

**Entering a New Market:
Oxford University Press Canada's Foray into
French-as-a-Second-Language Publishing**

by

Robyn Erin Matthew

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Approval

Name: **Robyn Matthew**

Degree: **Master of Publishing**

Project: **Entering a New Market:
Oxford University Press Canada's Foray
into French-as-a-Second-Language Publishing**

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Rowland Lorimer
Senior Supervisor
Director, Master of Publishing Program
Simon Fraser University

Dr. John Maxwell
Supervisor
Assistant Professor, Master of Publishing Program
Simon Fraser University

Dr. Cécile Sabatier
Directrice de thèse
Professeure adjointe, Faculté d'éducation
Simon Fraser University

Meredith Oberfrank
Industry Supervisor
FSL Department
Oxford University Press Canada

Date Approved:

May 30, 2007



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Abstract

This report examines French-as-a-second-language (FSL) education in Canada from a publisher's perspective, specifically that of Oxford University Press.

The seven chapters of this report provide an overall picture of Oxford's entry into the Canadian FSL market and reveal how the Press worked to establish itself in that market. Part one identifies three main FSL publishers in Canada with a special focus on Oxford University Press. It also examines the role of the Competition Bureau and how various mergers in the industry inadvertently enabled Oxford to enter the market. Part two details the conception, development, marketing and sales of the *Communi-Quête* series, Oxford's first foray into FSL publishing. It also outlines the numerous considerations required at each stage of the publishing process. Part three evaluates the *Communi-Quête* series' success in the marketplace, and the likelihood of Oxford remaining in the FSL market by producing another FSL series in the future.

Keywords: *Communi-Quête*, Oxford University Press Canada (OUP); French-as-a-Second-Language publishing (FSL); competition bureau; mergers; Core French

To all students struggling with French

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One desire has driven, propelled and motivated me over the last seven years: to develop French textbooks. With this goal in mind, I enrolled in the Master of Publishing program. This report symbolizes the fulfillment of this ambition and the beginning of a profession rooted in passion. Many people deserve thanks for giving me the opportunity and the tools to improve French education in Canada and the educational resources available to students. I would like to recognize them now.

My passion for French resulted from the teachings of one extraordinary teacher from the University of British Columbia: Richard Holdaway. Thanks to his efforts, I went from a student who loathed French to one who loves it. My desire to help students struggling in French the way I once did in high school began in his class and continued in subsequent years from the work of his colleagues: David Rogers, Anne Scott, Jocelyne Baverel and Jacques Bodolec. They all provided with me the skills I needed to succeed. In 2002, I received a double major in English and French.

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Chapter 1: French-as-a-Second-Language Publishers in Canada

French-as-a-Second-Language: New Revenue Stream for Publishers

French-as-a-second-language (FSL) education first appeared in the Canadian school system as a pilot program in the Anglophone community of St. Lambert, Quebec in 1965. Since then, educational initiatives in French language instruction have continued to maintain their popularity—a state of affairs Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau served to strengthen in 1968 with the signing of the *Official Languages Act*, which recognized French as one of the country's two official languages.

To improve FSL education, the federal government has continually provided funds to encourage the teaching of French throughout Canada. In 1970–1971 and 1978–79, for instance, it poured more than 1 billion dollars into bilingual education (Fraser, 188). The federal government's commitment to bilingualism and second language learning in Canadian schools has led to increased enrolment figures and a popularity for French programs that continues today.

Over the last forty years, the Canadian federal government has continually funded FSL education. In 2003, it renewed its commitment to French programs by allocating \$137 million, over a five-year term, to second-language education through the *Action Plan for Official Languages* (CPF, 2003, 3). An undeterminable portion of these funds indirectly benefits publishers, as French teachers in every province use them to purchase resources for the classroom, but this was not always the case.

When French-as-a-second-language courses first started in Canada in 1965, FSL publishing was not yet established as a viable market. Educational publishers were not nearly as interested in producing FSL products as they are today, so it was difficult for teachers to acquire resources. “In the beginning, we had no books or programs,” states French teacher Raymond Lemoine. “My job is easier now: publishers have finally come around after seeing that a profit is to be made from French [learning] materials” (*Teacher*, Nov/Dec 2003, p. 8). Interest in and funding for French programs has led to a healthy demand for French-as-a-second-language textbooks, and FSL publishing programs have grown in relation to the demand for FSL education.

French-language programs are now required courses in many provinces, and as such have become a cultural staple in most young Canadians' lives. Learning French is a right of passage for many students in the Canadian education system and represents a shared experience that unites Canadians and contributes to their sense of national identity. Today, over 2 million students nationwide are enrolled in French-as-a-second-language programs, both French immersion and Core French. An explanation of both terms follows.

French immersion is a full-time program directed at English-speaking students that teaches a variety of subjects in French and dedicates approximately 75 percent (708 hours) of the 945 hours of the year's instructional time to the language at the elementary school level; 60 percent (567 hours) at the junior high level; and 40 percent (378 hours) at the senior high level (Plan Twenty-Thirteen, 2004, p. 28). Core French, however, consists of a French-language course taught within the English curriculum, and students receive instruction for a minimum of 30 to 40 minutes per day over ten months. Because Core French is a single course, considerably less classroom time, approximately 96.5 hours per school year, is devoted to French-language learning than in the immersion program. According to *Heritage Canada's* French programs consultant, Sally Rehorick, "[most] Canadian students take Core French" (Plan Twenty-Thirteen, 2004, p.34). With more than 1.5 million students enrolled in Core French (CPF, 2004, p. 72) throughout the country today compared to approximately 500,000 in French immersion, it is clearly the more lucrative market of the two, representing approximately 75 percent of all potential FSL textbook sales in Canada.

As enrolment numbers increased over the years, Core French became an important market to capture for Canadian educational publishers and called for the creation of domestic learning materials to satisfy this growing sector. Astute publishers soon recognized the enormous market potential for Core French, and early market entrants capitalized on this niche market and expanded their businesses considerably as a result of this new revenue stream. The FSL market experienced a revival in the early twenty-first century after a series of mergers in the industry drastically reduced the number of FSL publishers in Canada, creating an opportunity for Oxford University Press Canada to enter the market and expand its own publishing operations from social studies and language arts to French-as-a-second-language.

In 2001, Oxford began preparing to enter the market by establishing its first FSL department. I spent my internship working within this department from June 6, 2005 to September 9, 2005. That internship put me in a position to examine the development of Oxford's fledgling FSL publishing program and its *Communi-Quête* series for Core French students in grades 7–9 (grades 8–10 in British Columbia). This series, of unprecedented size for Oxford, includes 18 student books (24–32 pages each) spanning three grade levels; 18 national teacher resource books (140 pages each); 18 Ontario teacher resource books (160 pages each); 18 workbooks (48 pages each); 18 reproducible masters (48 pages each); 14 CDs and 14 videos. Now that the three-year development cycle for the series has come to a close, it is a propitious time to analyze Oxford's entrance into the market and the challenges that it faced as a new FSL publisher.

To understand Oxford's evolution into FSL publishing, it is first important to understand Oxford Canada's history and why it endeavoured to enter the FSL market, as it was not without difficulty. Pearson Education and Thomson-Nelson, Canada's two largest educational publishers, were already selling textbooks in this high-stakes market. With strong competition and substantial start-up costs, what convinced Oxford, a small publisher, that it could enter this unfamiliar market and successfully compete?

Oxford University Press: Brief History

After more than five hundred years of publishing, Oxford University Press has become the world's largest university press with its books in more than fifty countries. As a department of Oxford University, the Press remains in Oxford, England where its headquarters are still located on Great Clarendon Street. From its home base, the Press oversees the actions of its International division, which now consists of twelve branches around the world: United States since 1896; Canada, 1904; Australia, 1908; India, 1912; South Africa, 1915; Pakistan, 1952; Kenya, 1954; China, 1961; Malaysia, 1969; Spain, 1992; Mexico, 1994; and Tanzania, 2002.

In all these years of publishing and expansion, Oxford had not published any French-as-a-second-language resources until a series of timely events enabled its Canadian branch to enter the market. The first such event was a set of mergers and acquisitions in the publishing industry that characterized the second half of the twentieth century.

Oxford in a Climate of Consolidation

When Oxford University Press entered the Canadian market in 1904, only three other educational publishers were on the Canadian landscape: Copp Clark Book Company, W.J. Gage Company and the Methodist Book Room, none of which exist today as single entities. They have all either merged with other companies or been completely acquired.

1. **Copp Clark Book Company:** 1841–1998; is now a part of Pearson Education. In 1970, it merged with Addison-Wesley, which later merged with Simon & Shuster in 1978 before becoming part of Pearson Education in 1998.
2. **W.J. Gage Company:** 1844–1970; was sold to American publisher Scott Foresman. It is now part of Thomson-Nelson.
3. **Methodist Book Room:** 1829–1919; changed names three times during its lifetime from the Methodist Book and Publishing House to William Briggs to Ryerson Press in 1919, taking the surname of its editor. In 1970, it became McGraw-Hill Ryerson after a merger with the US educational publisher McGraw-Hill.

None of these publishers were producing FSL textbooks before the seventies, which was a tumultuous time to enter the market and a time when many publishers needed a financial boost to their sales.

In the seventies, according to Rowland Lorimer, “US branch plants were busy moving into the [Canadian] educational market,” (Lorimer, 1997, p.70), and were increasing their dominance in educational publishing in Canada. The perception was that American companies were threatening to overtake the country’s indigenous publishing industry—the entire Canadian educational market seemed at stake. The textbooks sold to schools, oftentimes, were American textbooks refurbished with Canadian examples and content: same textbook, slightly altered. The educational textbooks did not reflect Canadian realities, and as a result, they did not instill a strong sense of national identity in young Canadians (Lorimer, 1997, p.70).

French-as-a-second-language was the one area of publishing that American branch plants could not enter by simply altering the contents of an American textbook for the Canadian market. FSL was an important subject and a niche market in Canada that demanded original products. The need for FSL materials created a distinct market for textbooks in Canada, and Canadian-based publishers, such as Copp Clark, and Canadian branches of foreign companies, such as Addison-Wesley and Prentice-Hall, were able to capture. All three became FSL publishers. Each, however, was eventually acquired by larger foreign firms when another wave of consolidation hit Canada’s commercial educational publishers in the eighties, nineties and into the millennium. These mergers and acquisitions reduced the number of educational publishers in the Canadian market considerably making it difficult for smaller companies like Oxford to compete.

Multinational firms, such as Canadian-owned Thomson-Nelson and British-owned Pearson Education, were now dominating the educational market. Not only did Thomson-Nelson and Pearson Education increase their businesses by acquiring the competition, but their strategic mergers eventually led to their entry into the FSL market. Those mergers also unintentionally laid the foundation for Oxford Canada’s entry into the FSL market as well.

