolio:** i) student includes a variety of writing styles				
Content: **Value: /10** i) evidence of effective critical thinking skills; interprets and analyses ii) demonstrates understanding through (complex) arguments iii) (where applicable) extends initial argument / concept to additional domains of study iv) (where applicable) makes links to research v) valid and cohesive argument vi) support of ideas; includes relevant details vii) originality **(Research:** where applicable) i) valid sources ii) suitable for writing article iii) citations within the article iv) research supports arguments and clearly contributes to argument				
General Development: **Value: /5** i) evidence of development from first article through to last ii) evidence of effort in written articles (corrective feedback followed and applied in subsequent articles) iii) evidence of development of learner responsibility for learning and for writing improvement (initiative and follow-through from feedback from all sources)				
Questionnaire responses: **Value: /5** i) depth of reflection in evidence in answers ii) regularity of response				

Comments:
_____

Appendix D

Teaching Log

Grammatical subjects covered:

Week 1: (Feb. 2)
- the present tense: including attention to accents, regular and irregular verbs
[- le présent - les accents, verbes réguliers et irréguliers]

Week 2: (Feb. 9)
- the past perfect: regular and irregular verbs; transitive and intransitive verbs
[- le passé composé - régulier, irrégulier, verbes transitifs, intransitifs, verbes VANDERTRAMP]

Week 3: (Feb. 16)
- continuation with a review of pronouns
[- la continuation d'une révision de pronomsç

Week 4: (Feb. 23)
- the pluperfect within contexts in the past - contrasting with the imperfect and the past perfect
[- plus-que-parfait, et les contextes au passé - l'imparfait et le passé composé]

Week 5: (March 1ˢᵗ)
- a continuation of past tenses; combining their forms with relative pronouns
[- suite du passé; pronoms relatifs]

Week 6: (March 8ᵗʰ)
- the future tenses: "will" and "will have"
[- le futur simple et antérieur et expressions]

Week 7: (March 22)
- the conditional tenses: (present and past) "would" and "would have"; sentences beginning with "if"; the uses of "all / every / completely"
[- le conditionnel présent et passé; les phrases avec "si"; "tout"]

Week 8:(March 29ᵗʰ)
- pronouns and a review of verb tenses studied
[- pronoms et tous le temps étudiés jusqu'B présent]

Week 9: (April 5)
- the simple past (preterite)
[- le passé simple]

Week 10: (Apr 12)
- the present subjunctive
[- le subjonctif (présent)]

Week 11: (Apr 19)
- the past subjunctive
[- le subjonctif (passé)]

Week 12: (Apr 26)
- indirect or third person agency
[- le faire causatif]

Week 13: (May 3)
continuation of third person agency; indirect discourse
[- le faire causatif et le discours indirect]

Week 14: (May 10)
- continuation of indirect discourse; "to let" and verbs of perception
[- le discours indirect; le verbe "laisser" et les verbes de perception]

Week 15: (May 17)
- relative pronouns "who" / "whom," "what," "of whom / of which"
[- les pronoms relatifs qui, que, dont, etc.]

Week 16: (May 24)
- the gerund and the present participle
[- le gérondif et le participe présent]

Week 17: (May 31)
- the past and present infinitive
[- l'infinitif présent et passé]

Week 18: (June7th)
- passive voice and negation with "not any / not one"
[- la voix passive, la négation avec aucun]

Week 19: (June 14)
- global review
[- révision globale]

Appendix E (In English translation)

Article Tracking Sheet: written articles   **Name:_____**

Date	Article #	Observations and comments	Progress and development in writing	Progress and development of learner responsibility

Appendix F: Questionnaire

Name: _____
Date: _____
Article #:_____

PORTFOLIO QUESTIONNAIRE

Please reflect, and then thoughtfully answer the following questions, as you conclude the writing process for your article. Please answer in full sentences on a separate sheet of paper, then attach both your answers and the questionnaire together, indicating to which article these reflections correspond. Keep this record of your reflections in your portfolio, where you and your teacher can refer to it.

Part I: The writing process

1) What were the greatest difficulties you had with this piece of writing?

