

Westman Consortia  
Rural & Remote Learning  
December 2021

# Final Report

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# Final Report

## WCP Rural & Remote Learning

**The Program.** The Westman Consortia Partnership (WCP) is a coalition of seven school divisions in western Manitoba, who joined together during the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver remote learning to students who were medically advised not to return to in-class learning in the 2020/2021 school year. The seven school divisions belonging to the consortia are Brandon School Division, Park West School Division, Southwest Horizon School Division, Rolling River School Division, Mountain View School Division, Swan Valley School Division and Fort La Bosse School Division. Initial Fall 2020 registration in the divisions identified 154 Kindergarten to Grade 8 students from 39 different schools who would require remote learning services and had to provide medical documentation to access this learning option. The school divisions decided to pool their resources and expertise to deliver remote learning for the registered students (130 in the English stream and 24 in the French Immersion stream). Eight class groupings were formed (K-1, 2, 3, 4, 5-6, 5-6, 7-8 English, K-8 French Immersion) and a teacher placed with each class. The assigned teachers were drawn from the teaching staff in four of the initial six divisions. Since initial registration and the addition of a seventh school division, the students' numbers have surpassed 170 and two new teachers have been hired. The WCP Remote Learning Guidelines document (2020) outlines the organization of the partnership and identifies remote learning considerations for teachers, parents, and students; administrative details; expectations for participating teachers; implementation steps; and plans to develop a parent document. Teachers contacted families the week of September 14, scheduled classes began the week of September 21 with planned individual and group learning time daily, except on Friday afternoons when the teachers would meet to do collaborative planning with curriculum consultants, mostly from Brandon School Division. Remote learning requires support and cooperation from all partners and this study shows perspectives of parents, students, teachers, curriculum consultants, and home school principals who had significant roles in the delivery of this program.

## Description of Research

The objective of this research was to identify effective approaches for delivering remote learning to students in the Westman region of Manitoba. The research question was: What beliefs, practices and strategies are critical to remote rural learning? The WCP was a work in progress and the group acknowledged that they were "building the ship while sailing it" (WCP, 2020, p. 4). Action research (AR) (Stringer, 2014) was a perfect methodology for studying emerging practices and offering ongoing feedback through multiple inquiry cycles. In the research preparation stage, the researcher applied for ethical approval to the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) and permission to conduct phase one of the research (#22739) was granted December 1, 2020. Generous financial support received from Tech MB (\$6000) for Phase One has been used to hire a Research Assistant IV, Mr. Gustavo Moura, a PhD candidate. The same amount was received, in addition, for phase two of the research and once again covered salary for the research assistant and associated research costs. The first AR cycle gathered initial feedback from each of the participant groups involved in the initiative: students, parents, teachers, curriculum consultants and students' home school principals. Online questionnaires were developed for all five participant groups. Letters of invitation and recruitment scripts with links to digital questionnaires were sent by the research assistant, to Mathew Gustafson (Brandon School Division Assistant Superintendent), who was the contact person for WCP. Ms. Carmen Mclean, on behalf of Mr. Gustafson, forwarded the letters of invitation and recruitment emails to parents, teachers, curriculum consultants and home school principals. Students accessed questionnaires through their parents, if the parents agreed to their participation. The researchers identified specific questions to include in the second action research cycle which included personal interviews with students, parents, teachers, curriculum consultants, and principals. All members of the targeted groups were invited to volunteer to be interviewed. All letters of invitation, recruitment scripts and protocols for the second cycle of data collection were submitted as an amendment to the original submission and were granted BUREC approval April 12, 2021.

### **Phase 1**

The questionnaires (Appendix A) aimed at finding out about the demographics of the participants in the study, and their strategies and experiences during the remote learning program. Each group of participants received a different questionnaire, but many questions looked at similar issues/matters. Strategically, the questionnaires approached a mixed-method methodology, and the research team developed both multiple choice and open-response questions for the participants.

### **Phase 2**

The interview questions (Appendix B) further explored the participants' perspectives on key elements (e.g., pedagogy, communication, Friday meetings, etc.) of the remote learning program. Each group of participants had their own set of open-ended questions that were used to develop a dialogue between the Principal Investigator and the participants. Interviews were transcribed for accuracy of analysis.

During the analysis of participants' answers, in both phases, the research team went through the analysis process together, writing, revising, and summarizing findings. The stages of analysis included going through responses by each participant group separately, then finding themes that emerged across the groups all together, and finally synthesizing all findings into themes.

## Participants of the Study

With learning taking place in students' homes, parents were called upon to support their child's learning in multiple ways ranging from facilitating digital access, monitoring energy and attention, assisting with academic learning, and communicating with their child's teacher. There was a need to assist parents with these tasks as required and to help caregivers develop confidence and capacity as co-educators. Teachers played different roles as facilitators of remote learning and were forced to improvise in this new context. There was a need for teachers to innovate, collaborate and reflect on what was working well to maximize learning in all the classes. Students were also adapting to a new teacher and new software, plus learning with students they had only met online from the other divisions. There was a need to determine effective ways to support student's social emotional and academic growth and to ensure formative assessment and feedback that fostered student learning. Curriculum consultants supported the remote learning teachers and some met with the teachers weekly. The curriculum consultants provided practical and pedagogical support and facilitated collaboration amongst the teaching team. Their involvement provided an opportunity to examine the kinds of instructional and assessment strategies that were working well in the online environment and the types of supports for teachers that enhanced program delivery. Home school principals were responsible for maintaining provincial and school records on each remote learning student, troubleshooting emerging issues and arranging for transition back to classrooms as required. As the one who connected families, schools and communities, home school principals needed to be kept informed through efficient and effective communication.

Table 1: Participant group numbers.

PARTICIPANTS	IN THE STUDY		IN THE PROGRAM
	Phase 1	Phase 2	
<b>STUDENTS (K-8)</b>	21	1	181
<b>PARENTS</b>	38	3	Minimum 1 per student
<b>TEACHERS</b>	6	4	11
<b>CURRICULUM CONSULTANTS</b>	3	1	5
<b>PRINCIPALS</b>	20	1	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	88	10	236+
<b>PARTICIPATION (%)</b>	≈ 37.3%	≈4.3%	



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# Phase One

## key findings:

Context for  
Innovation: Program  
Demand and Design

Beliefs, Perspectives,  
and Tensions in  
Communication

Technology, Learning,  
and Pedagogical  
Practices

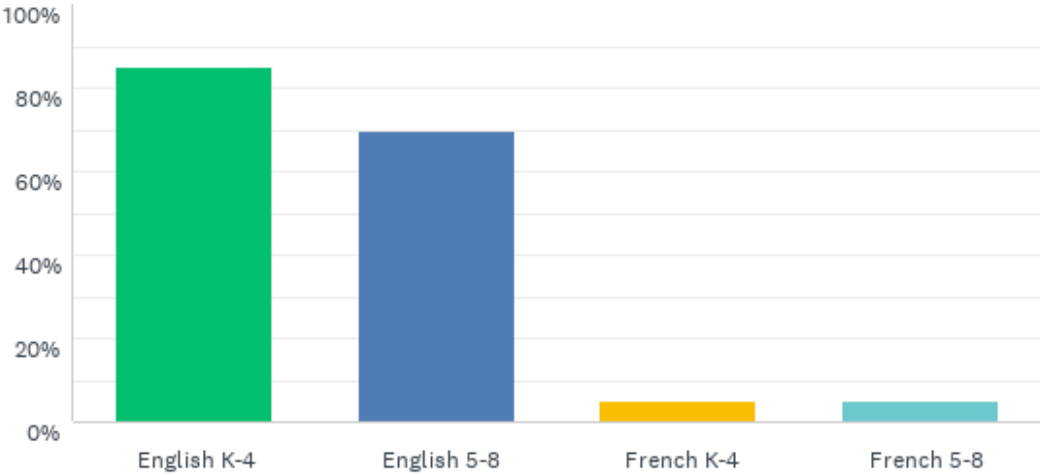
Enabling Strategies:  
Supports for Teachers,  
Parents, Students, and  
Mental Health

# Context for Innovation: Program Demand and Design

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a time sensitive challenge for the Manitoba Southwestern school divisions. Students, teachers, and parents needed a program that could be developed quickly, accommodate individuals who were medically fragile, and be responsive to ever-changing needs. The initial articulated vision, to develop a rural remote learning program that was strength-based, innovative, and responsive, served as a guiding principle throughout the development and enactment of the program. (Note: A more detailed report of Phase 1 can be found on <https://www.brandonu.ca/bu-cares/publication/westman-consortia-interim-report/>).

Figure 1: Students enrolled in the Westman Remote Learning Program according to principals' responses.

## Q3 Which programs are your students enrolled in?



**Need for the Program.** The need for the program is paramount on peoples' minds, and all participant groups commented on this topic. It was conceived as an essential service that had filled the need for an educational option for students unable to attend school for medical reasons. Any change in the demand for the service, due to changes in the rate of vaccination or prevalence of the virus, would necessarily impact sustainability. Dimensions of size would impact the viability of the program, for which the foremost motivation was to keep students and teachers engaged in education and healthy. Adequate financial resources could become a larger issue if the economies of scale disappear, through a decrease in demand, fewer participating students or not as many school divisions participating. There was a feeling amongst those involved, however, that this was an important program that should be prioritized, and an



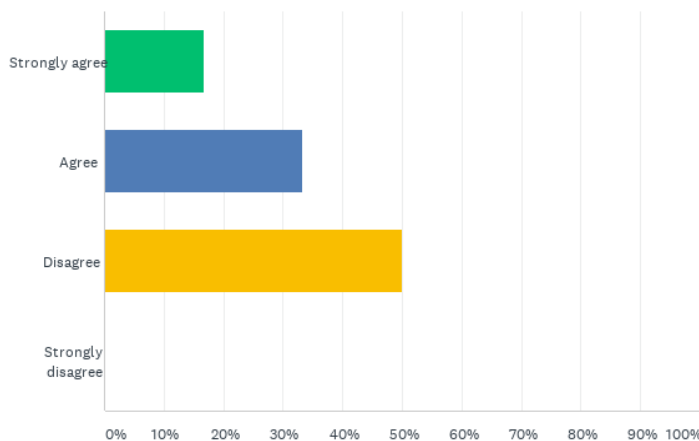
understanding that it couldn't be a priority if people were not aware of the innovation and learning that had taken place.

*“Will we have learners who need or want to continue to learn remotely? [...] there is a greater expectation on parents in this format of learning.”* (Curriculum Consultant)

**Design of the Program.** Not surprisingly, all participant groups had something to say about the design of the program. There was strong consensus that the program was an essential service that had done a good job of replicating many of the features of school within a remote learning environment. The standard markings of school were viewed as positive elements: children had a teacher, a classroom of peers, a daily and weekly schedule, direct instruction through a range of pedagogical approaches and learning which included all the core subjects. Implementing this structure required substantial innovation by remote learning teachers and collaboration between the different partners resulted in benefits for students, teachers, and families. Specific structures the adults singled out as advantageous included small class sizes, Friday afternoons with no classes, and the central role of the teacher. For students, being able to learn at home where there were fewer distractions and receiving individual attention from their teacher, increased their ability to focus and work independently.