Oxford’s Competition and their Market Positions

1. Thomson-Nelson

Thomson-Nelson represents the successful combining of two major publishing entities: Thomas Nelson, Inc. and Thomson Corporation. Thomas Nelson, Inc. began as a bookseller in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1798. Today, it is part of one of the world’s largest educational publishers. Thomson Corporation, on the other hand, found its start in newspapers. In 1934, Roy

Thomson acquired the Timmins Press, the first of many newspapers he would come to own in Canada, the United Kingdom and the US. Thomson Corporation grew to become the multi-billion dollar, international company that it is today by acquiring many smaller companies in the following four global market groups: legal and regulatory, learning, financial, scientific and healthcare.

In 1961, the Thomson Corporation decided to launch and acquire more business and consumer magazines, and book publishing companies. One of the company's first purchases was Thomas Nelson, Inc. in 1962—a company that had been publishing in Canada since 1914. Under the Thomson Corporation, Thomson-Nelson specifically set out in 1998 to develop more indigenous Canadian products. Over the next five years, the company doubled its revenues through internal growth and strategic acquisitions of Canadian educational publishers: Reidmore in 2000; Irwin and Arnold in 2002; Gage Learning Corporation and Norbry in 2003; Groupe Modulo in 2004; Harcourt Education Canada in 2005 and Les Editions Duval, Inc. in 2006.

Today, Thomson-Nelson is the largest Canadian-owned and operated educational publisher of elementary, high school, college, and consumer publications, as well as a participant in emerging markets in business, industry, and government.

2. Pearson Education Canada

A multinational corporation, Pearson Education's core business was not founded in publishing but construction. In 1844, Pearson began as a small building firm in England that eventually developed into one of the world's largest building contractors during the Industrial Revolution. Over the years, ownership of the company has passed down through the family until becoming a publicly traded company on the London Stock Exchange in 1969 with interests ranging from banking to investment to publishing.

Pearson's first foray into the media business occurred in 1921 with the acquisition of a group of UK provincial newspapers known as the Westminster Press. The publishing arm of the company continued to grow with the purchase of *The Financial Times* in 1957 and Longman in 1968—a year before Pearson went public. Pearson continued to strengthen its presence in the publishing industry by purchasing Penguin in 1970, Addison-Wesley in 1988 and HarperCollins Educational division in 1996, which it merged with Addison-Wesley Longman. Strategic acquisitions have enabled Pearson to emerge as a publishing powerhouse whose imprints bear the names of over 100 educational publishers of the past, such as Benjamin-Cummings and Scott Foresman. The masterstroke, however, was the acquisition of Simon & Schuster's educational

operations in 1998, as it led to the creation of Pearson Education as its own entity within the London-based international media company.

Over the years, Simon & Schuster had been aggressively acquiring its own educational businesses, which began with Prentice-Hall in 1984. Other educational publishers soon found themselves under the Simon & Schuster umbrella as well: Ginn & Company, Allyn & Bacon, Silver Burdett Company, Macmillan Publishing USA and many others until its parent company Viacom sold them all to Pearson who subsequently merged them with their Addison-Wesley Longman assets to create Pearson Education. In less than a decade, Pearson Education has become one of Canada's leading educational publishers.

In the end, Pearson's extensive mergers and acquisitions empowered both Thomson-Nelson and Oxford University Press to enter the FSL market.

Oxford Canada's Evolving Market Position

Mergers dominated educational publishing in Canada for much of the eighties, nineties and into the new millennium. Those mergers considerably reduced the pool of publishers. Oxford has watched its competition dwindle over the years, making it the only one of the original dozen, small-sized publishers remaining to compete against the multinationals. Although small, Oxford Canada has been forging ahead, undaunted.

During the acquisition frenzy, an attempt was apparently made to purchase Oxford Canada, but it was soon determined that the company was not for sale. According to Canadian President Joanna Gertler, Oxford "can never be sold." It could sell its assets, but the company as a whole could never be sold. As a university press and non-profit organization, Oxford is a unique publishing entity in the market: not only does it receive a tax-exemption, but it also remits approximately fifty-percent of its revenues to Oxford University every year. Because the Press could never be acquired, it needed to compete in order to survive in this changing market.

As a niche publisher with only five-percent market share, Oxford realized that it needed to strengthen its position to remain relevant in the Canadian market. Although the Press could not be merged, it was not above acquiring some assets of its own. In 1995, Oxford acquired McClelland and Stewart's college list, which boosted revenues, as did a distribution arrangement with a mid-sized American textbook publisher Mayfield, a contract that McGraw-Hill-Ryerson took over in 2000. Oxford also became the exclusive distributor for Hodder Arnold (UK) and Scott-Jones (US) in Canada.

To remain competitive, Oxford Canada also set out to diversify its publishing operations. Since opening in 1904, Oxford has published more than 3,250 titles and, currently, has more than five hundred Canadian titles in print. It publishes approximately fifty to sixty new titles annually from its three divisions: the Trade and Reference Division, the College Division, and the Education Division. According to the company's website, the Press has "approximately 35 percent of sales coming from local products and the rest from imports." Primarily known as a social studies publisher in the educational market, the Press was seeking additional ways to expand its publishing operations in other related fields and thus increase its revenue stream. By diversifying its domestic operations, Oxford was aiming to improve its position in the Canadian market. It was struggling until one merger created the growth opportunity that Oxford was seeking.

The Merger that Fuelled Oxford's FSL Program

In August 1998, Pearson Education acquired the educational assets of Simon & Schuster, including control of Prentice-Hall Canada. The acquisition gave Pearson a monopoly in both elementary mathematics and French-as-a-second-language publishing. Pearson's prior acquisitions of Addison-Wesley Longman, Copp Clark Limited and les Editions du Renouveau Pédagogique, meant the publisher would be the sole provider of French-as-a-second-language textbooks in Canada. With the purchase of Addison-Wesley in 1988, Pearson produced the FSL series *Passages* (copyright 1991). In 1998, it brought Copp Clark Pitman, acquiring in the process *Destinations* (copyright 1990). With the assets of Prentice-Hall Canada Pearson acquired in 1998, it would also own *Entre Amis* (copyright 1990), which had obtained 50 percent market share in all provinces outside of Ontario. These three textbooks saturated the FSL market for grades 7-9, making it difficult for other publishers, such as Oxford, to feasibly enter the market with their own indigenous FSL products.

This monopolistic state of affairs did not sit well with the Competition Bureau, a regulatory organization designed to maintain competition amongst businesses in Canada. To restore competition in the market, the Competition Bureau required Pearson Education to sell some of its titles from its Prentice-Hall acquisition. "To address these concerns, Pearson agreed to divest three of its FSL titles, thereby introducing new competitors into these important educational markets" (Press Release, Competition Bureau, 27 August 1999).

Because of the Competition Bureau's intervention in the market, Pearson in 1999 sold to Gage Learning Corporation all three of its Prentice-Hall acquired FSL titles: *Acti-Vie* (grades 4-

6), *Entre Amis* (grades 7-9) and *En Direct* (grades 11-12). With this sale, two FSL publishers were now competing in the Canadian market. One of the Competition Bureau's stipulations in the divestiture agreement was that Pearson make reasonable efforts to sell these programs to Canadian publishers (Press Release, Canadian Heritage, 27 Aug. 1999), which Gage most certainly was. Already market leaders in English, language arts, social studies and reference, Gage happily added FSL to its list of subjects it published. In 2003, Thomson-Nelson acquired Gage, and inherited its FSL program. At the time, the firm noted:

The addition of Gage will allow Nelson customers to access a broader range of high quality, innovative products in a new market—French-as-a-second-language. This market has long been a publishing objective for Nelson and brings the business closer to being a complete solutions provider for Canadian educators.

This acquisition is an excellent fit with our current offerings in the language arts, social studies, arts and reference materials, and gives us a strong position in the French-as-a-second-language market, confirmed George W. Bergquist, President of Nelson. (Press release, Thomson-Nelson, 2 July 2003.)

Aside from the Competition Bureau empowering other publishers to compete in the market, so do mergers themselves. Mergers can create opportunities not only for companies combining their assets but also for their competition. Companies tend to merge to consolidate operations and maximize strengths. By joining forces, merging companies also eliminate competition in the marketplace and thus make it more difficult for others to compete. Sometimes, however, mergers weaken some of their overall effect in the marketplace and can actually make competitors more competitive.

Large companies merging do not always realize the expertise they have in their midst and downsizing employees represents a loss of the professional riches acquired with the company. Mergers oftentimes leave professional debris in the marketplace for other publishers to employ and use to their advantage: Oxford Canada, for instance, hired a former Prentice-Hall manager whose knowledge of FSL publishing created an opportunity for Oxford to enter the market itself and establish its own FSL department. By acquiring Prentice-Hall, Pearson essentially knocked one FSL competitor out of the market and created another one in Oxford Canada.

Seizing Opportunity: Oxford Canada Enters the FSL Market

Oxford Canada entered Core French publishing as the result of a combination of factors: the foremost was timing. In the new millennium, FSL publishing was in a state of rebirth. The federal government had renewed its commitment and investment in FSL programs, and Ministries of Education were calling for new resources. Persistent mergers along with the Competition Bureau's involvement in the market created opportunity for new players, such as Oxford.

For more than a century, Oxford Canada enjoyed a reputation as a social studies publisher before determining that it could successfully publish French-as-a-second-language textbooks and compete against other FSL publishers vying for the same market. In the initial years of FSL publishing, Oxford watched other publishers enter the market and later be acquired by larger publishers, most notably Thomson-Nelson and Pearson Education. Unlike its competition, Oxford was not yet inclined to capitalize on the FSL market, nor was it in 1999 when Pearson's divested FSL assets came available for purchase. The Press did not seriously start considering entering the FSL publishing until 2001. Instead of acquiring assets or a company already active in the market, Oxford faced the challenge of developing its own indigenous FSL series, from the ground up. Meeting this challenge was made feasible by an opportunity to hire experienced staff with a history of success creating FSL textbooks.

When Pearson merged Addison-Wesley with Prentice-Hall in 1998, many senior managers were laid off, and a number of these highly skilled individuals went to work for the competition: one of them was Mary-Lynne Meschino, vice-president of Prentice-Hall's school division. With 22 years publishing experience, she found an appreciative home for her talents at Oxford. Impressed with Meschino's knowledge of the industry, Oxford Canada's president Joanna Gertler hired her in 1998, eventually making her vice-president and the director of Oxford's education division.

As the director, Meschino strove to ensure that Oxford undertook lucrative projects that would meet market demands and projected sales budgets. Her most significant contribution to Oxford's publishing program came from her contacts and expertise publishing FSL textbooks. With a Master of Arts degree in French literature and experience working on Prentice-Hall's highly successful, FSL series *Acti-Vie* for grades 4–6 (grades 5–7 in British Columbia where students start FSL a year later than other provinces), Meschino recognized an ideal opportunity for Oxford to expand its scope by entering the FSL market.

Meschino brought to Oxford not only the skills, knowledge and publishing expertise she acquired at Prentice-Hall, but also the freelance team that conceived and developed its *Acti-Vie*

series. Since publishers do not commit to freelancers or offer them the benefits that full-time employees receive, they run the risk of those “temporary” employees working for another publishing house and sharing their trade secrets. If publishers do not offer any loyalty through contracts, freelancers are essentially “free” to work for whatever publisher they choose or that chooses them, which is what happened with the development team of Prentice-Hall’s *Acti-Vie* series. Oxford hired their key contributors to create its own fledgling FSL department and series for grades 7–9 (grades 8–10 in British Columbia), entitled *Communi-Quête*.