2) In your efforts at self-correction / self-editing, what did you look for? For example, did you look at the content, the continuity of the progression and development of ideas? Did you look at grammar errors and spelling?

3) What kind of errors did you find?

4) Did you correct these errors? Why or why not?

5) Using a dictionary and a *Bescherelle*, were you able to determine both the error and its correction?

Part II: Cultivating and recognizing growth and development: guided reflection

1) Are you satisfied with this piece of writing? Why or why not?

2) Are you proud of this piece of writing? Why or why not?

3) What did you do that you that is new or original for you?

4) Define / identify what you did well in this article.

5) Define / identify what you did less well and what you think needs improving.

6) a) What development(s) do you see between this piece of writing and your last?

   b) Do you think that another reader would be able to distinguish these developments as well?
      Why or why not?

7) a) Do you feel that you are beginning to "know" yourself as a writer?

   b) Can you anticipate potential errors, weaknesses of structure and language based on what you have already analysed and corrected? Can you now apply this knowledge to avoid similar errors in your new initial drafts?

8) Have your thoughts or behaviours changed in any way as a result of this reflective process?

9) Do you see the connections between your goals and your beliefs about your learning and your actual learning behaviours?

10) To what extent do you *like* writing?

Appendix G (In English translation)

Portfolio writing: communication   **Article #_____**
Name:_____

Question	Student response	Teacher comments
What one comment on your writing would you like me to clarify?		
What do you understand from my comments to be my main suggestion to you?		
What will you do in order to respond to my comments and suggestions in order to improve your writing?		
How does this writing process help you to understand how your writing in English differs from your writing in French?		

Appendix G - Case Study (Elizabeth) - Sample Final Reflection Piece

(Reproduced here exactly as she wrote it, any errors included. The teacher-researcher had no corrective input in any manner to this article - it represents the end-point ability of the student. It was hand-written, so it may have been an uncorrected first effort, which further shows the student's level of learning.)

   À regarder la qualité de mon écriture de ma première composition comparée à celle de ma dernière, c'est clair qu'il y a une différence notable. Pourtant, je ne suis pas tout à fait convaincu que mon vocabulaire a beaucoup amélioré. Mais, je ne peut pas nier que ce procédé m'a aidé en ce qui concerne la sophistication de mon écriture.

   Le domaine dans lequel je vois une amélioration substantielle est dans la variété de structures que j'emploie. J'ai écrit ma première composition en prettant très peu d'attention aux structures de phrases parce que ça faisait presqu'un an que j'avais écrit en français. Ma dernière composition est beaucoup mieux écrite à cause du fait que vous m'avez encouragée plusieurs fois d'essayer plus de variété et d'écrire d'une manière plus sophistiquée. En réfléchissant, je pense que j'aurais quand même amélioré ce domaine de mon écriture sans vos commentaires, mais pas de ce degré.

   En général, avec chaque composition, j'y ai mis un plus grand effort que la composition précédante, ce qu'on peut voir dans la longueur de mes articles et aussi dans la qualité. Une chose que j'ai notée c'est que souvent j'ai essayé d'incorporer de nouveaux mots et de nouvelles structures. C'est vrai que j'ai fait quelques erreurs en faisant ceci, mais c'est comment on apprend.

   Si j'avais écrit un article par semaine, j'aurais vu une différence encore plus considérable dans la qualité de mon écriture, mais il existe quand même une différence. Je suis assez fière de mon progrès ce semestre et j'espère pouvoir retenir tout ce que j'ai appris en faisant ce portefolio. La prochaine étape, comme vous avez dite, ça serait d'économiser les mots pour créer quelque chose de plus concise et au futur, je ferai un plus grand effort de faire corriger me compositions par un ami.

Biographical Note_____

Christine Armstrong is a teacher of French immersion and Spanish, language and literature, in Kingston, Ontario. She is now in her third decade of teaching, throughout which time Ms Armstrong has dedicated herself to teacher education, second language acquisition theory and practice, evaluation and assessment theory and practice, literacy, and metacognition. Ms. Armstrong has lived in both Québec and France. She resides in Kingston with her three children who are in the French immersion system. Ms. Armstrong may be contacted for commentary at armstrongcl@limestone.on.ca.