Figure 2: Respondent students' opinions about their learning programs

Q22 My remote learning program involves the Arts (for example music, dance, drama, visual arts).



Design elements of the program that could be strengthened revolved around a few topics. Roles, responsibilities, and expectations for all stakeholders could have been more clearly articulated. Examples where more clarity would have been helpful include principals who had questions about pedagogy, general confusion about who was responsible for attendance and report cards, and worries about sustaining the connections, and transitioning students, to their home schools when the program ended. For

teachers, having a streamlined administrative structure in which there was a principal and office assistant designated for the remote learning program, would have helped reduce their administrative responsibilities (which included attendance, accessing resources and contacting principals) and improved communication about roles and expectations. A second area where challenges surfaced related to student engagement and attendance, though this was primarily voiced by principals and consultants, not by teachers, parents, or students, although some K-4 students did comment that they found it difficult to work alone, which could impact both engagement and attendance.

*“I very much enjoy our teacher’s personality. I think it’s hard to be upbeat and positive on a TEAMS meeting daily, and she is so great at it. She also has taken time to learn about the kids, and their families, and shows great interest in their work.”*  
(Parent)

*“[...] sometimes the assignments are hard to understand and it’s difficult not having a teacher in person to show me how to do it. Sometimes my computer glitches as well and it’s hard to submit my work.”* (Student)

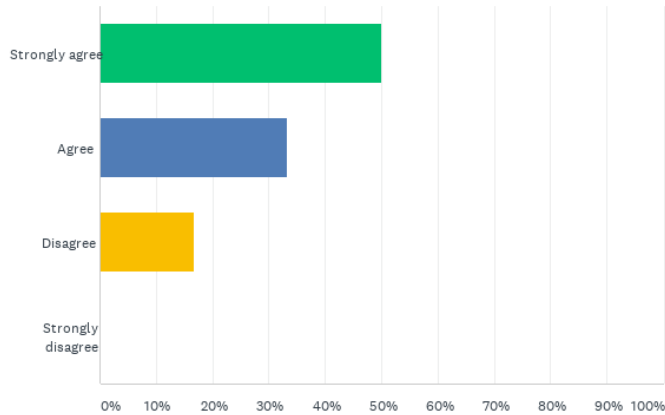
Principals noted the need for teachers and students within the program to have access to additional supports including counselling, social work, and resource. Teachers added that French resources should be available in one central location for shared access and that students should be provided with digital devices by either the program or their school division. Finally, there was a request for increased communication about what content was being taught in remote learning, and both clarity and flexibility around who could participate in the program.

## Beliefs, Perspectives, and Tensions in Communication

Although some of the participants reported having positive communication experiences during the remote learning program, a few issues were still raised. From a broader perspective, the (lack of) communication made it difficult for parents, teachers, principals, and students to understand the expectations and individual roles. In a more specific matter, teachers’ concern around communication reflected the difficulty of assisting students in some aspects of their daily remote learning routines. From what was presented by the participants, a face-to-face environment makes it easier for them to interact with one another, engage in activities, and help someone out when needed. Indeed, mostly among the students, new ways of communicating were being appropriated as students seemed to be better adapted to digital/interactive forms of communication and learning.

Figure 3: Teachers' perspective on their connection with students online.

Q5 My students contact me when they have questions.



Some of the different participant groups perspectives on distinct aspects of the program include:

***“Many teachers in the program do not realize that remote learning does not mean 100% online learning [...] Students are not receiving small group/individual communication once a week as outlined. Limited, effort from teachers to create personal connections with challenging students [...] Lack of empathy for students in this situation, they did not choose this option. It is a necessity for the health and safety of themselves or a family member.”*** (Principal)

***“Communication challenges made it difficult to get students set up with technology at the outset, and to stay in touch “when parents are disengaged”*** (Teachers)

***“I think if there were a clearer direction that everyone was supposed to focus on, then there would in turn be more direction for consultants. For example, if the teachers were all focusing on and familiar with the best practices in remote learning as put on by the province, then more support could be given for each of those areas.”*** (Curriculum Consultant)

***“I am able to stim a lot without distracting other students.”*** (Student)

***“It is easier to communicate with people in the classroom. He [child] said that online, some kids are not wanting to speak in group discussions”, but “when you need the teacher, it’s just a click away”*** (Parents)

NOTE: Curriculum consultants and teachers had Friday afternoon meetings to use as planning sessions. Collaboration and professional learning were identified as the focus of the meetings, though the topics shifted over time, since there was more logistical support required at the beginning of the program. Figure 4 outlines different ways in which the Curriculum Consultants supported the program.

Figure 4: Curriculum Consultants' views on how often support is provided for teachers and students.

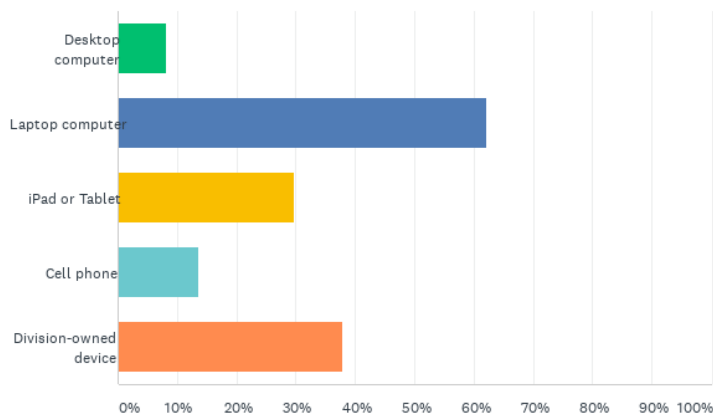
**Q1: Which of the following are ways in which you have supported the remote learning program?**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Daily support for teachers and or students	0.00%
Support for teachers and or students a few times per week	66.67%
I provide individual support when requested	66.67%
I provide group support when requested	33.33%

## Technology, Learning, and Pedagogical Practices

Figure 5: Technology use by remote learning students, according to parents.

**Q2 What technology do you use to access remote learning classes and materials?**



The rural remote learning program required teachers, parents, and students to maximize their technological skills and digital access. Remote learning contributed to and impacted students' learning differently. Teachers found themselves innovating, creating, and adapting pedagogical practices.

Figure 6: Grades 5-8 students.

Figure 7: Grades K-4 students.

Q15 Do you feel you are learning new computer skills?

Q15 I am learning new skills in working with technology through remote learning.

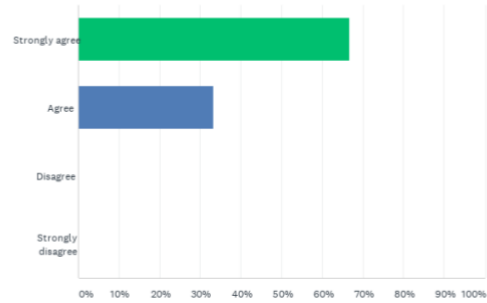
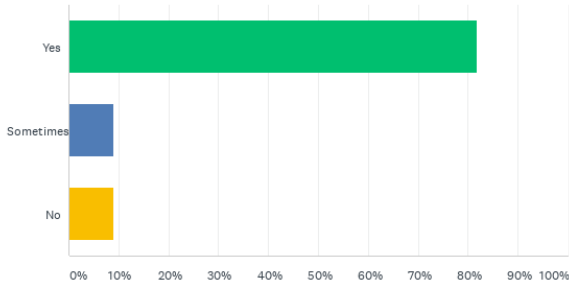
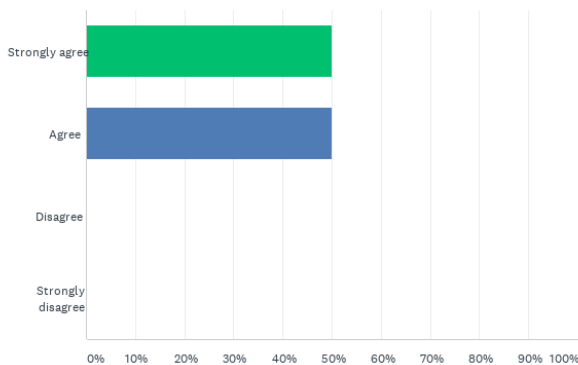


Figure 6: Teachers' responses to choosing assignments online.

Q12 I am able to give my students interesting assignments online.



***“Teachers need to be well trained. This program will only work if there is solid pedagogy and strong partnerships between all stake holders. Especially parents. Access to necessary technology and familiarity with it is also critical.”*** (Principal)

***“I have appreciated seeing the development of the teacher’s skills, comfort level with online teaching.”*** (Curriculum Consultant)

***“[...] students are afraid to take risks when learning French and will often rely on Google Translate instead of trying on their own.”*** (Teacher)

**Technology.** In remote learning, technology played a fundamental role in all the participants' new routines. According to the participants of the study, we can analyze the role of technology under three main streams: access, skills, and benefits. As for access, most of the participants talked about the unreliable access to Wi-Fi, and sometimes not-functional software. From the principals' perspectives,

making sure that people in rural Manitoba had equitable access to the internet was the biggest concern. Participants also showed the good side of working with technology in remote learning, as it provides interactive and hands-on activities, flexibility, and quick access to resources/files. However, the number of platforms was shown to be one of the drawbacks of participants' easy access to different sources.

Figure 7: Access issues in remote learning, according to parents.

## Access Issues

“Problems with Microsoft Teams”

What kinds of issues have you encountered accessing remote learning?	
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
No challenges	40.5%
Video freezing	29.7%
Lost connections	27%
Sound lags	24.3%
Weak internet connection	21.6%
Difficulty logging on to the internet (Connection issues)	16.2%
Trouble accessing specific programs	16.2%
Difficulty logging onto programs (Password issues)	10.8%
What do you do when the internet goes down and you and your child are unable to connect with online support?	
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Work independently on tasks assigned by the teacher	62.1%
Send an email to inform the teacher and wait	62.1%
Switch to using data on a phone	37.8%
Do something not school related until the internet comes back on	16.2%

Predominantly, parents, students, and teachers developed new skills during remote learning. Along with technical knowledge, these participants were also improving, or finding new ways to improve, their social skills. A benefit of having access to technology in remote learning was having a system in place that was accountable to store students' information, and to give more autonomy to students' own participation in the learning process. On the negative side, parents and students sought more synchronous virtual learning times; and teachers found it challenging to motivate students and have them be physically active in remote learning.

As K-4 students were asked to indicate what they do online that they cannot do in the classroom, having ready access to technology was predominant, whether it indicated students were able to “text with friends”, “[access] the internet all the time”, or even use tech features such as “mut[ing] ourselves”. Secondly, using their technological skills and finding different ways of communicating were also recurrent in students’ responses. Controlling their own environment was another response we observed from respondents as one student said they were “getting work done faster and not getting distracted”. Finally, one student mentioned the fact that they were staying healthy by learning online. (Interim Report)

[...] parents noted that their children were more focused and enjoyed “working independently on online lessons”. “Being in the comfort of home, in a more familiar environment compared to a classroom” makes their child “get a lot more work done”. These aspects are followed by the flexibility that the remote learning program has given their children, as there is “more time to complete assignment” and the teacher is able to respond more quickly to student questions. (Interim Report)

**Learning.** The learning aspect of being in remote learning, according to parents, teachers, and students, identifies what helped and what jeopardized one’s learning. For instance, in remote learning, the teacher was ‘a click away’ and could support students right away. The autonomy that the remote learning offered students helped them grow and become more independent doing their tasks. Nonetheless, students’ learning was still affected by the fact of being home and having too many distractions around; and learning was also impacted when the students did not see their teachers often, had little access to them or needed to wait long times to receive their response/feedback. For participants included in French Immersion, learning another language remotely was a challenge itself as there was too much dependence on Google Translate, given the level of difficulty of assignments and lack of language skills from both parents and students.