The Complexity Continues

Oxford entered the French-as-a-second-language market through a complicated series of events. No less complicated, however, was the birth of the Oxford’s FSL department and its *Communi-Quête* series. The challenges had only just begun.

Despite Oxford’s best efforts to minimize the difficulties associated with publishing for an unfamiliar market, they proved just as strong as those related to entering the FSL market. As a first-time FSL publisher, Oxford underestimated the challenges it would face at every stage of the publishing process, from conception to sales. Although Oxford hired a qualified staff of core contributors to author the series, the project overwhelmed the rest of the supporting staff of writers, editors, marketers and sales representatives who all had no previous experience developing a series of this nature, size and complexity. The *Communi-Quête* series was Oxford Canada’s largest undertaking to date.

The following chapters identify the specific roles that staff members held and also pinpoint some of the internal and external struggles that they encountered: hiring qualified staff; meeting curriculum requirements; satisfying the needs and purchasing habits of nine provinces; servicing a large customer base with a small sales force; understanding the market and estimating its sales potential; revising sales plans; missing deadlines; overspending and underselling; not delivering on projected sales. Oxford entered the market to expand its publishing portfolio and increase its revenues, yet it found itself in a precarious financial position that it would not have had it not published the series. The big question: was the risk worth it?

Throughout its three-year development cycle, Oxford had numerous reasons to question its resolve to continue publishing the *Communi-Quête* series, but it stayed its course. The lessons to be learned from Oxford’s first experience as an FSL publisher are numerous, but the primary one, as this report will show, is that experience has its advantages. Success comes from commitment and knowing the market.

Chapter 2: Beginnings of the *Communi-Quête* Series

Oxford's Organization of Labour: Key Players Developing *Communi-Quête*

The creation of a new textbook series involves the work of many people. The following chapters describe the roles of the key individuals who were involved in bringing the *Communi-Quête* series into being. Each held specific roles and entered at various points in the publishing process. The first employee to become involved in the series was the director of the education division.

The Director of the Education Division's Role

The majority of the work of the director of the education division lies in the conception of new projects and the creation of proposals. The other portion consists of putting them into action once approved by the president and finance manager. As the director of the education division, Meschino conceptualized and created a proposal to enter the FSL market with the *Communi-Quête* series. She analyzed the market to determine if it could bear another FSL textbook and assessed the initial investment and possible financial gain before submitting to the president and the finance manager a proposal.

The Director's FSL Proposal and its Analysis of the Market

In 2001, Meschino put together a twenty-five-page proposal, entitled *Publishing Proposal for French-as-a-second-language Program*, for Oxford's Group Strategy Committee. It detailed the market potential of a FSL series for grades 7 through 9 and also assessed how Oxford could position itself in an unfamiliar market. Further, it explained why this new FSL series would be a success. The proposal not only examined the market but also the feasibility of the project.

A proposal has to show the full life of the program in terms of costs and sales. A clear, well-conceived outline, essentially a plan of action for the seven- to eight-year lifetime of the project, is a must. The main crux of the FSL proposal was based on Oxford capitalizing on the unattended needs of the "national market," which includes all English-speaking provinces, except Ontario. According to the publishing proposal,

The most currently published FSL programs (copyright 2001) have been designed exclusively for Ontario. While the publishers of these programs are promising adaptations for provinces outside of Ontario, there is a strong desire for a brand-new program, designed especially for the FSL market outside of Ontario. (Meschino, *Communi-Quête* proposal, p. 3).

With over 903,420 students in Core French (CPF, 2004, p. 72), Ontario represents 56 percent of all Core French students in the country, making it the largest FSL market and a highly lucrative market for publishers to capture. With such a substantial portion of the market, Ontario has the economic clout to make publishers pay attention to its wants: it is a market difficult to ignore, and yet Oxford attempted to do just that.

Ontario's highly grammar-focused, curriculum requirements, are so different from the national market that they necessitate separate resources to be developed, ones that Pearson and Gage Learning were willing to create for the lucrative Core French market of 336,135 students (61 percent) in grades 7-9. This initial focus on the Ontario market left the other 39 percent of the Core French market for grades 7-9 inadequately served. While Pearson was developing *On y va!*, a series catering to the Ontario market for grades 7 to 8, and Gage Learning Corporation, before selling to Thomson-Nelson, was developing the *Tout ados* series for the same market, Oxford looked to gain a competitive advantage by developing a series tailored to the expressed wants and needs of the national market.

Many teachers outside of Ontario were eager for new resources reflecting the realities specific to their provinces, and Oxford wanted to be the first to market, as they knew that Pearson, and most likely Gage, would be creating a series for the national market after the Ontario market. Despite minimal support in the West for French and a significantly smaller market overall, Oxford determined it could command enough of the national market to warrant a foray into FSL publishing. To ensure adoptions and the success of the series, Oxford faced one critical task: it had to design a series that met the curriculum expectations of the national market.

Realities of the National Market: Curriculum Expectations

To understand how Oxford could potentially capitalize on the national market, it is first important to understand how the national market came into being and what it seeks from its resources because its needs are quite different from those of Ontario.

The national market is a relatively new concept that evolved out of an attempt to create a national curriculum for Core French. In 1985, the *Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers* (CASLT) acquired funding from the Department of the Secretary of State for the National Core French Study (NCFS), which was designed as a collaborative project between the two groups to revise the methodology behind FSL education in Canada. The Council of the Ministers of Education worked to involve every province in the study—the first step in reaching a national consensus on Core French. Each province provided funding, designated a representative

to contribute to the study and mounted a provincial committee to examine the ensuing documents and recommendations from the study, thereby insuring equal commitment and concrete participation in the work by all provinces. FSL publishers were especially anxious for a general consensus on methodology, as it would facilitate their ability to publish textbooks that would satisfy the entire country, but it was not to be. The final report called for drastic changes in the teaching of FSL that every province accepted, except Ontario. Because Ontario did not embrace the NCFS and the communicative/experiential approach it promoted, the textbook market for Core French is now fractured into the Ontario market and the national market. The only consistent element provincially was that every FSL textbook be written entirely in French with no English.

Before the National Core French Study, the FSL curriculum focused primarily on grammar and content rather than speech and communication. The communicative/ experiential approach the study advocated represented a more learner-centred approach that did not exist before. It encouraged students to speak French and actually use the language skills they were learning to communicate. This approach outlined in the National Core French Study promoted a “multi-dimensional curriculum” (leBlanc, xi) that included four elements: (1) language, (2) a communicative/experiential component, (3) culture, and (4) general language education. This formula influenced curriculum development throughout the nineties in eight provinces across Canada: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

Although the NCFS revolutionized how second languages were taught in Canada, it was never intended to be a “‘ready-to-wear’ curriculum” (Tremblay, Duplantie, Huot), as such a document would bind every province to one immovable way of teaching that would defeat provincial autonomy. The National Core French Study was meant to provide the foundational methodology that every provincial Ministry of Education would interpret and adopt, as necessary, to develop its curriculum. Curriculum consultants in a given province thus collaborate to determine the learning objectives appropriate for each subject and grade level within the four elements that the study identifies. Each province then writes curriculum documents that publishers use to shape the contents of their FSL textbooks.

Since curriculum guidelines for FSL vary from province to province, publishers face a considerable feat of creating a single product that will satisfy each province’s educational needs and still capture a large enough market share to earn a profit. FSL publishers not only need to create resources that suit market needs, but also produce them when its customers are ready to buy. Thus, FSL publishers need to keep up-to-date on changes in curriculum in order to anticipate

the market. If they wait for “calls for resources” from a Ministry of Education, they can be too late to capture or even compete in the market.

In 2002, Oxford recognized an appetite for new resources in the FSL market, and a need for a fresh, new take on the National Core French Study. Timing had again played a factor in Oxford’s decision to enter the FSL market. The resources being used at that time for grades 7–9 (8–10 in British Columbia) were all created in the early nineties and had run their course. When first-generation FSL resources were created, the study had not been widely adopted. It called for such a drastic change in methodology that publishers and teachers had not fully internalized the communicative/experiential approach. Today, FSL teaching is more student-centred, as originally intended, and provincial curricula are reflecting these trends. A second generation of textbooks designed more closely to the NCFS, was needed, and Oxford’s foresight into market and curriculum needs led to the proposal for the *Communi-Quête* series:

Since the last adoption cycle, provincial guidelines have been revised to reflect the latest in pedagogical trends, thus creating a need for new resources. FSL programs currently used in schools were published in the early 1990s and do not reflect current issues and pedagogical trends; a great need is being expressed. (Meschino, *Communi-Quête* Proposal, 3)

The timing was right for new resources, but Mary-Lynne Meschino’s proposal still had to convince Oxford that it could successfully join the market.

Gaining Approval for the *Communi-Quête* series within Oxford

To gain internal approval, proposals must convince Oxford professionals of their worth, passing through a lengthy, multi-layer process of deliberation and careful consideration. These in-house professionals, from both the Canadian branch and the UK headquarters, offer their respective expertise and advice, and also identify any potential pitfalls. By eliminating troublesome or questionable areas at this stage, Oxford tries to minimize any future financial risks or problems. In undertaking such a thorough review, a broad spectrum of Oxford employees shares in the future success or failure of the company’s projects. Oxford looks to ensure that it is not wasting time, resources or finances with any risky, new projects: a series proposal such as *Communi-Quête* required a multi-million dollar investment and also the development of an entirely new department.

After drafting the proposal, the director of the education division seeks professional advice from the president, the finance manager and the production manager before transmitting it

to the managing director of the international division who also provides feedback and acts as an intermediary between the branches and the respective approval committees at Oxford UK. Once accepted, the managing director submits the proposal for final approval, either to the delegate committee or else the group strategy committee, if the project value exceeds more than \$250,000, which the *Communi-Quéte* series did. If the proposal needs further revision, the director sends it back to the branch with suggestions. The *Communi-Quéte* series underwent a couple revisions before the director of the international division deemed it ready for inspection by the group strategy committee.

The President of Oxford Canada's Role

As President of Oxford Canada, Joanna Gertler ensured that the Canadian branch met Oxford's larger financial objectives. Although the UK headquarters do not dictate how the branches should operate or what they should publish, Gertler reported to and consulted with Oxford UK on major publishing projects such as the *Communi-Quéte* series. For smaller projects, she relied on her staff, publishing proposals and her own judgement to guide the branch's projects. She saw herself as a figurehead more than a dictator. She believed in hiring experts, trusting their professional opinion and championing their projects. She did not tell her staff what to publish but let them come to her with ideas. She considered proposals from a business point of view and then watched, advised and provided feedback and support. Her aim was to facilitate her colleagues publishing initiatives and title proposals.

In educational publishing, federal and provincial government funding generally dictates publishing choices. According to Gertler, "[Funding] depends on who is in power and what they see as a priority." French is not considered an essential subject by many provincial governments, so it does not command as much funding or attention as mathematics or science. A good publishing proposal times the development and release of a textbook just right. Even the soundest publishing project, from its proposal forward, can experience difficulty if trends in funding or curriculum are no longer favourable.