Figure 8: Students' and parents' level of comfortability with French language.

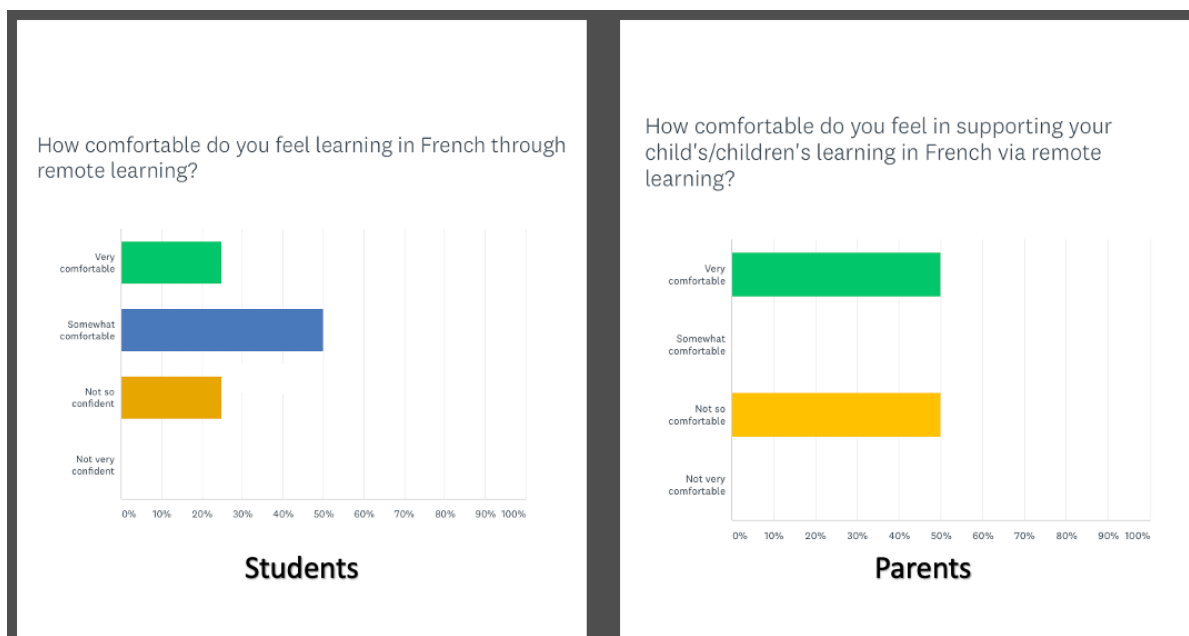


Figure 9: Parents' and students' level of French language.

**For parents, which option best describes the level of French required for your child's/children's remote learning program?**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Material and instructions are accessible with my level of French	25.00%
Material and instructions are beyond my level of French	50.00%
I have no French language knowledge or ability to support my child/children	25.00%

**For students, which option best describes the level of French required for your remote learning program?**

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I can understand the French materials and assignments very well.	25.00%
I can understand the French materials and assignments, but not very well.	75.00%
I cannot understand the French materials and assignments to do my classwork.	0.00%

**Pedagogy.** All participants in the study somehow referred to pedagogy in their responses. When thinking of the current program and its sustainability, there was a focus on the quality of the delivery of the program. This referred to how well-trained teachers, students, and even parents were to deal with remote learning and how well-planned the program was. From the curriculum consultants’ perspective, for instance, the weekly checking-in with teachers was a strategy to establish a more streamlined online pedagogy, giving the chance for teachers to voice their successes and tensions, revise planning and assessment, and incorporate new ideas exchanged among themselves. The strength of an online pedagogy, according to teachers, parents and principals was the flexibility it offered, and the context-based troubleshooting skills it developed in all participants. Teachers were able to develop new, active, and creative (digital/online) activities, as much as they created new routines with students. But one aspect to consider was whether the autonomy that an online pedagogy provided was ideal and properly assigned to students who may be a little more dependent on others to do a search and complete the schoolwork.

*“Teachers are able to focus on the remote learning aspect and do not need to worry about in class. The very specific teacher/student time online vs independent is also very important”. Similarly, the integration of technology and the highly interactive classrooms are seen as a strength. “The fact that there is a reporting system, tracking, accountability” replicates the school routine. The use of rural remote learning has reduced the teacher workload for those working in schools, “it took the burden of planning for remote learning off my teachers who are also teaching in class and sending packages to students not in the consortium.” (Interim Report)*



# Enabling Strategies: Supports for Teachers, Parents, Students, and Mental Health

Remote learning teachers, students and parents were the critical participants in the remote learning initiative. The essential supports required by each stakeholder group shifted with increasing awareness of the needs in each group over time. The lack of opportunities to socialize during the remote learning period led to pervasive concerns about the mental health of both students and teachers.

## Support for Teachers

To support teachers in the delivery of this essential service, several supports were put in place, in particular the support of curriculum consultants. From their perspective it was very important that the teachers had the designated time on Friday afternoons to gather and collaborate. At the outset there were a lot of logistical issues to resolve and questions to answer about how to access various programs and resources. As time went by, the support shifted more towards providing reassurance and validation for teachers, through reflective processes that helped them reach clarity. The third shift was when groups of teachers started meeting to co-plan together and the consultants were called upon as needed for support or resources. For the consultants working in these roles, it was a privilege to be able to work so directly with the teachers and develop relationships with them. There was growth in their understanding of their roles within the consortia and how to effectively support the teachers. Dialogue emerged as a significant tool, teachers were isolated and appreciated the chances to have professional conversations with each other and the consultants. Having a second set of eyes on student assessments and clarifying student progress in the online environment was another topic for discussion. Both teachers and curriculum consultants stressed the excitement of the innovation and the need for a growth mindset that embraced change and had a can-do attitude. Some consultants thought it might be helpful to have an agreed upon set of guidelines for remote learning that could enhance consistency between teachers and help streamline supports.

*“[...] it’s a matter of helping them with clarity ... Also helping them to see that progress with their students is being made.”* (Curriculum Consultant)

*“[...] the collaboration and support I receive.”* (Teacher)

*“I think it can only go up from where we are, the teachers make it fun and engaging, and there is so much teacher parent communication, everyone is engaged with how your child is performing, what needs work, etc.”* (Parent)

## Support for Parents

Although half of the parents reported only positive experiences supervising their children during home-based remote learning, parents indicated, not surprisingly, that they were always multi-tasking. Many may have had paid employment in or outside the home, more than one child in remote learning, unmotivated teen-agers, and/or pre-schoolers who did not yet attend school. When coupled with the regular demands

of running a household, parents were pressured to integrate the demands of remote learning supervision into their daily schedule. Parents felt they would be able to fulfill their multiple roles better if they could access information about their child's daily schedule and assignments when *they* had the time, which may be before, during or after the instructional day. Suggestions to facilitate this time-shifting include posting a digital schedule and list of assignments, providing clear written instructions for independent work, and posting examples to model what completed work should look like. For parents of students in French Immersion, instructions in English would be appreciated (even if they had to be posted separately from the student instructions). When parents were trying to help their children with assignments, they sometimes needed access to content information, so they appreciated teachers who provided links to appropriate resources. Some parents found it difficult to access the teachers and would prefer to meet with the teacher on a regular basis to get insights into how their child was doing and how they could best support their learning.

**As parents were asked to indicate what would make it easier for them to support their children in their remote learning program, we observe that parents are seeking practical suggestions to help their children, for example: “our teacher does a good job of giving us links and information to support what she teaches in class”. Parents are also feeling effective in supporting their children in remote learning. Some challenges they have are balancing time and support, or simply multitasking. As suggested by one parent, it would be better “having activities posted ahead of time so I can prepare if I am going to be busy in a work meeting”. Lastly, parents shared ideas about information they can get to help their children with motivation and content, such as “getting support with French instructions” or “more support for parents (provide material) and have regular parent child meetings or emails to ensure that parents are aware of and can help their child with learning concepts.” (Interim Report)**

*“[...] I've called families to see how it's been going. They like the communication” (Principal)*

Figure 10: Parents' employment experiences.



### Support for Students' Socialization

Parents were the most enthusiastic about the socializing they observed in their children. From the parental perspective, children were receiving more personal attention from their family, and some, though not all, parents felt their children were getting more personal attention from their online teachers than they had received in the physical school. Socializing through online environments was helpful for some children as parents reported increased confidence, an absence of bullying and the ability to make choices about how to interact (i.e., video on or off). Teachers valued the strong relationships they formed with students and parents, while students valued their online interactions, though these were more popular amongst the older students. Parents, teachers, and students identified the same social challenges that students faced during remote learning. Students were missing their friends, the physical locations where they could socialize such as the gym, recess or lunch time, seeing both friends and teachers physically, and having a social life.

*"[...] it is difficult when I do not know how to do an assignment and do not have a teacher there in person to help."* (Student)

*"[...] perhaps having/encouraging more lecture/class time for discussion as a way to further enhance our usage of the language."* (Student)

Figure 11: Parents' support for children.

Support to children: what are parents providing their children	
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Providing encouragement	75.8%
Supervising independent activities	68.9%
Help with time management	65.5%
Helping my child to engage	62%
Helping to motivate my child	58.6%
Providing direct instruction	55.1%
Helping regulate the need for movement and/or outdoors	55.1%
Help access programs and applications	44.8%
Helping regulate emotions	44.8%
Help logging on	37.9%
Help with logging on to programs (password issues)	31%

### Support for Mental Health

The topic of mental health surfaced in comments by teachers, parents, and students. Parents were concerned about the mental health of the remote learning teachers and saw the potential for teacher burn-out. Concerns also applied to students, as they worried about the mental health of children who were isolated from their peers. For some students, the opportunity to study alone at home increased their mental health as they were free to work at their own speed, move freely around the house, interact less with their same age peers, and engage in comforting behaviours without fear of criticism.

*“[...] I miss seeing other people in person.”* (Student)

*“[...] the importance of giving the teachers time to voice both their questions/concerns and to celebrate successes. The need for being responsive to their unique challenges and needs. I have appreciated the positive and patient stance the current facilitators have taken while working through challenges with the teaching team.”* (Curriculum Consultant)

*“[...] the amount of research. As they are young and not strong readers, it takes a very long time for them to find, read, and then write the expected amount on different topics. It can be very frustrating for them.”* (Parent)

# Phase One Summary

Four distinct themes (see Table below, but themes are not in order) summarizes the findings that ran across the different participant groups in Phase 1. The first theme, *Context for Innovation: Program Demand and Design*, consolidates findings related to the initial reason for the program’s creation and elements of program design that resonated with participants.

The second theme, *Beliefs, Perspectives and Tensions in Communication*, addresses the complex challenges of maintaining effective communication in such a complex and ever-changing system.