Although Gertler is not a specialist in French, she recognized a prime opportunity to enter the FSL market and the possible growth that an indigenous FSL program could bring to Oxford. She worked with her colleagues at Oxford Canada to make it happen, one of whom was the finance manager.

The Finance Manager's Role

The financial manager also enters the life of a textbook or a series at its earliest stage: the proposal. Before any funds are invested, the financial manager creates a financial proposal, essentially a business plan, for the project to ensure profitability in the long term. Current financial manager Geoff Forguson ensures the proposal meets established corporate financial objectives in order to meld the vision of the proposal with financial feasibility. He prepares not only the costing for the project but also continues to advise on the finances throughout its life. His role consists of two parts:

1. Plan Construction: Forguson constructs a sound plan by consulting company experts, who offer specific details in terms of sales targets, cost of production, printing and manufacturing. Credible numbers are indispensable. Inaccurate numbers can cause unrealistic expectations, overestimates, or under-budgeting.

2. Plan Monitoring: A sound plan must be monitored to ensure that targets are met and actual costs reflect perceived costs. If not, adjustments and revisions are required to meet targets. From the outset, good monitoring is critical.

For the *Communi-Quête* series, Forguson worked alongside the director of the education division Mary-Lynne Meschino and sales manager Chris Allen to devise reasonable, mutually agreeable and financially sound figures for the series. This proposal was anything but standard. Many factors played a role, as the series proposal required more financial forecasting than it would have to publish one textbook: the series consists of three grade levels with six themes each. In all, it includes 18 student books, 18 workbooks, 14 CDs and videos, 18 teacher resource books and 18 language & strategy cards: starter kits are also available as class sets. With a three-year development cycle, the series required a large financial outlay. Normally, the margin for profit is set at ten percent. With larger projects, it is set higher because the publisher incurs more financial risk upfront. With the *Communi-Quête* series, for instance, every box set earning \$260.00 cost an estimated \$120.75 each, creating a return of over 54 percent to offset the upfront costs of producing the series.

As first-time FSL publishers, the financial projections could not be taken lightly, and they were not. The finances underwent five different revisions before the president, director of the education division, production manager and financial manager were prepared to sign off. The financial manager approached the project with reluctance, as he was displeased with the numbers. According to president Joanna Gertler, there were “challenges going into it” to make the financials work for a program selling outside of Ontario because those provinces, as noted, represented only 39 percent of the Core French market for grades 7–9 (8–10 in British Columbia).

A small market and a large sales territory for the *Communi-Quête* series increased the difficulty of publishing for the national market. With a substantial investment necessary to enter the market, creating a successful FSL program was of primary importance.

Once the initial financial plans are determined, careful scrutiny continues throughout the life of the project to ensure it remains on point. Every month, meetings are scheduled, for which Forguson compiles a list of all project expenditures for group discussion and troubleshooting. Every six months, the president reviews the financial forecast and devises a new action plan—an essential process the finance manager also oversees. His job is to forewarn of overspending that could possibly jeopardize the financial health of the project, which current financial manager Geoff Forguson summarizes with one important and insightful phrase: “If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.”

Proposal Approved

The director of the education division began drafting the proposal in September 2001, and it was approved in 2002. It took an estimated year for the proposal to go through all the necessary stages of acceptance: in-house approval, director of the international division’s approval, and group strategy committee approval. Many factors need consideration when reviewing financially demanding proposals, so, naturally, the process of evaluation takes time.

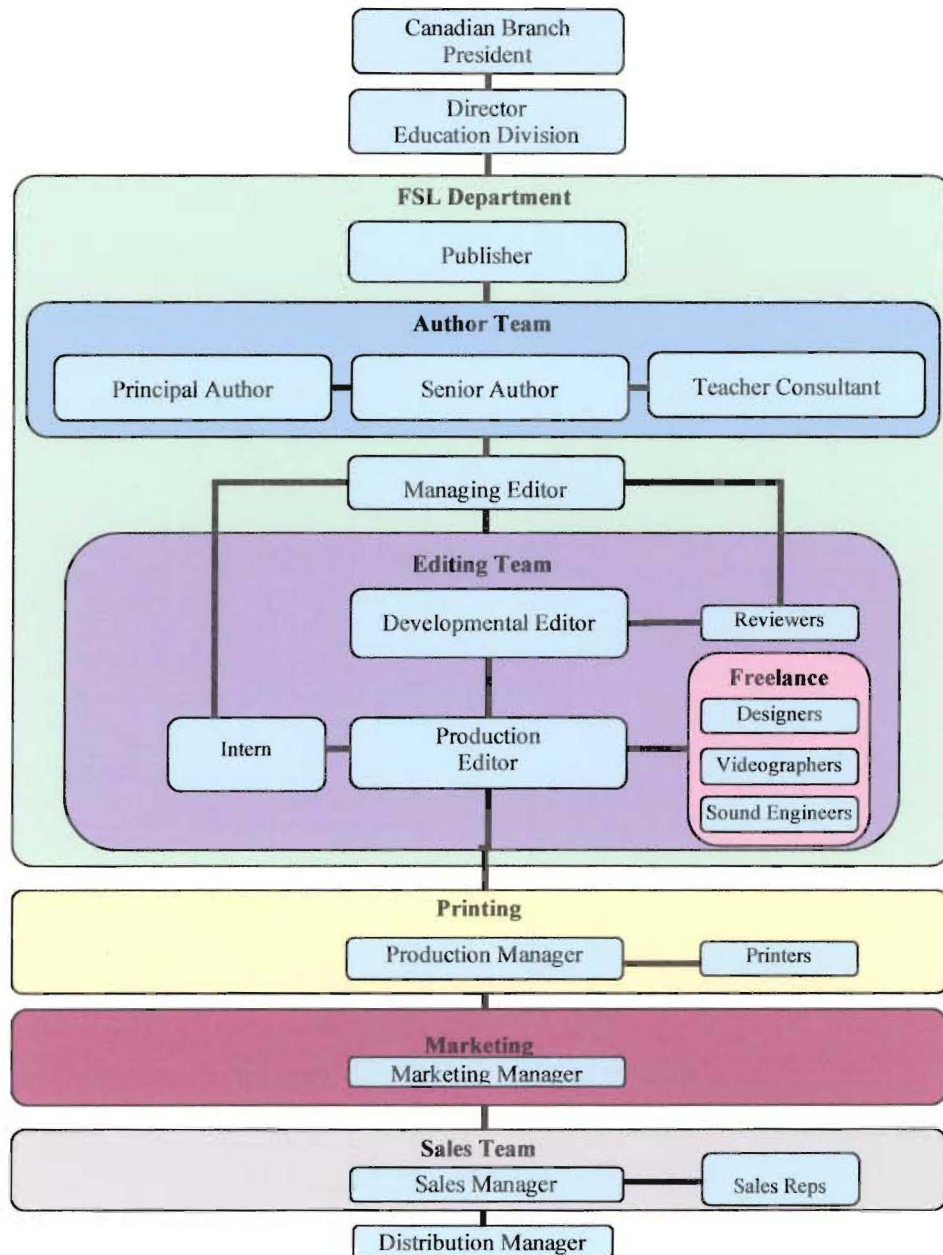
Once company-wide approval was achieved, the president, the finance manager and production manager all took a hands-off approach. The director of the education division, however, remained involved. Her role evolved from the first phase—conceiving the project and creating the proposal—to a second phase—putting the proposal into action. So large was the FSL project that the proposal called for the creation of a whole new department at Oxford Canada.

Chapter 3: The FSL Department at Oxford Canada

Developing Oxford's FSL Department

Using the proposal as a guideline, Meschino began creating the FSL department and hiring staff to develop its flagship series of French textbooks. The previous FSL experience of the publisher and the principal author facilitated the department set-up, as they already understood FSL department structure and the positions that needed filling.

Figure 1: Oxford's FSL Department



Working with the publisher and principal author, Meschino looked to establish a firm foundation for the series before taking a more hands-off approach and working in a more consultative manner with her main point of contact, the publisher. The director's role reduces to strict management of the series—the budget, timelines, and strategy—while her colleagues work directly with the FSL staff to bring the proposal to life.

Staff Structure of the FSL Department

Setting up a new department requires hiring the right employees. Fortunately, Mary-Lynne Meschino brought a ready-made network of contributors for the main positions of principal author, senior author, publisher, and managing editor. Without prior knowledge of FSL publishing and the proven credentials of the author team, the FSL series might have been considered an even greater financial gamble and thus an even tougher sell to Oxford as a feasible undertaking.

The difficulty Oxford faced in establishing its FSL department was finding a supporting cast of employees to publish a multi-million dollar FSL series, as the available positions required a unique skill set. The publishing industry faces the same problems as the teaching industry: finding employees with the necessary credentials in French.

In 1992, a *Canadian Education Association* (CEA) survey of school boards revealed that 58.8 percent experienced shortages of French teachers and that a great deal of out-of-field teaching (the teaching of subjects for which the teacher has had little or no training) was taking place. Ten years later, in 2002, the first *Bellwether Survey* was conducted to assess on a large scale the supply and demand for qualified French teachers in the country. The results indicated that the problem was as serious as ever, which creates challenges for both the education system and publishers, as they both draw from the same pool of candidates.

Educational publishers normally hire teachers or former teachers to develop the textbooks in their FSL departments. The persistent shortage of qualified teachers, however, not only weakens the employment pool but also the quality of French being taught, but also decreases the overall number of potential French experts who could possibly develop these French textbooks in the future. The industry is only as strong as its most qualified contributors. A weakened pool of textbook contributors ultimately jeopardizes the quality of the textbooks being produced and publishers' ability to capitalize on the market.

French is not a required course for graduation from high school (CPF, 2000, p. 29) or for admittance into most Canadian universities (Fraser, 197). According to Richard Gwyn author of *The Northern Magus*, “since no one needed to take French any longer to get into university, fewer

and fewer students spent time on the subject” (Fraser, 197). With the right encouragement and opportunities in place, high school and university students are more likely to become FSL teachers, FSL curriculum consultants, or future developers of FSL resources.

When Oxford entered the market in 2001, Pearson and Gage Learning Corporation were already publishing for FSL, so it proved more difficult for Oxford to find staff with the right qualifications in French to support the work of the experienced author team hired to develop the *Communi-Quête* series.

When I applied for the Oxford internship, the managing editor alluded to this selection pool shortage: “I do not often come across a candidate with your qualifications.” My long-term educational and professional purpose has always been to improve the standard of French education in Canada, so my credentials and experience are specific to the FSL field. Because the managing editor does not often encounter a lot of qualified applicants, she has had to manage her expectations. To fill available positions, she focuses on hiring employees who are not scared of the language. For her, strong French skills are helpful but not essential for the positions that support the author team.

The relevance of credentials, of course, depends on the position. The author team needs a strong grounding in the language, whereas production editors technically require less expertise. Textbook developers need an in-depth understanding of the language and the potential problems students encounter to be effective. Without the right education, knowledge and understanding of the French language, it is practically impossible to create FSL textbooks that students or teachers will find useful.