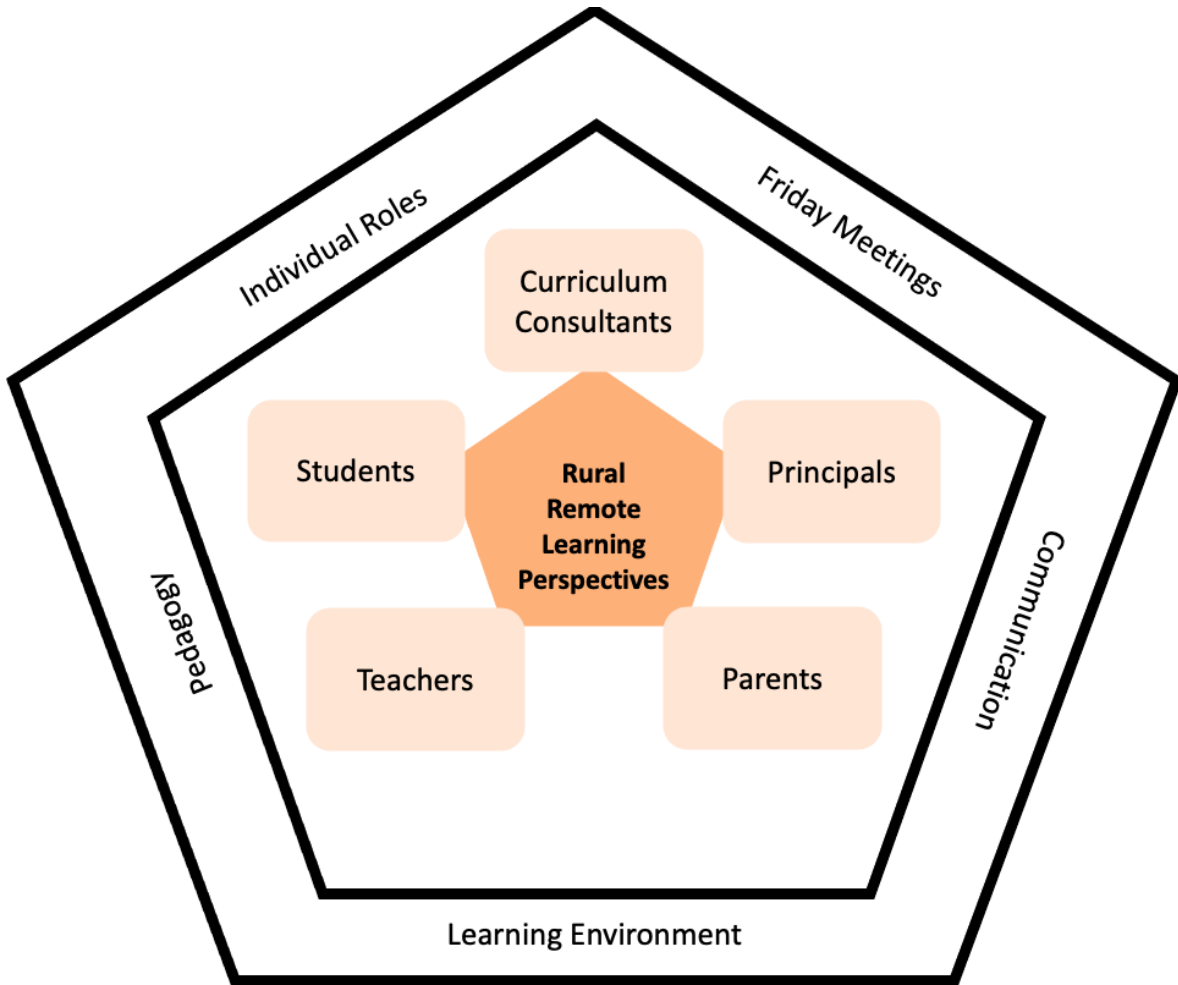
The third theme, *Technology, Learning and Pedagogical Practices*, explores the ways in which technological access and skills were influencing how remote learning was being facilitated and experienced, and the impact of those decisions on student learning.

The fourth theme, *Enabling Strategies: Supports for Teachers, Parents, Students, and Mental Health*, synthesizes what participants said supported them to be effective in their role within the Westman Consortia Program.

Table 2: Summary of findings - themes, strengths, and challenges.

Themes	Strengths	Challenges
<b>Context for Innovation: Program Demand and Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Beliefs, Perspectives and Tensions in Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understandable student feedback</li> <li>• Flexibility in communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student comprehension of feedback</li> <li>• Inconsistency in expectations due to th</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling Strategies: Supports for Teachers, Parents, Students, and Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible work schedules support parents</li> <li>• Parent support of 1-2 hours daily is usually enough</li> <li>• Curriculum Consultants are responsive to teachers</li> <li>• Teachers observe friendships developing online</li> <li>• Students contact teachers with questions</li> <li>• Students enjoy meeting and connecting online</li> <li>• MY students extend friendships beyond the class</li> <li>• Parents are helpful when students have difficulties</li> <li>• Students use a variety of strategies to get help</li> <li>• Students are supported by parents and teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are multi-tasking while supervising</li> <li>• Parents have fixed schedules and work locations</li> <li>• Some parents’ support takes up to 6 hours daily</li> <li>• Parents are concerned about their children</li> <li>• Children are less physically active</li> <li>• Children are socializing less</li> <li>• Some parents observe children withdrawing</li> <li>• Students are not connecting outside of class</li> <li>• FI students do not connect with their peers</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students lack effective strategies for getting help</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology, Learning and Pedagogical Practices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to digital devices</li> <li>• Parents can support children with technology</li> <li>• Students can work independently</li> <li>• Teachers more confident teaching online</li> <li>• Teachers can support students with technology</li> <li>• Students acquiring confidence and tech skills (MY)</li> <li>• Core curriculum subjects are being taught</li> <li>• Providing interesting remote learning assignments</li> <li>• Health, Arts and Thematic instruction utilized</li> <li>• English stream students find work interesting</li> <li>• K-4 FI students find their work difficult</li> <li>• Students recognize Health content</li> <li>• K-4 FI students report learning through themes</li> <li>• Teachers provide verbal and written feedback</li> <li>• Feedback is posted, emailed, and graded</li> <li>• Children are motivated by online learning</li> <li>• Children's coursework stimulates new interests</li> <li>• Parents observe motivation and independence</li> <li>• Online programming is more diverse</li> <li>• Teachers model a learning stance</li> <li>• Students feel like learners in online classrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unstable internet connections disrupt learning</li> <li>• Poor Wi-Fi is replaced by cellular data</li> <li>• Accessing and logging on can be difficult</li> <li>• Some teachers are not learning tech skills</li> <li>• Some teachers cannot solve tech issues</li> <li>• FI EY students are not all learning tech skills</li> <li>• Half of FI EY students find their work interesting</li> <li>• Half of EY English students find their work easy</li> <li>• Most MY English students find their work easy</li> <li>• Half of MY students lack Arts instruction</li> <li>• Some parents don't see their children's feedback</li> <li>• Some parents see children resisting logging on</li> </ul>



# Phase Two

key findings:

## Curriculum Consultants

The interview questions were designed to inquire into curriculum consultants' perspectives on the Friday meetings and individuals' roles (teachers and curriculum consultants themselves). Understandably, the Friday meetings evolved as the program continued. Firstly, meetings solely focused on logistical and structural inquiries and helped teachers understand the applications, share some online classroom experiences and activities. However, according to one curriculum consultant, such meetings were lost reflective opportunities, mostly pedagogically, because of the absence of leadership and alignment of practices.

The structure of the Friday afternoon meeting revolved over the course of the program. Initially, there was a lot of logistical information shared and informal discussions about teachers' experiences. Over time, this became the staff meeting portion of the afternoon which was followed by grade group clusters of teachers. From the perspective of some consultants, the Friday afternoons did not have a significant impact on teachers' pedagogy due to challenges. There were untapped opportunities to: develop a shared understanding of collaborative teacher teams with teachers who came from different contexts, reach consensus on some common pedagogical practices that would increase consistency, and expand teachers' knowledge of digital pedagogy through professional development. Specific suggestions for professional development voiced by consultants include doing a book study of recent publications about online teaching, learning from the numeracy achievement project to focus on foundational outcomes first, and research suggestions for organization and pedagogy. Clear leadership could have helped to focus the group on developing innovative online pedagogy. For example, ***“can you imagine if we had the opportunity to pilot something that could then be brought into all of your schools? If we found that on Friday afternoons, having the time to collaboratively plan and get things accomplished, can you imagine if this works so well that it became the model for the province?”*** (Laura). Since there was no shared direction, the teachers functioned as autonomous individuals and did not develop collective efficacy. According to a consultant, if they had regular scheduled meetings with other consultants, they could have set direction for ***“some kind of general alignment of practices”*** (Laura) and developed a joint schedule to deliver related PD.

Curriculum consultants recognized the individuals' different roles in the remote learning program. As for teachers, they had different skills, personalities, and experiences, and curriculum consultants agreed that a teacher who was more flexible, easygoing, and responsive adapted more easily to the needs of students. Curriculum consultants reflected on their own roles in the program as representatives of local school divisions, supportive of local families' needs, and system developers (e.g., updating report



cards). From what curriculum consultants shared, their pedagogical expertise was not efficiently used in the professional development of teachers in the program.

## Principals

***“[...] if you don't set up those kinds of processes and procedures, you can't just expect it to magically grow. And I think that's where we've kind of fallen down a little bit with the rural consortium in terms of not having clear cut [...] procedures.” (Bob)***

Interviews with the principals were designed to focus on communication, technology and remote learning pedagogy, and expectations and roles for those involved with the Consortia. From a principal's perspective the initial expectations for communication and teamwork were clearly articulated, however as they moved into enacting those responsibilities the processes became messier. For example, the system for recording attendance was effective, but the home school were not notified frequently enough to take action if a student was not attending regularly. Report cards were submitted to the home principal but there was an absence of relationships, time, and process to resolve discrepancies in tone or content between the school and the teacher. Finally, there was a need for a better support system, such as the one provided by the provincial program, to alert the home school when a student was having difficulties and to provide appropriate and timely supports.

Principals are close to their students' families and able to identify those who require additional supports to access and manage remote learning. Parents required support from the home school to establish routines with their children and to follow a regular schedule with due dates for assignments. These executive functioning skills needed to be taught more explicitly through the program, but it was hard to advocate for their inclusion when not supervising remote learning teachers directly. To be effective, remote learning needed to include opportunities for collaboration; high quality engaging learning was considered more important than the quantity of contact time. Slower academic progress and missing elements in the curriculum, such as teaching behaviour and self-regulation, suggested to principals that the impact of remote learning may be less than face-to-face instruction.

***“[...] focusing on quality, not quantity [...] Focus on what's important and create those rich learning things, because I'd rather you give a rich learning environment or engaging lesson in 30 minutes than lecture for an hour that's not engaging.” (Bob)***

A principal observed that the Consortia lacked a central communication system and formal leader. One consequence of the absence of leadership was that the Friday meetings were not as effective as envisioned; they could have been more effective if the teachers had opportunity to agree upon some essential practices and learn from local Westman educators with relevant areas of expertise. A designated principal for the program could have provided the needed leadership.