Speaking French and making French comprehensible to students in a textbook format are two completely different skills. Finding employees who can contribute to the latter task is a challenge for FSL publishers and their human resource departments. An ability to speak French does not necessarily mean someone can teach the language well (Rehorick 33) or create French textbooks that facilitate learning.

Even after initial hiring for the FSL department took place at Oxford, a change in staffing proved imperative to achieve the high standards intended for the *Communi-Quête* series. Although hiring new staff and training them causes delays in the project’s development, it is sometimes necessary and unavoidable to maintain quality. For instance, after the first five units of *Communi-Quête* level one were complete, new production editors were hired to ensure the proper development of the series.

The *Communi-Quête* Series Begins to Take Shape

The director of the education division and publisher worked together in the initial stages, organizing the FSL department and staff, and determining the name of the series. It took a year of brainstorming to decide on the series title, *Communi-Quête*.

The Publisher's Role

As the series publisher, Beverley Biggar, a FSL veteran and contributor to Prentice-Hall's *Acti-Vie* series, was responsible for developing the *Communi-Quête* series to meet market needs. She attends various conferences to network, reconnect with the teaching community and meet teachers face-to-face to determine what they need in textbooks and resource material: do teachers want more games for students? More exercises? More grammar rules? Once these types of questions are answered, the publisher then works with the FSL department to transfer those needs into classroom resources that teachers would purchase and find useful.

As Biggar was learning what teachers want, she was also raising awareness about the *Communi-Quête* series. The publisher represents the series at conferences throughout the country and also conducts informational sessions to inform teachers about how the series will accomplish learning objectives established in the curriculum. Meeting and interacting with different professionals in the FSL field enables publishers to meet potential candidates to conceive, write, and contribute to future textbooks.

Biggar also acts as the senior author. Her two jobs demand a substantial time commitment. The dual role also presents a conflict when talking to teachers because they expect her to hold one title, not both. Generally, she attempts to downplay the fact that she is also the senior author.

**Chapter 4:
The Author Team—
Writing and Editing;
Meeting and Managing
Curriculum Expectations**

Writing: The Importance of Authors in Developing a Credible Series

For successful FSL publishing, an experienced, recognized and capable author team is important. Developing textbooks takes work and a clear, concise concept. In Biggar's opinion, the author team "needs two people to balance it out:" the principal author and the senior author. Together, they are responsible for creating a product that teachers will approve and students will enjoy.

In addition to the principal author and the senior author, the author team includes a number of associate senior authors and teacher consultants. Aside from the principal author, Irene Bernard, who was raised speaking English and French and worked outside the office, the author team consisted of Anglophones, who learned French as a second language. Some teachers voiced concern that there were no authors with French last names working on the series and thus questioned its quality. According to Biggar, "second language learners should write it. Any program written by a Francophone is always too hard." Anglophones understand the challenges that other English-speaking second language learners face, an understanding that Francophones do not share. Most native French speakers are not aware of the grammar rules they use on a daily basis (Farb, 225), so it is harder for them to relate to the needs of FSL students and create FSL textbooks at the appropriate level.

The ideal combination for an author team would be one Francophone and one Anglophone who both work together to blend Anglophone sensibilities with the authenticity of real French material. It is important to expose students to authentic French content and sentence structure in the resources they use. Otherwise, students learn to speak an English-inspired "patois of ungrammatical French: French words pinned together with English syntax" (Fraser, 187) that hardly resembles actual spoken French. If however, learning materials are too difficult, it can be discouraging for many learners initially enthusiastic about the language. To acquire the proper command of the language, "it is essential for learners to [be exposed] to authentic texts" (Nunan, 212). Authenticity is primary in the learning of a foreign language.

To address the authenticity issue of their FSL series content, Oxford hired some first language French-speakers to review the units, but unfortunately they were not in the office. Speaking French with native speakers in the office on a daily basis reminds Anglophone authors and editors of common mistakes and difficulties they had learning the language, and positively influences textbook development, making language resources more useful for students. One or

two French-speakers on an FSL development team is enough linguistic input to balance out an Anglophone staff of many. A Francophone presence in the office is a great influence and motivator, and would have been useful in Oxford's FSL department.

Unfortunately, "there are not enough native French-speaking teachers in the system" (Fraser 195) due, in part, to the high cost of university tuition fees (Rehorick 60) for international students that dissuade many non-Canadian French speakers from enrolling in the faculty of education. Consequently, there are not enough native French speakers with the necessary education to contribute to the successful development of FSL textbooks, which places greater importance on finding a qualified principal author.

The Principal Author's Role

According to the publishing proposal, the principal author "provides the academic credentials and practical teaching knowledge." In many cases, the person occupying a specific position is not as important as the role itself; the opposite is true for the principal author—a role that requires specialized skills and knowledge, both of which are the culmination of years' worth of work. The importance of hiring the right principal author cannot be underestimated, as it is their vision that structures and frames the entire series.

With a doctorate degree in the psychology of education and the necessary teaching experience, Dr. Irene Bernard possessed the right credentials for the job of principal author. Mary-Lynne Meschino hired her to develop Prentice-Hall's *Acti-Vie* series (grades 4-6) in the early nineties and Oxford's *Communi-Quête* series (grades 7-9) in 2002. Oxford was relying on Bernard's experience, reputation in the industry and the commercial success of the *Acti-Vie* series to propel the *Communi-Quête* series into comparable profitability.

On the *Communi-Quête* series, Bernard worked mostly as an editor, not an author in the true sense of the word: She did not write any of the units per se. Instead of writing every unit, like she did on the *Acti-Vie* series, Bernard conceptualized the series and wrote the framework for each unit. On Oxford's series, Bernard supervised and reviewed the work of the senior authors who wrote each unit according to her methodology. She was still teaching three days a week at St. Xavier University in Nova Scotia and also spending 25 weeks a year in the classroom teaching, so her time was limited.

As the principal author, Bernard was responsible for the primary aspects of the textbooks: philosophy, scope and sequence. She also shaped the text according to the National Core French Study (NCFS), making sure to incorporate all four syllabuses: (1) language, (2) communicative/experiential, (3) culture, and (4) general language education. Bernard was

amongst the first to adopt the principles of the NCFS when it was released in 1990, which she used to develop the successful *Acti-Vie* series.

To succeed in the market, principal authors need to create a series that remains faithful to one overarching feature of the Study: “all learning activities need to be structured around communicative tasks” (Tremblay, Duplantie, Huot 3) to encourage students to speak French in meaningful ways. The *Communi-Quête* series had to meet the educational objectives of the curriculum. Otherwise, it would not sell.

The difficulty of creating such a series lies in balancing the individual curriculum needs of eight provinces in the national market, and, more precisely, in translating educational theory into classroom experiences that would work for both the teacher and the students. It is a grand challenge. Bernard used curriculum documents from across the country to develop the *Communi-Quête* series and ensure that all the four necessary elements showed up in a natural context.

As a teacher and researcher, Bernard possessed a unique combination of skills. She brought both current pedagogy and methodology to the *Communi-Quête* series. She also knew exactly what students were capable of at every level, and her pedagogical philosophy served as the guiding force behind every unit. She assigned the senior authors the appropriate sections, working directly with them on each unit and reviewing each one in great depth to ensure quality.

With many senior authors contributing material, the challenge for Bernard was to keep the vision maintained throughout the series, that everything was carried out correctly and that each unit matched the pedagogical framework for the series.

The principal author works as the gatekeeper to ensure that key standards are met: her job was to determine what would, and would not, work in the classroom. Final decisions were always Bernard’s. Nothing was published without her corrections, rewriting, and restructuring at every stage. No unit was passed without her approval. She read each of the units three times during the process: after the author wrote it, after the developmental editor revised it, and once during production. Each time a unit is read, revised and reworked, it is called a “pass.” After each pass, Bernard would send the unit back to the senior author for revisions.

Although Bernard worked out-of-the-office and lived in Nova Scotia, she participated in conference calls during the development and production process. Bernard communicated closely with the publisher, managing editor and four senior authors whom she personally trained in the necessary style. Senior authors Beverley Biggar, Helen Lockerby, Joseph Dicks, and Anne Normand were the ones who wrote all the units in the series.

The Senior Authors' Role

According to the publishing proposal, the role of the senior author is to “provide the FSL product and development experience” necessary to write series units. Each senior author worked closely with the principal author to ensure that the vision for the series was maintained.

Since Bernard worked with senior author Beverley Biggar on the *Acti-Vie* series, Biggar was an ideal candidate to coordinate the three other senior authors writing the units for the *Communi-Quête* series. For Bernard, it was important to work with someone who already understood her methodology since she herself would not be writing any of the units for this series, as she had done for the *Acti-Vie* series. Together, Bernard and Biggar worked on outlines and ideas for the units and discussed topics for the units that they would assign the other senior authors. If any senior author had a good idea for a unit, then they would submit an outline for a unit, which Bernard would look over in terms of methodology. All senior authors were required to attend meetings and brainstorming sessions where Bernard worked closely with them. It was also imperative that they keep current on trends for young adults, so students using the series would find the material not only useful but also relevant. Deadlines were established for each author to deliver the unit manuscript to the principal author who would read each unit and make the necessary revisions and suggestions before sending it back to them.

The Ontario Senior Author's Role

Initially, Oxford's FSL proposal for the *Communi-Quête* series only focused on the provinces outside of Ontario, as its potential market. The Ontario market was never a part of the original proposal because its curriculum did not embrace the National Core French Study. Ontario curriculum focused on traditional grammar study, and the authors of the *Communi-Quête* series were specialized in the communicative/experiential approach coveted by the national market.

Approximately a year and a half after the proposal approval, Oxford devised a way to feasibly publish for the Ontario market without having to create a new series for the Ontario market. In 2004, Oxford hired Anne Normand, a Core French teacher in Ontario, as the Ontario senior author to adapt the *Communi-Quête* series to Ontario's curriculum expectations. Instead of creating an entirely new series for Ontario, Oxford revamped its teacher resource books for each unit by adding a chart correlating Ontario's curriculum objectives to those present in the student books. By adapting its teacher resource book to meet the specific grammar needs of the Ontario market, Oxford saved time and expensive development costs necessary to create a resource it believed would sell in the province.

Ontario has a stricter standard of French than the other provinces, focusing more on formal grammar study than communicative activities designed to encourage speaking. The challenge for Normand was to adapt themes already designed and intended for the national market to Ontario requirements. She first modified the teacher guides to make them Ontario-friendly by creating a cross-reference chart to keep track of each learning objective in the Ontario curriculum that needed to be accounted for in the new resource. She transformed the original “outcomes” of the national market into “expectations,” and alternated activities or “final tasks” to meet Ontario requirements. She also made rubrics for evaluation. She also supervised some contributing authors who helped her adapt some teacher guides. Normand’s job at Oxford evolved to include the role of contributing author and Ontario/national workshopper assigned to demonstrate how the series is best used to teach Core French in the classroom.