***“I appreciate the initiative. I think it was well intended. It was kind of, it felt like sometimes it was a ship that was steering itself, I guess it is the best way for me to describe it. It's like it kind of felt like it was like lacking a captain.” (Bob)***

## Parents

***“[...] the challenges of remote learning have really helped her to develop responsibility because she's the one that's taking a picture of her work and handing it in.” (Julie)***

***“[...] having a teacher with a lot of experience in teaching and in handling it well, [...] from early on, she set her expectations very directly with them [students].” (Lily)***

Interviews with parents focused on what they had learned about their own child, their parental role in supporting a remote learner and their insights into curriculum and pedagogy. Parents felt their children appreciated the opportunity to learn in the calm and quiet space of their family home. Some interpreted increased participation in class as growth in self-confidence, and increased ability to manage schedules, timelines, and responsibilities as an increase in self-motivation and self-regulation. Parents felt that the teachers maintained their child's engagement when they provided real-life examples of curricular content, facilitated social interactions, issued physical movement challenges, and held students accountable through class meetings and individual check-ins. Engaging instruction led to curiosity about new topics, excitement about learning, and online searches for new information. Parents found they could support their

children by reducing distractions, monitoring deadlines and teacher feedback on assignments, and providing an inviting workspace with good natural light.

Parents who were interviewed identified several strategies they found helpful when supervising remote learning. Strategies included: establishing dedicated workspaces which allow for personal comfort and choice as well as physical proximity to the adult; reducing distractions by limiting access to video games and phones during school hours; enforcing a no screen time rule during the lunch hour; talking regularly with their children to help them process what they are learning and overcome any resistance or reluctance to participate in activities; and using the teacher's to do list as a check-in to help children keep track of assignments with minimal prompting. By supervising their children during remote learning, parents also

***“[...] as far as quality of learning, there is nothing wrong with the quality of learning that he received. I had no complaints at all. I thought they were compassionate, kind and very good with my child.” (May)***

acquired insights into their own child and the education system. Socially, parents noted that although their children were able to make new friends online through their classes, they still missed their school friends, and worried about the transition to face-to-face learning. Academically, parents noticed that teachers have more flexibility with curriculum than they had thought, and not only demonstrated effective teaching and assessment skills but also management strategies (such as showing them your work) that held students accountable for their use of time. Practically, parents noted the advantages of having one device per child, strong Wi-Fi, personal experience with online platforms, incentives for outdoor activity and limitations on phone access. Parents suggested that teachers include unmarked tasks on to do lists and plan for specific one on one time with each student on a regular weekly or bi-weekly basis. Caregivers recommended that programs provide parents with an orientation to Teams (or other platforms) and be thoughtful about preparing remote learners to re-enter the physical school environment.

Parents identified three different aspects of online pedagogy that were significant for their children. Of paramount importance was the personality, skill, and experience of the remote learning teacher. A skillful teacher set clear expectations, facilitated student to student and student to teacher relationships, and differentiated both instruction and assignments by incorporating student choice. Daily classroom and program routines experienced through the provincial remote learning program were viewed as very important and effective in supporting student learning; these included a daily schedule, a daily read aloud, clear expectations, a weekly email with curricular content, personal contact, and an emphasis on mental wellness.

***“[...] before she was like timid and shy, and now she really comes out and tells us stuff and talks about things that she wants or things that she needs in her life like. And I'm always talking with her as a mature adult now... it feels like I see more of my daughter and I see more of her personality, who she is as a person.”***

(Aiyana)

# Teachers

The discussions with teachers focused on three main areas: connecting with students; developing pedagogy; and communication. For connecting with students, the strategies varied from teacher to teacher considering their different years of teaching experience, areas of teaching, and groups of students. However, some similarities in their strategies could be found such as on-going synchronous meetings with students, both in groups and one-on-one, themed days throughout the week, and the variety of platforms that could be used (e.g., chats, video calls, texting, etc.). The remote learning classroom sizes facilitated such connection effectively. As teachers stated, the small number of students in a remote classroom allowed them to dedicate more time to meeting the needs of their students. According to teachers, the online aspect of teaching and learning remotely increased the students' sense of safety and enabled them to participate and engage in class. Compared to the brick-and-mortar school curriculum, the remote learning provided a chance for teachers and students to connect through shared emotions and feelings, along with the development of mechanisms to cope with hardships that were intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., depression, anxiety, self-care, boundaries).

In developing pedagogy, teachers had comments about the Friday meeting and appreciated the opportunity to collaborate and talk to other teachers within the remote learning program. The potential of Friday meetings was somehow lost with time, as the focus shifted from understanding the program structure to pedagogically rethinking their practices. The difficulties seen by teachers in the Friday meetings were diverse. The disparity in the number of teachers in the English program compared to the French Immersion program, made collaboration challenging as their experiences differed considerably; the fact that certain subject areas were simpler to adapt to an online environment than others (for example math and science apps were easy to access, but doing hands-on activities was difficult); and the overall lack of resources for online classroom activities.

***“[...] if you consider how they interact with online on a daily basis, it is all about novelty and when they have to come to school and their expectation is novelty really quickly. Like every few minutes, they are expecting something novel. That is hard to keep up with.”*** (Jean)

***“I took the initiative to post to Facebook ... teacher Facebook groups that this is my situation. I just need anything you want to throw at me or for units or activities. So, I had quite a few teachers offer like some units that they did, whether I use them or not. It still gave me some ideas to plan with. So, I had a big folder in my email just saying resources. So, any time that I got those, I just plug them in there. And any time that I needed ideas, that's the folder that I went to.”*** (Audrey)

***“In class teaching, what do I miss? It's part of an experience. It's when a kid gets the idea, and they've been struggling and they've been trying and a look crosses their face and that light bulb goes off and shines across the room, my kids keep their camera off. I can quite often hear it in their voice. But it is not the same as seeing it live and in person and feeling the radiating heat of that knowledge come out of their head.”*** (Maria)

For communication, Teams served the purpose for sharing and contacting colleagues and staff throughout the year. Teachers also reflected on communication with parents highlighting that they were able to contact them through phone calls, text messaging, and even Teams chats. Despite the attempt of teachers' clear and effective communication, the lack of a pointed remote learning administration staff made it challenging for teachers to connect with students from different school divisions and to centralize information. As for communication with students, it seemed common sense that older students were easier to communicate with as they already had their technological skills developed, while younger ones had to rely on a more structured classroom day and follow a more fixed routine.

## Students

For students, the questions encompassed learning environment, pedagogy, and communication. Their learning environments were heavily influenced by their living conditions/circumstances. The likes and dislikes of students were an important factor in determining whether the learning environment was contributing to the students' learning experience. For example, for students who are more introverted, their remote learning experiences provided them a space free of pressure of others looking at them while doing their work. But for others, remote learning felt rather isolating, as for them, they missed the interactivity of a day-to-day brick-and-mortar school. Another aspect of students' learning environment refers to the flexibility in doing their tasks and assignments that they acquired in the remote learning program. Independent work time and time management are some of the skills developed by students throughout the year.

In pedagogy, the students commented on the routine established by their teachers, which made it easier for them to follow up with their responsibilities. There was also an emphasis on the importance of having some time to share emotions and feelings with the teacher and colleagues, and that listening to others increased students' empathy. In addition, pedagogy was described by students as engaging due to breakout room activities and other planned themed classes that teachers set up. Similar to the teachers' experiences, students were able to use a variety of means to communicate with peers and teachers (e.g., Teams chat, social media, email) to both submit assignments and tasks, and engage with friends or the teacher.

One strategy some teachers were using in remote learning was to do a nine o'clock roll call and ask students to unmute themselves to confirm attendance. This time of day might also include an emotional check-in to see how students were doing. Such a strategy was motivating for some students who had that time to listen to their classmates. Breakout rooms provided another opportunity to connect with individual students and talk about their learning in a smaller group. Even when breakout rooms were randomly set up, students were expected to turn on their videos and unmute themselves: ***"It's mostly randomized. So, I don't know who I'm getting and our expectation is that we're supposed to be on our videos. Like camera's supposed to be on and unmuted"*** (Laryssa). Some students were also expected to report what they had done in the breakout rooms to the main group and/or the teacher. Students were able to submit screenshots and photos of their work and received feedback through chat from the teachers or as notes on their assignments.

# Contributions and implications

The results of this research study will inform contributions and implications to different stakeholders in rural communities as well. These stakeholders include teacher educators, program administrators, researchers, rural education researchers, and funding agents – in the case of this study, Tech MB. The contributions and implications listed here will advise current and future remote learning programs across Canada and help develop new and existing rural education initiatives in the country. The list below is useful for individuals to broaden discussions about remote learning in rural areas, and to consolidate teaching practices that can be beneficial for those involved in any educational context.

## **Contributions/Implications for teacher educators in rural contexts**

- Develop a program that approaches hybrid/online/remote learning more in depth
- Foster strategies for online/remote French language teaching and learning
- Advance resources for French language teaching and learning
- Discuss and broaden the concept of innovative and online pedagogies
- Engage pre-service teachers in more collaborative and interdisciplinary work
- Encourage teachers' autonomy (when there is a lack of a central administration), trusting their own professional knowledge, self-direction, agency, confidence in their professional identity and decision-making
- Provide tools and explore the advantages or disadvantages of learning apps and software
- Develop PD sessions which enable teachers to voice their concerns
- Investigate alternatives for remote offline teaching (e.g., apps that do not require online access)
- Further pre-service teachers' knowledge on multiliteracy theories
- Discuss motivation, well-being, and mental health with pre-service teachers
- Explore diverse formative feedback strategies with teachers
- Examine and adapt school curricula
- Teach about computer-assisted learning for language learners

## **Contributions/Implications for program administrators**

- Develop and distribute to all stakeholders a consistent set of expectations re roles and responsibilities
- Establish clear communication pathways for all stakeholders
- Create a central hub for communication with an office assistant and principal or director
- Establish a clear process for referral of students to additional supports
- Establish and maintain ongoing communication with home school principals
- Establish a regular routine for central distribution of program information
- Ensure technical assistance is easily accessible for families and educators
- Select consistent digital platforms for use by program teachers
- Create pedagogical documents which outline expectations and parameters for teachers
- Facilitate teacher autonomy within established parameters
- Provide families access to on call academic support from Educational Assistants
- Develop a central store of devices, including laptops, printers, and document cameras that can be distributed on an as needed basis
- Identify options for supporting families without WIFI access (such as data plans for phone use)

- Designate a technical digital expert who can advise and support educators with digital pedagogy
- Establish regular meetings for remote learning teachers to develop a community of support, engage in collaboration and participate in relevant professional development
- Provide orientation sessions for families including how to use the digital platform, the importance of routine and movement, and ways they can support their children during remote learning by establishing routines and rituals
- Provide onboarding orientation for teachers new to the program including orientation to the digital platform, available equipment, resources available from the program and divisions, remote learning pedagogy, setting up a home office including ergonomics, and job shadowing
- Ensure remote learning teachers know the process for raising concerns about working conditions in their home offices such as the cost of upgrading home internet, purchasing additional monitors, headsets, applications fees etc.