The Teacher Consultant’s Role

Oxford employed twenty-five teacher consultants from different provinces to work with senior authors on their respective units. Together, they generated ideas for their designated units in accordance with the principal author’s vision. They used a top-down approach, focusing on the vision as the basic framework for the unit. Teacher consultants were asked to contribute to the series to ensure it met classroom needs. These consultants brought up-to-date classroom experience, exercises, activities, and examples to the series and wrote activities under the guidance of a senior author.

The principal author and publisher select teacher consultants based on who they know working in the field, who can handle the challenges ahead, and who can maintain the vision for the series. Consultants focus on ideas, logic, and curriculum—not grammar. Contributing authors Terry Jensen and Suzanne Gallant wrote the outline as well as the first and second drafts with the senior authors. Teachers and consultants are meant to review the first and second drafts for every unit. Due to time constraints, this was not always the case.

FSL Textbook Formulas: Meeting Each Ministry of Education’s Curriculum Expectations

The publisher’s role has become more important in the education system in Canada, especially in French-as-a-second language studies. As mentioned, it was difficult for teachers to acquire resources when FSL courses first started in 1965, so many teachers had to develop their

own materials. As FSL became more popular, however, teachers gave “over more and more of the creation of learning materials to the publishers” (Lorimer, 1981, p.10).

Teachers used to create their own lessons, but today they have more demands on their time. To gain a market edge, publishers have tried to assist teachers by creating textbooks and resources that guide the teacher and save them preparation time. Many teachers have become reliant on publishers, and thus welcome someone else creating activities for students. According to *Plan Twenty-Thirteen*, many Core French teachers “confirmed that their first year or two of teaching they were not ready or able to venture beyond the textbook” (Rehorick, 52).

Due to the well-documented shortage of French teachers, many teachers without any training in French are being asked to teach the language. Non-specialists are teachers even more reliant on their textbooks and their pre-packaged activities than teachers with the proper training in French. According to Wendy Carr, FSL instructor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, many teacher-training programs at Canadian universities do not offer basic courses in FSL instruction as a part of the main program, which would prepare future teachers to teach French. Without any training, non-specialists in French rely on ministry approved resource lists because they lack the expertise necessary to select their own materials and they know that these resources meet curriculum expectations. Thus, Oxford’s textbook formula needed to meet curriculum and teachers’ expectations. Curriculum is the one area of textbook development that publishers have yet to dominate, especially for French-as-a-second-language. FSL publishers understand they must deliver resources that meet—and not deviate from—the curriculum guidelines established in each province. Otherwise, their resources will simply not sell if they do not appear on the recommended resource lists.

Publishers need to be especially mindful of meeting curriculum expectations because textbook creation has become more expensive and a greater financial risk, due to changes in the standard format. The textbook formula used for today’s FSL resources, and Oxford’s *Communi-Quête* series, stems back to the seventies. In 1978, Addison-Wesley’s first Core French textbook, *Vive le Français*, successfully introduced the module format that teachers have since come to expect from their resources. Instead of one textbook for each grade, Addison-Wesley broke established norms by creating a series of textbooks, spanning three grades. This change in format has made it more challenging for publishers to enter the FSL market today because developing such a series requires higher start-up costs. A good series can guarantee a market for all three grade levels, but it also increases the chance of greater financial failure, if the series should not be well received. There is no guarantee that the series will be successful, especially if it does not meet the curriculum.

Oxford worked with a number of contributors to ensure that its FSL series would deliver on the curriculum. Developing the theoretical framework of the *Communi-Quête* series and its activities was a combination of the efforts of the principal author, senior author, teacher consultants, and reviewers who worked on all 18 units. Each unit must represent at least two of these elements from the National Core French Study. Each one of the three levels is specific to a certain grade and corresponds to learning objectives designed for that particular grade: level 1 is for grade 7; level 2 for grade 8; and level 3 for grade 9 (except in BC where the series is for grades 8–10). Throughout all six units for each level, the goal is to encourage students to use the language in communicative ways by accomplishing real-life tasks. The 18 themes of the *Communi-Quête* series range in subject matter, including science, media, music, multiculturalism, traveling, entrepreneurship and natural phenomena.

Table 1: All 18 Themed Units of the Communi-Quête series

Level 1 (grade 7)	Level 2 (grade 8)	Level 3 (grade 9)
Entrepreneurs en herbe!	Rétro-Monde	Folklore urbain
La guerre aux déchets	À l'action!	Studio créateur
Consommation	Le monde mystérieux...	Passons aux nouvelles...
Phénomènes canadiens	Ça brasse!	Bombes météo
Le grand voyage	Faisons une différence	Un avenir à découvrir
Mosaïque	En route vers la francophonie	Mission : survie

Aside from meeting established curriculum in each province, textbooks must, according to Biggar, be grammar-based, fun, culturally orientated, affordable and easy to use.

With all these aspects in mind, the *Communi-Quête* series attempts to entertain as well as instruct. This combination is difficult to achieve, yet the series does it well. It displays a wonderful creativity in its efforts to interest the students and meet curriculum expectations. The animated text encourages participation and engagement by offering real-life situations that students might encounter and makes a conscious effort to incorporate the four basic elements of the National Core French Study. The series matches the learning objectives to the materials it uses for examples. Students read about interesting information in the *Communi-Quête* series from the information boxes, newspaper articles, and other primary texts present in the series. Finding authentic articles that communicate at a level the students can understand and that also use the desired principles was a challenge for the author team.

Each unit in every level of the *Communi-Quête* series, although a separate entity unto itself, was also meant to build upon the preceding unit and lead into the next. To maintain

continuity and ensure ease of reference, all the student books nonetheless share common elements that give explicit direction and act as anchor points throughout each book. Each box, as described below, focuses students' attention on the learning objectives specific to that page.

1. La Tâche Finale on the first page of the student book establishes the focus of the text. By the end of the unit, the students will have to complete a final project using the lessons in the book. By establishing a goal at the beginning of the book, students become more focused in their use of the textbook because they know what goal they need to accomplish by the end of the unit. For example, in the unit *Ça brasse!*, students must compose a song in French and videotape themselves singing the song (1).

2. Dans cette unité, tu vas... This portion of the text describes what the students will be learning in each textbook, which focuses their attention on specific goals.

Learning objective icons placed throughout the book indicate to students what skills they are developing in certain activities. The four basic language skills are listening, speaking, writing, and reading (Nunan 197). To this basic list, Oxford has added some other skills and learning strategies for doing presentations, watching videos and studying. In some textbooks, a larger two-page section, entitled *On travaille bien ensemble!*, describes how to work in groups to accomplish certain tasks and offers an example of a dialogue that might transpire between two people while giving students direction to engage in their own conversations.

3. The Quête-Language section appears numerous times throughout every student book in the series. Each one identifies for students the lessons and key grammar points intended for study and communication. For example, in the student book *En route vers la Francophonie*, the Quête-Language discusses how to form a negative sentence in French using *ne...pas* (23). This section is always located on the right hand side of the page—in the most prime viewing location in the book, so students see the lesson before anything else on the page.

In this offset area, there are several key components: the “*Tu veux d'autres exemples?*” (More examples) component that refers students to the workbook for more examples and practice of each grammatical principle being isolated. The “*Parle!*” (Speak!) component teaches students how to use the grammatical lessons in practice. Sometimes, there is an “*Ecoute!*” (Listen!) component that directs students to a taped version of these grammatical principles outlined in that particular *Quête-Language*, an example of which follows.

Quête-Language

ne... pas marque la simple négation

Je ne peux pas.

Tu veux d'autres exemples?

Parle!

Utilise une expression négative

Je ne fais jamais les dimanches matins

Ecoute!

Tu veux faire d'autres activités?

4. Extra “Info-mation” Boxes are located sporadically throughout each unit, which also focus student’s attention and highlights certain points of interest related to the theme of the text, which could be a person, product, or event. For example, in the unit *le folklore urbain*, the information box entitled Info-Folklore describes a Japanese urban legend for students—an example that interests the students while also accomplishing one goal of the NCFS, which is to discuss culture in relation to the themes of the unit (17).

Info-Culture

Info-Rétro

Info-Bénévole

Info-Vie Active

Info-Phénomène

Info-Science

Info-Type

Info-Nouvelles

Info-Invention

Info-Art

Info-Folklore

Info-Survie

5. *Mini-Guide* located at the back of the book summarizes previous lessons discussed throughout the text and also provides supplementary information. For example, the student book *Mission: Survie* describes in French a practical situation of withdrawing money out of a bank machine (28). At the end of the book, there is also another *Quête-Language* section, usually between 4–8 pages, that resumes in greater detail all the grammatical principles taught throughout that entire unit. For example, conjugating regular and irregular verbs or how to ask a question.

Mini-Guide

Info-Plus

- summarizes of previous lessons

Quête-Language

- summaries and enhances the grammatical principles taught in the textbook

In the *Communi-Quête* series, the subject matter for every unit was decided in advance to match curriculum needs. In each textbook, however, there is clear overlap of material. (Please refer the appendix A for a diagram of content from each unit). As these examples show, the *Quête-Language* section at the back of each book revisits most of the same principles—an unnecessary duplication of information already in other units and a misuse of pages that could be dedicated to other principles of language learning. Students, in some cases, are not learning anything new from one unit to the next in the *Quête-Language*. Students want to be introduced to new ideas instead of revisiting old material. According to the *Plan Twenty-Thirteen* issued by the department of Canadian Heritage and intended to double the number of bilingual graduates by 2013, “students commented on the poor quality of the resources and the fact that the work was repetitive, explaining that they often covered the material from elementary through high school” (Rehorick 35). Repetition is not stimulating for high school students, and thus can be unproductive.

It is unclear whether this overlap of material in the *Communi-Quête* series is a product of an underperforming curriculum demands or a publisher’s attempt to be all things to every province. In any case, curriculum dictates how publishers create textbooks, so curriculum would have to change before textbook content ever could.

Editing: Quality Assurance for the *Communi-Quête* Series

Aside from the work of the author team, editing is one of the single most important stages in creating a successful FSL series. Content errors and factually incorrect information can significantly impair the sales of a new product on the market, and Oxford's editors worked hard to identify and eliminate any trouble spots.

The Managing Editor's Role

The managing editor's job is quite varied but, essentially, it consists of coordinating the efforts of everyone involved in bringing each unit to market. The current managing editor Meredith Oberfrank reports to the publisher/senior author Beverley Biggar and concerns herself with keeping projects on track and meeting deadlines. She oversees editors, grants final printer approvals, troubleshoots problems, informs sales and marketing teams of product details, proofreads units for errors, hires freelance designers and other contributors, organizes curriculum correlations, edits teachers guides, and monitors production schedules. She also initiates frequent tele-conferences where contributors—both in-house and freelance—discuss unit progress while working to solve problems and ward off any future troubles from arising. The managing editor is supposed to read every single pass and conduct a post mortem on every unit, but this does not always happen due to time constraints.

The managing editor is in constant contact with the senior author to discuss all matters of business: future and past products, workload, schedules, and staffing issues. During my internship, the managing editor and the publisher were working to replace one of the two developmental editors.

The Developmental Editor's Role

Once each unit of the series is written and developed according to the textbook formula, the manuscript passes to one of two freelance developmental editors.