### **Contributions/Implications for researchers**

- Establish networks of researchers interested in rural remote learning scholarship
- Explore the impact of digital inequity on rural learners and educators
- Explore computer assisted learning strategies for additional language learners in rural contexts
- Identify components and needs for culturally responsive pedagogy within rural communities
- Publish research on innovative pedagogies in K-12 online learning environments
- Investigate innovative rural program design responses to local emergencies

### **Contributions/Implications for Tech MB**

- Discuss and broaden the concept of innovative and online pedagogies
- Provide orientation and training workshops for digital platforms (How to use Teams? Google?)
- Provide support teachers who have ideas to develop new learning apps and software
- Strengthen relationships with school divisions across the province – attempt to get to rural and northern areas
- Collaborate on the development of online/remote/hybrid teaching and learning delivery
- Investigate alternatives of remote offline teaching (e.g., apps that do not require online access)
- Assist language teachers (e.g., French Immersion) and promote tech resources for language teaching and learning
- Advance digital literacy and multiliteracy initiatives for teachers, parents, and students



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# Appendices



## Appendix A: Remote Learning Questionnaire

### Remote Learning Parent Questionnaire

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as you are associated with the **Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program**. Your feedback will provide important information to the facilitators of the remote learning program and help guide ongoing improvements. By submitting this questionnaire you are a participant in this study as described in the letter of invitation. Your participation is voluntary and you will not be identified. The best person to complete this questionnaire will be the parent who provides the most direct supervision of the remote learners in your home. If this role is shared, please submit a joint response. Thank you for participating.

### Demographics

1. As a parent of a remote learning student, which program stream(s) are you or your child or children involved with?
  - a. English K-4
  - b. English 5-8
  - c. French Immersion K-4
  - d. French Immersion 5-8

### Technology Issues

2. What technology do you use to access remote learning classes and materials?
  - a. Desktop computer
  - b. Laptop computer
  - c. I-Pad or Tablet
  - d. Cell Phone
  - e. Division-owned device
  - f. Other
3. What kinds of issues have you encountered accessing remote learning?
  - a. No challenges
  - b. Weak internet connection
  - c. Difficulty logging on to the internet (connection issues)
  - d. Difficulty logging onto programs (password issues)
  - e. Sound lags
  - f. Video freezing

- g. Lost connections
  - h. Trouble accessing specific programs
  - i. Other
4. What do you do when the internet goes down and you and your child are unable to connect with online supports?
- a. Work independently on tasks assigned by the teacher
  - b. Do something not school related until the internet comes back on
  - c. Switch to using data on a phone
  - d. Send an email to inform the teacher and wait
  - e. Other (please specify)

**Time Commitment**

5. On average, how much time is your child spending per day on remote learning?
- a. Less than one hour
  - b. 1-2 hours
  - c. 2-3 hours
  - d. 3-4 hours
  - e. 4-5 hours
  - f. 5-6 hours
  - g. More than 6 hours
6. On average, how much time are you spending supporting your child's remote learning per day?
- a. Less than one hour
  - b. 1-2 hours
  - c. 2-3 hours
  - d. 3-4 hours
  - e. 4-5 hours
  - f. 5-6 hours
  - g. More than 6 hours
7. Please select the options that best describe your employment situation while your child is (or children are) engaged in remote learning.
- a. No paid employed
  - b. Caring for other siblings
  - c. Working part-time

- d. Working full-time
  - e. Other (please specify)
8. If answers I or (d): What is your work schedule like?
- A) flexible hours/schedule
  - B) Fixed hours/schedule
9. Whichever answer from 7.1: Do your work from home or at your workplace?
- A) I work from home.
  - B) I work at my workplace.
  - C) Other (please specify)

**Parental Support**

10. Please select the kinds of support you find you are providing for your child while they are doing remote learning.
- a. Help with logging on
  - b. Help with logging on to programs (password issues)
  - c. Help to access programs and applications
  - d. Help with time management
  - e. Providing direct instruction
  - f. Supervising independent activities
  - g. Providing encouragement
  - h. Helping to motivate my child
  - i. Helping my child to engage
  - j. Helping regulate emotions
  - k. Helping regulate the need for movement and/or outdoors
  - l. Other
11. What are your biggest challenges in helping your child with remote learning?
- a. Help with logging on to the internet (connecting)
  - b. Help with logging on to programs (password issues)
  - c. Help to access programs and applications
  - d. Help with time management
  - e. Providing direct instruction
  - f. Supervising independent activities
  - g. Providing encouragement
  - h. Helping to motivate my child
  - i. Helping my child to engage

- j. Helping regulate emotions
  - k. Helping regulate the need for movement and/or outdoors
  - l. other
12. Which of the following structures have been elements of your child's remote learning this fall?
- a. Virtual class meetings
  - b. Small group work with the teacher
  - c. Small group without the teacher
  - d. Partner work without the teacher
  - e. One on one meetings with the teacher
  - f. Individual work without the teacher
  - g. Computer mediated independent learning
  - h. Other (please specify)
13. Which of the following structures have been successful in your child's remote learning this fall?
- a. Virtual class meetings
  - b. Small group meetin-s - with the teacher
  - c. Small group meetin-s - without the teacher
  - d. Partner work – without the teacher
  - e. One on one meetin-s - with the teacher
  - f. Computer mediated independent learning
  - g. Other (please specify)
14. What kinds of feedback is your child receiving from their teacher to let them know how they are progressing with their learning?
- a. Verbal feedback – live
  - b. Verbal feedba-k - recorded
  - c. Written feedback – posted
  - d. Written feedba-k - emailed
  - e. Graded assignments
  - f. Marked tests – totals, percentages or letter grades
  - g. Written correspondence (journals)
  - h. Other (please specify)
15. What resources do you access when your child is struggling with a concept or an assignment?

- a. Contact the teacher
  - b. Review assignment requirements
  - c. Contact another student in the class
  - d. Contact another parent with a child in the class or program
  - e. Search for help online
  - f. Contact a teacher at my child's home school
  - g. Other (please specify)
16. What changes do you notice when you compare your child's initial experiences with remote learning in the spring of 2020 with their experiences in the fall of 2020?
- a. My child's is more independent
  - b. My child is more engaged
  - c. The remote learning is more varied
  - d. My child is more motivated to learn
  - e. My child is more efficient in completing work
  - f. Other
17. How you would describe your ch'ld's attitudes towards remote learning?  
Please, rank the following statements from most accurate (1) to least accurate (8).
- a. They are eager to join class each day
  - b. They talk about what they are learning
  - c. They are excited to complete assigned learning tasks
  - d. They look forward to class meetings
  - e. They look forward to individual meetings with the teacher
  - f. They look forward to group gatherings online
  - g. They have increased their interest in topics explored in class
  - h. They are eager to demonstrate what they have been doing online
18. Which of the following concerns you about your child as a remote learner?
- a. They seem more withdrawn
  - b. They spend less time talking to their friends
  - c. They come up with reasons not to log on to remote learning
  - d. They are not excited about school
  - e. They are less physically active
  - f. I am not aware of any concerns
  - g. None

**Open Response Questions: please type your response in the space provided.**

19. What is your child's favorite part of remote learning?
20. What have been your child/children's favorite learning activities this fall?
21. What have your child/children been able to experience through remote learning that might not occur in the classroom?
22. What would make your child's remote learning experience better?
23. What would make it easier for you to support your child in their remote learning?
24. What is your child's least favorite part of remote learning?
25. What have been your child's least favorite learning activities this fall?
26. What is making your child's learning experiences stimulating?
27. What is making it difficult for you to support your child's remote learning?
28. How does your child's experience with remote learning compare to their experience with face to face learning in the classroom?
29. What is your child missing the most about going to school in person?
30. If we could improve one thing about remote learning to make it more successful for you and your child, what would that be?
31. From your perspective, what are some factors that might impact the sustainability of the remote learning program?
32. What else would you like to share with the organizers about your family's experience with remote learning this fall?
33. Is your child / Are your children in French Immersion?
  - A) yes
  - B) no

**For parents of students in French Immersion**

If your child is in French Immersion, please respond to these additional questions.

34. How comfortable do you feel in supporting your child's learning in French via remote learning?  
Very comfortable – Somewhat comfortable – Not so Comfortable –  
Not very comfortable support for students
35. What supports do you access when you and your child don't understand the language in an assignment or material? Support for students
  - a. Use Google Translate
  - b. Use You Tube

- c. Consult a dual language dictionary
  - d. Consult the teacher
  - e. Guess
  - f. Email the teacher for support
  - g. Email another student for support
  - h. Consult a sibling
  - i. Consult a family friend
  - j. Consult a past teacher
  - k. Other (please specify)
36. Which option best describes the level of French required for your child's remote learning program:
- a. Material and instructions are accessible with my level of French
  - b. Material and instructions are beyond my level of French
  - c. I have no French language knowledge or ability to support my child
37. What are your biggest challenges in supporting your child's remote learning in French?
38. If we could improve one thing about French remote learning to make it more successful for you and your child, what would that be?

**Thank you very much for your responses.**

### **Remote Learning Student Questionnaire Grades 5-8**

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as you are a remote learning student with the Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program. Your feedback will provide important information to the facilitators of the remote learning program and help guide ongoing improvements. By submitting this questionnaire you are a participant in this study as described in the letters of invitation you and your parents received. Your participation is voluntary and you will not be identified. If you need help with completing the questionnaire, you can ask your parents for assistance. Thank you for participating.

#### **Fixed Response**

Please select the response that best describes your feelings for each the following statements.

1. I have met new people through remote learning.

2. I enjoy meeting with my classmates online.
3. I have made friends through remote learning.
4. I connect with other students in my class outside of class time.
5. I contact my teacher when I have questions.
6. I enjoy meeting with my teacher online.
7. I know how I am doing on my remote learning assignments.
8. My teacher helps me with my work when I need it.
9. My parent(s) help me with my work when I need it.
10. My classmates help me with my work when I need it.
11. When I need help with an assignment I search online for answers.
12. The work I am given to do is interesting.
13. The work I am given to do is difficult.
14. I feel like a learner in my remote learning classroom.
15. I am learning new skills in working with technology through remote learning.
16. I feel more confident learning online than when I first started.
17. My remote learning program includes Language Arts (for example reading, writing, speaking, listening)
18. My remote learning program includes Mathematics (for example numbers, word problems, problem solving, computation)
19. My remote learning program includes Social Studies (for example people, places, communities, geography, history, wants and needs)
20. My remote learning program includes Science (for example plants, animals, natural world, weather, machines)
21. My remote learning program includes Health (for example healthy body, wellness, mindfulness, exercise, decision-making, healthy lifestyles)
22. My remote learning program involves the Arts (for example music, dance, drama, visual arts)
23. My remote learning program involves themes (for example dinosaurs, Churchill, Reptiles, travel, Terry Fox, Halloween)

**Open Response Questions: please type your response in the space provided.**

24. What do you like best about your remote learning program?
25. What do you like least about your remote learning program?
26. What do you do online that you would not be able to do in the classroom?
27. What do you miss about being in the classroom?



28. What else would you like to share about your experience as a remote learning student?

**Remote Learning Student Questionnaire French Immersion Grades 5-8**

If you are in French Immersion, please respond to these additional questions.