The developmental editor enters the publishing process at first-draft stage, receiving the manuscript draft from a senior author and commenting on it along with the reviewers. The senior author makes any necessary changes before submitting the final draft to the developmental editor, who further enhances the manuscript for the production editor by making the examples stronger and more relevant to students. Research is conducted on the web to find actual articles

appropriate for the students' linguistic, comprehension and interest level. The developmental editor also ensures that examples are correct and that the information present in the text is appropriate for learners.

Developmental editors primarily concern themselves with the big picture: they indicate to the author areas for revision and never do any large-scale structural writing. It is not the developmental editor's job to rewrite: the manuscript should go back to the author for any revisions.

The development editor for the media unit *Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles...* turned out to be a weak link in the publishing process. While the department was trying to phase this particular editor out as a contributor, the unit was left in the balance and took even longer to complete. A solid developmental editor would have facilitated the process. To compensate for this employee's inadequacies, an overextended developmental editor from another unit agreed to examine the unit for any mistakes or inconsistencies and identify any major grammatical flaws. He indicated a faulty lesson on relative pronouns—only three of the eight examples were correct—crucial mistakes the original developmental editor should have noticed and rectified. Here underlines the importance of proper French training in creating sound FSL resource materials.

The relative pronoun exercises for 'que' and 'qui' found on 31 and 44 of the workbook *Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles...* were meant to teach how to modify nouns using the grammatical formula [noun+**que**+noun] or [noun +**qui**+verb].

For example:

(noun+**que**+noun) "*Voici le livre **que** Bob a acheté*" (Here is the book **that** Bob brought)

(noun+**qui**+verb) "*Voici le livre **qui** a été acheté par Bob* (Here is the book **that was** brought by Bob").

Only three of the eight examples in the *Communi-Quête* series followed these grammatical pattern [noun + 'que'] and [noun + 'qui']. The other five incorrect sentences resembled the following pattern [verb + 'que'], not the grammatical patterns being taught.

For example:

(verb+**que**+noun) "*Je **pense que** Bob a acheté le livre*" (I think **that** Bill bought the book)

'Que' can be used for many purposes, one of which occurs in dependent clauses such as 'je pense que...' or 'il semble que...' In these examples, there is no noun for the 'que' to modify. The 'que' modifies the verb 'penser' (to think). Inconsistent examples such as these were the kind of grievous mistakes that almost made it into print and were thankfully avoided.

According to production editor Arlene Miller, a change made to one book affects at least one other book in the unit. Because the improper use of the relative pronoun was not corrected at

an earlier stage, she had to make changes to the student book, workbook and also the teacher resource book. These types of changes are time-consuming to rectify because the various books in the series are all interlinked and refer to one another. Unfortunately, one error was avoided while some others were introduced into the text.

For example, relative pronoun examples on page 44 of the student book were corrected for the fill-in-the-blank exercises, but the answers to those questions featured on page 146 in the teachers resource book (TRB) were not:

1. Student Book (p.44): Le virus _____ a infecté 48 000 ordinateurs a même infecté le site Web de Microsoft®. [Grammatical formula: *noun+qui+verb*]
TRB (p. 146) Answer #4 should read *qui* (not *qu'*).
2. Student Book: La bêtise _____ il a faite a causé plus d'un million de dollars de dommages. [Grammatical formula: *noun+que+noun*]
TRB Answer: #5 should be *qu'* (not *que*).

These mistakes were undoubtedly oversights from previous changes. A knowing teacher would recognize the errors; teachers unfamiliar with the subject matter who rely solely on the textbook for guidance will probably question their own understanding of the material rather than the text. Mistakes can easily be passed on to unassuming teachers and unsuspecting students.

The developmental editor is supposed to catch and eliminate these kinds of errors from the text, so the production editor can concentrate on production. Instead, the production editor was left looking through reference books to rectify mistakes that should not have been there in the first place. Textbooks are only as good as the team putting them together, which reiterates the importance of proper training and the difficulty for FSL publishers to find staff with the necessary grammatical knowledge of the language. A lack of such skill most often only becomes detectable on the job.

The Reviewers' Role

Teachers from every province in the country are sought to act as reviewers for textbooks. Reviewers evaluate the series, offering their comments and suggestions so that any necessary changes or modifications to the series content can be made before the textbooks are printed and sold for use in the classroom.

By requesting teachers' input and involvement in textbook creation, Oxford not only makes teachers aware of the series, but it also flatters their egos to be asked to participate and

creates champions in the market for the series. Most often, reviewers will recommend the textbooks to their colleagues for use in the classroom. These teachers act as unofficial salespeople for the series; however, they cannot be relied on solely to sell the product—they are only an enhancement to the sales force.

Reviewers are usually selected from volunteer teachers and are paid a hundred dollar honorarium for their suggestions. Despite minimal involvement in the actual development of the series, reviewers' comments are taken very seriously. Each unit undergoes approximately fifty assessments depending on time constraints. According to principal author Irene Bernard, the FSL department is overloaded with assessments. Not all comments affect the overall text, however. Only common criticisms give impetus for revisions. Reviewers see the first pass before the in-house production editor and at two other stages during development.

As the publisher, Beverley Biggar selects the reviewers, as she selects teacher consultants, based on the people she knows working in the field. Consultants also recommend names of people they meet at workshops to review the manuscripts. Eight reviewers from three different provinces completed the first *Review for the Media Unit: Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles*.

Chapter 5: Production and Printing: Bringing the Series to Life

Production: Series' Content Becomes Visual

Once the editing of each unit in the *Communi-Quête* series has been completed, the manuscript then enters the production stage of the development cycle where it receives images and a layout intended to complement the lessons in the book.

The Production Editor's Role

The production editor transforms the finished manuscript into a printer-ready document, reports to the managing editor, and works with the developmental editor, production manager, and designer. Working on a contractual basis, the production editor navigates the unit through the production process. The role involves many tasks. At any one time, the production editor is juggling a number of components related to the unit: video shoots, sound recordings, photo shoots, and manuscripts for the student book, workbook, and teacher resource book. According to publisher and senior author Beverley Biggar, “the job of a production editor is all about detail.”

When the current production editor Arlene Miller was hired in January 2003, the first three units of the *Communi-Quête* series had already been published (level 1: grade 7, *le grand voyage; mosaïques; la guerre aux déchets*), and two other units were in development. Miller studied French at university and then followed courses in the faculty of education to become a French teacher. She serves as a prime example of someone who turned an education in French into a publishing career. When she started, Oxford's indigenous FSL program was just getting underway. Before receiving her first unit, Miller spent January to July in training but claims she also taught herself a lot.

The production editor relies on the developmental editor for guidance. According to Miller, “the developmental editor is the spine” of the series. Ideally, the developmental editor acts as a project manager and hands the production editor a perfect manuscript with all rewriting done and no significant changes to be made. As previously mentioned, Miller found the developmental editor on the media unit to be inefficient and evasive in responding to questions about the unit. Her incomplete work often fell on Miller, who was not trained for that specific job.

The production editor usually receives manuscript text files via email. Before sending them to the designer, she reads them over to understand the instructions given for layout. At Oxford, the production editor was not shy about questioning content choices where necessary. She did not make any changes, though. She would simply send the files back with comments to the developmental editor. For example, one exercise to teach verbs conjugated with *être* in the

past tense, called *passé composé*, had questionable content. The unit aimed to encourage students to use certain verbs in the past tense, of which there are only 16 that combine with *être*: *mourir*—meaning to die in French—was one of them. The example was as follows: “At a hard rock concert, an audience member shot and killed guitarist Dimeback Darrell on stage.” Students were to respond using the verb *mourir*. The appropriateness of such an example for grade 7–9 students caused controversy at Oxford, which might have been amplified at a school level. Educational publishers generally try not to upset teachers, students, or parents purposefully. It is the production editor’s job to identify areas of concern by providing feedback such as “the Dimeback Darrell example on page 19 of the workbook—I don’t think it works.”

Once the production editor has given initial feedback to the developmental editor, she turns her attention to acquiring photo permissions and working with the designer. The production editor also prepares all the elements of production: photos, permissions, front and back matter, and credits. After receiving the final manuscript, the production editor follows the directions embedded in the text regarding layout and style, which she explains conceptually to the designer. Good production editors make the process easier because they understand the house style.

“Launch” is a previewing of the unit before going to print. Reviewers take another look at the mock-up and give comments. The deadlines are already intense, especially preparing for launch. Alleviating as many problems as possible at launch is essential. The challenge with every unit lies with balancing deadlines and quality. Many people work with the manuscript during the production processes: the number of times the manuscript is reviewed varies from four to eight times. Once the last pass is complete, Miller readies the manuscript for the Oxford’s production manager, who works outside of the FSL department, by putting it on a disk.

The Designer’s Role

Before designing units, designers attend a meeting with the production editor, managing editor and developmental editor. Each unit has a theme and requires its own distinctive look. Colourful and expressive images that attract students’ attention and curiosity are always coveted. About a week or so in advance of the meeting, designers receive specific details about the unit, so they arrive with mock-ups to discuss, sketches to show, and questions to ask. The first pass is intentionally a rough draft to receive the necessary feedback and direction before moving ahead.

Unlike the rest of the departments, FSL did not have its own in-house designers. They were freelancers. Heidi Laurence Associates worked on the *Communi-Quête* level 3 media unit *Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles* and many others. In terms of freelancers, the Oxford team could not have asked for a more reliable and accessible designer. Heidi Laurence worked

weekends and basically around-the-clock to ensure that the materials were delivered on time and that changes could be made in an instant. Even though the designers for the media unit were accessible and good about returning messages in a timely manner, the effort to coordinate the numerous freelancers Oxford hired to work on the series was difficult in general.

Outsourcing the design added an extra layer of complexity to each unit. Most freelancers had time commitments and holidays, so they were not working to Oxford's schedule, but rather the other way around. Most freelancers' extraneous commitments hindered the development process, making it difficult at times to move forward and meet deadlines.

Sometimes, it can work to a publisher's financial advantage to hire freelancers, but not always. The difficulty, however, is in trying to determine from the outset how many hours a project will require in order to know whether to hire freelance staff or in-house staff on contract. Design work, for instance, for the *Communi-Quéte* series seemed too infrequent for Oxford to incur the cost of an in-house designer for the three-year development of the series: too much work some times, and not as much at others. In this particular case, it proved itself an ineffective means of bringing series units to market, especially with such shrinking deadlines.

Despite how available exemplary freelancers like Heidi Laurence Associates made themselves to staff, that availability was no substitute for having in-house design staff. Two production teams were working on units concurrently, which means that an in-house designer employed on a contractual basis could have been constantly occupied, as FSL textbooks are design heavy. Instead, visual changes and ideas had to be transmitted via phone or long, descriptive, timing-consuming emails—a simple conversation in-person, using examples of content, would have been more effective and efficient. Without the designer in-house where initial ideas could be shown to other team members, it was hard to tell if the designers were conceiving of a unit correctly.