29. How comfortable do you feel learning in French through remote learning? (Very – Not comfortable at all)

30. Which of the following supports do you access when you don't understand an assignment or material?

- a. Use Google Translate
- b. Use You Tube
- c. Consult a dual language dictionary
- d. Consult the teacher
- e. Guess
- f. Email the teacher for support
- g. Email another student for support
- h. Consult a family member
- i. Consult a friend
- j. Consult a past teacher
- k. Other (please specify)

31. Which option best describes the level of French required for your remote learning program:

- a. I can understand the French materials and assignments very well.
- b. I can understand the French materials and assignments, but not very well.
- c. I cannot understand the French materials and assignments to do my school work.

32. What are your biggest challenges with remote learning in French?

33. How difficult is it for you to learn in French online?

- a. Very difficult
- b. Somewhat difficult
- c. a little difficult
- d. Not difficult at all

34. How much are you speaking in French while learning online?

- a. I am speaking more French than I did in the classroom
- b. I am speaking the same amount of French as I did in the classroom

- c. I am speaking less French than I did in the classroom
35. How much are you reading in French while learning online?
- a. I am reading more French than I did in the classroom
  - b. I am reading the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - c. I am reading less French than I did in the classroom
36. How much are you listening in French while learning online?
- a. I am listening to more French than I did in the classroom
  - b. I am listening to the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - c. I am listening to less French than I did in the classroom
37. How much are you writing in French while learning online?
- a. I am writing more French than I did in the classroom
  - b. I am writing the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - c. I am writing less French than I did in the classroom
38. What are you noticing about your French while learning online?
- a. My French is improving
  - b. My French is not improving
  - c. My French is getting worse
39. Is there anything else you wish to tell us about remote learning in French?

**Thank you very much for your responses.**

### **Remote Learning Student Survey Grades K-4**

[You are invited to complete this survey as you are part of the Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program. Please, tell us what you think of your remote learning program. Your answers will help make the program better. Once you answer these questions, you will be part of the study. Thank you for participating. If you need help with the questions, you can ask your parents.]

#### **Fixed Response**

Please select the response that best describes your answer for each of the following questions. (keep yes, sometimes, no)

1. Do you meet new classmates online?
2. Do you like meeting your classmates online?
3. Do you connect with other students online outside of class?
4. Do you connect with other students in your class in person outside of class?

5. Do you contact your teacher when you have a question?
6. Do you enjoy meeting with your teacher online?
7. Do you know how you are doing on your assignments?
8. Does your teacher help you with work when you need it?
9. Do your parent(s) help you with work when you need it?
10. Do your classmates help you with work when you need it?
11. Do you look online for answers when you need help?
12. Do you find your schoolwork interesting?
13. Do you find your schoolwork difficult?
14. Do you feel like a learner in your remote learning classroom?
15. Do you feel you are learning new computer skills?
16. Do you feel more confident learning online now than when you first started?
17. Do you learn about Language Arts? (for example reading, writing, talking, listening)
18. Do you learn about Math? (for example numbers, word problems, problem solving, computation)
19. Do you learn about Social Studies? (for example people, places, communities, geography, history, wants and needs)
20. Do you do learn about Science (for example plants, animals, natural world, weather, machines)
21. Do you learn about Health (for example healthy body, wellness, mindfulness, exercise, decision-making, healthy lifestyles)
22. Do you learn about the arts? (for example music, dance, drama, visual arts)
23. Do you learn through themes? (for example dinosaurs, Churchill, Reptiles, travel, Terry Fox, Halloween)

**Open Response Questions: please type your answer in the space provided.**

24. What do you like best about your remote learning program?
25. What do you like least about your remote learning program?
26. What do you do online that you could not do in the classroom?
27. What do you miss about being in the classroom?
28. What else would you like to share about being a remote learning student

**Remote Learning Student Questionnaire French Immersion K-4**

If you are in French Immersion, please respond to these additional questions.

30. How comfortable do you feel learning in French through remote learning? (Very – Not comfortable at all)
31. Which of the following supports do you access when you don't understand an assignment or material?
- Use Google Translate
  - Use You Tube
  - Consult a dual language dictionary
  - Consult the teacher
  - Guess
  - Email the teacher for support
  - Email another student for support
  - Consult a family member
  - Consult a friend
  - Consult a past teacher
  - Other (please specify)
32. Which option best describes the level of French required for your remote learning program:
- I can understand the French materials and assignments very well.
  - I can understand the French materials and assignments, but not very well.
  - I cannot understand the French materials and assignments to do my school work.
33. What are your biggest challenges with remote learning in French?
34. How difficult is it for you to learn in French online?
- Very difficult
  - Somewhat difficult
  - a little difficult
  - Not difficult at all
35. How much are you speaking in French while learning online?
- I am speaking more French than I did in the classroom
  - I am speaking the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - I am speaking less French than I did in the classroom
36. How much are you reading in French while learning online?
- I am reading more French than I did in the classroom
  - I am reading the same amount of French as I did in the classroom

- c. I am reading less French than I did in the classroom
37. How much are you listening in French while learning online?
- a. I am listening to more French than I did in the classroom
  - b. I am listening to the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - c. I am listening to less French than I did in the classroom
38. How much are you writing in French while learning online?
- a. I am writing more French than I did in the classroom
  - b. I am writing the same amount of French as I did in the classroom
  - c. I am writing less French than I did in the classroom
39. What are you noticing about your French while learning online?
- a. My French is improving
  - b. My French is not improving
  - c. My French is getting worse
40. Is there anything else you wish to tell us about remote learning in French?

**Thank you very much for your responses.**

### **Remote Learning Teacher Questionnaire**

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as you are a remote learning teacher with the Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program. Your feedback will provide important information to the facilitators of the remote learning program and help guide ongoing improvements. By submitting this questionnaire you are a participant in this study as described in the letter of invitation you received. **YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.** Thank you for participating.

### **Fixed Response**

Please select the appropriate response for the following statements. (SD, D, A, SA)

1. I help my students to meet new people through remote learning.
2. My students enjoy meeting with each other online.
3. My students have made friends through remote learning.
4. My students connect with other students in my class outside of class time.
5. My students contact me when they have questions.
6. I enjoy meeting with my students online.
7. My students know how they are doing on their remote learning assignments.
8. I am able to help students with their work when they need it.

9. My students get help from their parent(s) with their work when they need it.
10. Students help each other with their work when they need it.
11. When students need help with an assignment they search online for answers.
12. I am able to give my students interesting assignments online.
13. I am able to give my students stimulating assignments online.
14. I model being a learner in my remote learning classrooms.
15. I am learning new skills in working with technology through remote teaching.
16. I feel more confident teaching online than when I first started.
17. I AM ABLE TO HELP MY STUDENTS resolve TECHNOLOGICAL issues.
18. I can sustain my current level of commitment to remote teaching all year.
19. I could sustain this level of teaching indefinitely.
20. I would like to continue teaching remotely in the future.
21. My remote learning program includes Language Arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
22. My remote learning program includes Mathematics (numbers, word problems, problem solving, computation)
23. My remote learning program includes Social Studies (people, places, communities, geography, history, wants and needs)
24. My remote learning program includes Science (plants, animals, natural world, weather, machines)
25. My remote learning program includes Health (healthy body, wellness, mindfulness, exercise, decision-making, healthy lifestyles)
26. My remote learning program involves the arts (music, dance, drama, visual arts)
27. My remote learning program involves themes (dinosaurs, Churchill, Reptiles, travel, Terry Fox, Halloween)

**Open Response**

28. What do you like best about teaching in the remote learning program?
29. What do you like least about teaching in the remote learning program?
30. What are you able to do online with your students that you would not be able to do in the classroom?
31. What do you miss about teaching in the classroom?

32. If the Westman Consortia Partnership could improve one thing about remote learning to make it more successful for you and your STUDENTS, what would that be?

33. From your perspective, what are some factors that might impact the sustainability of the remote learning program?

34. What else would you like to share with the organizers about your experiences with remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year?

35. Are you a French Immersion teacher?

A) yes

B) no

**If you teach in the French Immersion Program, please answer the additional questions.**

**Additional questions for teachers of students in French Immersion**

36. How comfortable are you with supporting children's remote learning in French?

37. What are the biggest challenges you have with supporting your students' French language learning through remote learning?

38. What supports do you suggest students or their parents access when they don't understand the language in an assignment or material?

- a. Use Google Translate
- b. Consult a dual language dictionary
- c. Consult the teacher
- d. Guess
- e. Email the teacher for support
- f. Email another student for support
- g. Consult a family friend
- h. Consult a past teacher
- i. Other (please specify)

39. Select the option that best describes the level of French required for the remote learning program(s) you teach.

- a. Grades K-4 Material is accessible with most parents' level of French
- b. Grades K-4 Material and instructions are beyond most parents' level of French
- c. Grades K-4 I have parents with no French language knowledge or ability to support their child
- d. Grades 5-8 Material is accessible with most parents' level of French

- e. Grades 5-8 Material and instructions are beyond most parents' level of French
  - f. Grades 5-8 I have parents with no French language knowledge or ability to support their child
40. If we could improve one thing about French remote learning, what would that be?

**Thank you very much for your responses.**

### **Consultant Questionnaire**

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as you are a Curriculum Consultant supporting remote learning teachers with the Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program. Your feedback will provide important information to the facilitators of the remote learning program and help guide ongoing improvements. By submitting this questionnaire you are a participant in this study as described in the letter of invitation you received. Thank you for participating.

1. Which of the following are ways in which you have supported the remote learning program?
  - a. Daily support for teachers and or students
  - b. Support for teachers and or students a few times per week
  - c. I provide individual support when requested
  - d. I provide group support when requested
  - e. Other (please specify)
2. How involved have you been with the Friday team meetings of remote learning teachers?
  - f. I attend Friday meetings weekly
  - g. I have attended a few Friday meetings per month
  - h. I attend about one Friday meeting per month
  - i. I have not attended any Friday meetings
  - j. Other (Please specify)
3. What do you like best about supporting teachers in the remote learning program?
4. What is the most difficult aspect of supporting remote learning teachers?
5. What are you helping teachers accomplish in remote learning?



6. What are teachers finding the most difficult about teaching online?
7. What makes your support work exciting?
8. What makes your consultant work stimulating?
9. What are some exciting developments you have noticed in the remote learning program?
10. How are teachers supported through the Friday afternoon planning sessions?
11. What are remote learning teachers looking for when they gather together?
12. What are you learning about effective facilitation of meetings with remote learning teachers?
13. What would enable you to more effectively support the remote learning teachers?
14. What are some of the factors that might impact the sustainability of the remote learning program?
15. What else would you like to say about supporting the rural remote learning program?

### **Home School Principal Questionnaire**

You are invited to complete this questionnaire as you are a home school principal with students enrolled in the Western Consortia Remote Rural Learning Program. Your feedback will provide important information to the facilitators of the remote learning program and help guide ongoing improvements. By submitting this questionnaire you are a participant in this study as described in the letter of invitation you received. Your participation is voluntary and you will not be identified. Thank you for participating.

1. How many students from your school are involved in remote learning?
2. What grades are your students enrolled in?
3. Which programs are your students enrolled in?
  - a. English K-4
  - b. English 5-8
  - c. French K-4
  - d. French 5-8
4. How satisfied have you been with the remote learning option for your students? (Likert scale)
5. How satisfied do you feel the parents of remote learning students are with the remote learning program? (Likert)

6. How satisfied are you with the communication and structure of the Western Consortia Partnership? (Likert)
7. From your perspective, what are the best features of the remote learning program?
8. From your perspective, what are the most challenging features of the remote learning program?
9. From your perspective as a home school principal, what could be done to strengthen the remote learning program?
10. From your perspective, what are the factors that might impact the sustainability of the remote learning program?
11. What questions do you have about the remote learning program?
12. What else would you like to say about the remote learning program?

**Thank you very much for your responses.**

## **Appendix B: Remote Learning Interview Questions**

We will select questions from the list below for both Focus Group and Personal Interviews. We will not ask all the questions from the list to everyone. Questions will be selected from each category based on level of interest of participants.

### **Curriculum consultants**

#### **(Friday - French Immersion - Individuals – Perspectives)**

1. How has the use of Friday meeting time changed since the beginning of the project?
2. What might be some examples of classroom experiences and stories shared by teachers and curriculum consultants during Friday meetings?
3. What have been some of your conversations around the quantity of work to be assigned to students (e.g., How much homework? How many hours online?)? What might you identify as areas of consistent and inconsistent expectations between teachers?
4. What is the impact of teacher's previous experiences on the support they request/require from curriculum consultants?
5. What are some proactive strategies you have used to support remote learning teachers?
6. How have you been able to connect and assist individual teachers in the program?
7. In what ways do Friday meetings allow you to identify common practices and emergent pedagogies?
8. What sub groupings/small teams of teachers are developing and what is their common focus [grade level, subject, technology, pedagogy]?
9. How have the challenges expressed by teachers shifted over time?
10. In what ways are the Friday meetings being used to troubleshoot/problem-solve?
11. What are the ways in which remote learning teachers are developing collective efficacy in online pedagogies through the remote learning program?
12. What have you noticed about those who are thriving in the remote learning context?
13. What have you learned from your role as a remote consultant that can be transferable to face-to-face classroom contexts?
14. As consultants who are often working together, how are you learning from each other while supporting remote learning teachers?
15. Reflecting on your time consulting with the program, when did you feel most effective as a consultant? And what contributed to that?
16. From your perspective, what would be some common shared practices that could support the program in your area of expertise?
17. In what ways can curriculum consultants be helpful in the collaborative planning?

18. What do you envision happening to this program once it is safe for these students to return to school?
19. How are students being motivated to use the French language in different contexts?
20. What authentic opportunities are accessible for online French learners?
21. As there is no French language consultant, how are consultants supporting remote learning for French Immersion students?

## **Principals**

### **(Communication - tech/pedagogy - expectation/roles)**

1. To what extent does the success of the program depend on the technological elements of the program?
2. How can technological structures be put in place to share/retrieve information?
3. What are the expectations towards the balance between specific teacher/student time online vs independent?
4. What are the expectations of communication between principals and teachers? What are some effective ways to accomplish this?
5. What do you anticipate as challenges for reintegrating students and teachers back into in person learning?
6. How effective are the current structures/procedures for tracking attendance and students' achievement? What suggestions do you have for improvements?
7. Who is responsible for setting up communication systems? What might be effective methods of maintaining communication with all the different people?
8. What revisions are necessary in the document of expectations to increase clarity?
9. From a principals' perspectives, what would enhance consistent and clear communication?
10. What are the different resources available to respond to students' needs within the program [social work, EAL, resource]?
11. How would you define successful pedagogy in online environments?
12. How would you describe your responsibilities for on-going professional learning for remote learning teachers? Whose responsibility do you think it should be?
13. In what ways could the experiences of the consortia be used to advocate for affordable and reliable internet access in rural Manitoba?
14. What do you feel the differences are in pedagogy and quality of learning between online remote learning and learning face-to-face?
15. How do you think teachers should balance expectations from different administrators?
16. What is the balance between the principal's right to know and the teachers' autonomy in remote learning?

17. How are teachers doing remote learning being evaluated?  
How is your division handling the teachers who need to be evaluated?
18. What are the factors that influence your satisfaction with remote learning?

### **Teachers**

#### **(Connecting to students - Developing pedagogy - Communication)**

If you brought something with you that represents your experiences as a teacher, tell us what you brought [evidence of planning for remote teaching]. If you didn't bring anything, what could be something that would represent your experience as a remote teacher.

1. Can you describe what happens on a typical Friday afternoon?
2. What communication strategies/methods are you using to communicate with other teachers?
3. How familiar are you with the learning sprints? How are learning sprints supporting your learning development as a remote learning educator? [Would you be willing to share some of the written artifacts that document your learning sprints?]
4. What elements of the remote learning support you to be responsive to the students' needs [class size, flexibility, contact information]?
5. What strategies do you draw on to establish a strong classroom community?
6. How has this remote learning program shifted your pedagogy? What would be an example of shifts you have made from teaching in the classroom to teaching online? How have you adapted a face-to-face practice into an online practice?
7. What strategies have you found to compensate for the things you miss from in-person teaching?
8. What are some of your strategies to compensate for the lack of interpersonal interactions among your students?
9. What are some of the ways to streamline communication between the program and schools?
10. What might be effective ways to build awareness and understanding of the program?
11. What supports did you receive as an incoming teacher to the remote learning program?
12. Based on your experience, what preparation do you believe teachers require to teach online?
13. What strategies do you use to help students speak up and establish relationships with other students?
14. How are students being motivated to use the French language in different contexts?
15. What authentic opportunities are accessible for online French learners?

16. What is your level of comfort in teaching different subjects online?
17. How are you reflecting on your teaching strategies in order to strengthen your online pedagogy?
18. What are you doing to support students and help them become more aware of their mental health needs?
19. What are some ways in which teachers can provide exemplars for parents to follow when they work with their kids?
20. How do you communicate as a teacher what work is required and what work is expected? For example, how is more independent work, such as independent reading, being scheduled/set up in children's daily routines? How are these activities accounted for and who is responsible for the record keeping of such activities?

### **Students 5-8**

#### **(Communication - Learning environment - Pedagogy)**

If you brought something with you that represents your experiences as a learner, tell us what you brought.

If you didn't bring anything, what could be something that would represent your experience as a remote learner.

1. What is it that you like about being able to go to school from home?
2. Describe for me what a typical day of remote learning looks like for you?
3. What have you learned about time management?
4. What kinds of things do you do with your whole class?
5. What kinds of things do you do in small groups?
6. What kinds of things do you do with the teacher?
7. What strategies does your teacher use to help you keep track of the assigned work?
8. What methods are you using in class for digital interaction?
9. How are you communicating with your online peers?
10. How are you communicating with the teacher?
11. How is your day structured with regards to work and breaks?
12. How do you keep in touch with your friends during remote learning?
13. How is it different to share your work in an online environment?
14. How have your assignments changed with remote learning?
15. How do you know as a student what work is required and what work is expected? For example, how is more independent work, such as independent reading, being scheduled/set up in your daily routines? How are these activities accounted for and who is responsible for the record keeping of such activities?

### **Students K-4**

#### **(Communication - Learning environment - Pedagogy)**

If you brought something with you that represents your experiences as a learner, tell us what you brought.

If you didn't bring anything, what could be something that would represent your experience as a remote learner.

1. What is it that you like about being able to go to school from home?
2. Describe for me what a typical day of remote learning looks like for you?
3. What kinds of things do you do with your whole class?
4. What kinds of things do you do in small groups?
5. What kinds of things do you do with the teacher?
6. How is it different to share your work in an online environment?
7. How is/are recess/breaks structured in your home schooling?
8. Who decides when to take the recess/breaks? And how long are they?
9. Many of you said you miss your friends from school. How do you cope with missing your friends?
10. How do you keep connected with your friends from school?
11. What can you tell me about the types of work you are given to do?
12. How has your work changed with remote learning?
13. How does your teacher help you keep track of your work?
14. How are you communicating with the teacher?
15. How do you know as a student what work is required and what work is expected? For example, how is more independent work, such as independent reading, being scheduled/set up in your daily routines? How are these activities accounted for and who is responsible for the record keeping of such activities?

## **Parents**

### **(Child - Successful pedagogy - Parental role)**

1. How have you set up your working space?
2. What are the ways in which rural remote learning aligns with your child's learning needs and preferences?
3. How has being involved in remote learning strengthened communication with your children and made it easier to talk about their learning?
4. What kinds of remote field trips have your children experienced?
5. What do your children say about their favourite remote learning activities?
6. Through being able to observe your children in the Westman program, what new insights do you have about them as learners?
7. How has your awareness about your children's education changed since the beginning of the remote learning program?
8. How has your understanding of schooling, the education system, pedagogy or school programming changed?
9. How have your attitudes/opinions about teachers shifted?
10. What impacts has this remote learning program had on your children in terms of finding new hobbies, new activities, new social interactions inside and outside of class times?

11. What are the indicators that your child is flourishing through the personal attention they are receiving in the remote learning environment?
12. What kinds of support are you looking for as a parent of a remote learner?
13. How does the amount of virtual contact your child has in the program compare to what you think they need? Why?
14. What might be some of the challenges for students trying to focus in their homes where they have access to leisure activities?
15. What are the differences in experiences of parents dealing with one child and those with siblings during remote learning?
16. How do you define the success of your child as a learner?
17. When things are going well, what is happening? What supports your child to be engaged?
18. If it is relevant, what are you noticing about your child's social interactions online compared to their in-person social interactions?
19. What are you noticing about the activities your child does not like? What are some of the factors that might impact whether an activity becomes enjoyable?
20. What are some strategies you are using as parents to motivate your children to complete assignments they do not like?
21. What specifically does your child appreciate about their teacher?
22. What kinds of experiences has your child had online that allowed them to be **vicarious** at home?
23. What are components of your child's daily/weekly remote learning routine?
24. What have you incorporated into your routine with your child to enhance their ability to focus on remote learning?
25. If you feel that things are going well for you during the remote learning, what contributes to it working well?
26. What skills have you developed to help your child manage their school assignments?
27. How do you know as a parent what work is required and what work is expected? For example, how is more independent work, such as independent reading, being scheduled/set up in children's daily routines? How are these activities accounted for and who is responsible for the record keeping of such activities?
28. As a parent, what kind of information are you able to access to know about your children's assignments and how do you access them?
29. What are the factors that allow your child to focus on the school assignments? Or in contrast, what are the aspects that contribute to their distraction?
30. What are some ways you have found to incorporate physical movement and time outdoors into your child's day?
31. What are other opportunities have you been able to provide to your child to get together with their friends?



32. How do you get to know all the resources in a program (e.g., Teams can read text aloud for you in English and French).
33. How do you feel about the structured time of classes that your child has?
34. As parents, how do you find information about how to use the programs your child uses during remote learning? How do you organize passwords/log in information / connectivity?
35. Parents have identified the following factors as likely to influence sustainability of the program: Parents working at home or in the workplace, access to technology, equipment that is borrowed from the school, teacher workload, quality of the teachers, and the availability of French Immersion teachers. How comfortable would you be in letting your child continue in the program if these factors were addressed?
36. The province has offered parents a choice for in-classroom remote learning, how do you think you child's experience would be different if they were in that program?
37. What translation resources are you aware of?