FSL textbooks require many images to describe content and grammatical principles in an intriguing manner, to create context and to encourage students to think in French. The content is linked to design, so every page requires great care to appeal to students and still meet curriculum requirements. Textbook designs that are too busy make it difficult for children to identify and focus on key concepts and can distract from the lessons being conveyed. Publishers need to negotiate a delicate balance between content and image, so students feel challenged not overwhelmed. Having an in-house designer would have made it easier for Oxford to achieve this balance while speeding up the development process.

Oxford attempted to minimize photography costs by taking its own pictures whenever possible and by hiring student videographers and high school students to participate in photo

shoots for the textbooks. The staff also worked to receive complimentary photo permissions, but these materials take time to acquire, time that Oxford did not always have because of strict deadlines. One page of four photos purchased from Getty images for the media unit, for which Oxford could have staged similar photos during its scheduled photo session, cost over \$1000. Such time-saving expenditures caused many units in the series to run over budget.

Oxford normally commissioned cover artwork for the series. The director of the education division reviewed and signed off on every cover image to ensure that it would meet teachers and parents' approval. Despite Oxford's best efforts, certain oversights did occur. The cover approved for the *Mission: survie* unit, for instance, caused consternation amongst teachers, because it featured a girl wearing a necklace with a Playboy® pendant. The cover for the media unit: *Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles*, however, was ideal. The stock photo found on Getty Images cost approximately \$800 and consisted of an interview fit for a rock-star, complete with microphone and cheering fans. The wording on the interviewer's shirt was even in French!

Bonus Material: Learning Aids Make Language Series Unique Commodities

The high developmental costs involved in educational publishing make it a unique entity in the publishing landscape, producing second language textbooks is an even further departure from traditional publishing and a more costly one. According to publisher and senior author Beverley Biggar, the French department is an "anomaly in every publishing company." At Oxford, for instance, the whole company, from management to finance to production to distribution, had to adjust their regular procedures to the individual needs of the French department's and its numerous learning materials.

Unlike other textbooks, language series are interactive and require learning aids to complement their lessons, such as videos, cassettes, reproducible masters, workbooks, and teacher and student books. These tools can actually be the most useful in the classroom, especially for teachers with a poor command of the language. All these extras, although expensive to produce and optional to buy, are somewhat easier to sell because they come as a complete package. Once a textbook is adopted, it is not uncommon for teachers to purchase the accompanying learning aids as well. Oxford could also expect increased revenue by promoting its French dictionaries in addition to its FSL series.

Printing: Language Series Marks Unfamiliar Territory for Oxford

For Oxford Canada, the *Communi-Quête* series was uncharted territory in the publishing landscape. With all its units, pieces and bonus material, the series proved a challenge at every stage for the employees in both Oxford's FSL department and also the production department.

The Production Manager's Role

Oxford's production manager heads the production department for the whole company—a position that Vince Morgan held during the development of the *Communi-Quête* series. The production manager works as a liaison between the publisher and the printer, making the decisions in the financial best interests of the company. Technically, the duties of the Oxford production department do not include the FSL department. However, the role of the production manager does overlap with the department at three different stages.

Stage One: Budgeting

The production manager estimates the printing costs related to a particular project, such as the one for the *Communi-Quête* series. The company requires financial estimates to determine if a proposal will work, and the production manager's calculations and expertise inform the financial manager's ability to predict future expenditures versus possible revenues from the project. Normally, Morgan can estimate project costs based on similar budgets. French, however, breaks from any established norms. As a new and unfamiliar entity, the series presented problems and challenges for Oxford that it had never confronted before due to its size and the variety of materials: 18 student books, 24 to 32 pages each, spanning three levels; 140-page national teacher resource book; 160-page Ontario teacher resource book; 48-page workbook; 48-page reproducible masters; 40-page RSC; and CDs and videos.

The production manager does his best to anticipate costs based on information he receives from the publisher. He fills out a "proposal to publish form" (PPF) before costings are done. Many factors come into consideration: typesetting, artwork, royalties, permissions, pre-production and plate costs, scanning of photos, if necessary, and paper, printing and binding (PP&B). The publisher examines the anticipated costs for the project, especially the gross profit margins. The production manager works to satisfy publishers' wants for the project by estimating costs, making adjustments and suggesting options until a consensus for the project budget is reached. Morgan advocates, but the publisher, in the end, makes all the final decisions. Once the

budget is settled, it must be respected, but that is not always the case. As mentioned, overspending on production costs (eg. stock photos) did occur while creating the *Communi-Quête* series.

After the budget is reached, consultations then diminish between the production manager and the publisher but increase again when units become ready for print. He monitors projects from a distance. While the editorial team works, he reminds them of the contents of the PPF. Any changes not in conformity with the PPF require a new form to be drawn up and re-signed by all management parties involved.

If a budget runs off course, the publisher takes responsibility. Company policy calls for a post mortem after each unit is complete to alleviate any reoccurring problems. Time constraints and missed deadlines infringing on the next unit in production for the *Communi-Quête* series sometimes stood in the way of conducting a post mortem after each unit. For Oxford, the scope of this project was so massive, unwieldy and unlike any project they had ever attempted before that maintaining a focus on project costs proved difficult.

Step Two: Up keeping

Normally, the production manager would keep in contact with the formatter and audio technician, but since Morgan does not speak French, the managing editor of the *Communi-Quête* series Meredith Oberfrank took responsibility for signing off on unit proofs. Morgan set up the main suppliers and established budgets, so the managing editor could take over. However, she would consult Morgan during the printing process, as he remained the contact with the printers, each working on one of three different components of the series:

Brown Book Company in Toronto printed the teacher's resource book (300 copies: 200 for series kits/100 for the warehouse), Reproducible Masters; Language and Strategy Cards (300 copies: 200 for the kits/100 for the warehouse)

Transcontinental in Montreal printed the Student Workbook (7,500 copies: 6,000 for kits /1,500 for the warehouse)

Interactive Design Studios in Toronto printed the CD (500 copies) and videos (300 copies: 200 for the kits/100 for the warehouse).

Step Three: Going to Press

The production manager re-enters the picture once the production editor receives the finished files from the designer. The production manager then looks over the finished product with the managing editor before granting approval. Oberfrank ensured editorial quality; Morgan

approved production quality, any content changes made at the printer stage and the invoices received from the printer. Last-minute changes to the printer proofs are costly but sometimes necessary. For example, Morgan authorized over \$400 in changes for the media unit *Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles...* due to editorial oversights. After receiving the printer proofs and the final go-ahead, Morgan contacts the printer and moves on to another project until another unit of the *Communi-Quête* series becomes printer-ready.

Chapter 6:
Marketing and Selling *Communi-Quête*

Marketing: Getting the Word Out

As a first-time FSL publisher, Oxford Canada was expanding its publishing operations, and it needed a marketing plan that would inform and excite FSL teachers about the *Communi-Quête* series. Oxford's marketing manager was in charge of getting the word out about the new series on the market.

The Marketing Manager's Role

At Oxford, the marketing manager works with another marketer and the sales manager to promote all of the company's products: FSL is just one of them. The FSL department's marketing needs are quite distinctive. Oxford's marketing manager at the time, Caroline Cobham, saw a need for a different approach than she used for other Oxford products. Because the scope of the *Communi-Quête* series has surpassed anything that Oxford Canada had done before, Cobham found that everything was bigger and harder than anticipated. Some aspects of the challenges she faced included trying to promote products that were delayed as well as promoting for two markets: Ontario and the national market. Yet, her basic job remained the same, informing people about the series, enticing them to buy it, and reminding them that *Communi-Quête* authors also created the successful *Acti-Vie* series.

As a new addition to the Oxford's publishing operations, it was important to present the *Communi-Quête* series in a way that makes educators not only take notice—but also take it seriously. The series was being developed and sold at the same time, which made it challenging to market. One year, she spent much of her budget on mail-outs whose information all changed: ISBN numbers, publication dates, unit names, and cover designs were wrong. Just as textbooks need to be completely accurate to be effective, so do marketing materials. Mail-outs require professionalism to have their desired effect. Since that experience, she learned to wait until products are complete before announcing them to consumers. Her conclusion: "Don't announce unless you can deliver within a month. When customers want something, they want it now."

Oxford is a small publisher with limited resources, so the marketing department could not afford to create incorrect materials for the series, especially since it had a slower start in the market than anticipated. To reduce costs, in-house design staff from other departments were used instead of freelancers. A new promotional piece was planned to promote the completion of the series to teachers.

Cobham was also responsible for the promotional packages for the presentations that sales representatives and workshopers generally conduct. In September 2005, she was preparing for a single-adoption presentation to the Newfoundland Department of Education—the only Ministry-approved day for presentations to pilot teachers. The Atlantic Canada Territory sales manager Philip Niven was there with workshoper Anne Normand who presented kits, piloted and sampled all the resources to show teachers how the series met FSL curriculum expectations. At that time, Pearson, Nelson and Oxford were all in the running for the adoptions (see appendix C and D for details regarding Pearson’s *Ça marche !* series and Nelson’s *Tout ados* series). The package Cobham’s department prepared consisted of marketing materials and samples of every single series that could be piloted in the schools. Six teachers tested the series in the classroom, and Oxford won the bid, guaranteeing series sales for 17,120 students!

Gratis Copies, Mail-Outs: the Silent Sales Force

Certain times of the year are more important than others for teachers and for publishers. To maximize sales, publishers go to great lengths to promote their products. For example, the first two days of my internship I spent working in the warehouse alongside the marketing manager, the assistant marketer and other full-time employees, quickly assembling over nine hundred sample copies of the English textbook *Inside Track 2* to mail to school districts to avoid losing the sales to another publisher. Schools had the money to buy, and Oxford needed to act before the end of June 2005. After that time, teachers would have made their decisions, spent their budgets, and been on vacation.

Mail-outs are expensive and labour-intensive, but they can also generate great sales. According to the July 2005 issue of *OxCan News*, the Press’ internal newsletter, Oxford sold 652 copies of *Inside Track 2* (4) thanks, in part, to the timely mail-out to teachers. With a net price of \$39.95 per copy, the textbook earned \$26,047 in a matter of weeks, proving the importance of seizing opportunity in educational publishing.

When the curriculum changes, publishers are generally aware of the impending change prior to it taking place, and they are prepared to send resources to Ministries for school piloting, an essential component in generating successful program adoptions. For the *Communi-Quête* series, the sales manager kept a budget specifically for gratis copies to be distributed at conferences and for piloting in the classroom.

Sales: Meeting Financial Projections

After years of preparation, development, and expenditures, Oxford Canada looked to its sales force to present the *Communi-Quête* series to its customers and receive a return on its initial investment. It was the moment of truth for the National Sales Manager who had calculated the original financial forecasts at the proposal stage.

The National Sales Manager's Role

The primary role of the national sales manager is to organize and coordinate the efforts of the sales staff. At Oxford, during the time this report covers, Chris Allen held this position. Part of Allen's responsibilities was to monitor sales, stock, and inventory levels throughout the twelve-month sales cycle. The national sales manager reported to the director of the education division Mary-Lynne Meschino, with whom Allen discussed the budget and also the reception of the series in the market. Together, they monitored sales and the budget. Allen also created a sales and marketing plan for the entire year: five months at a time, one for fall and the other for spring. He also contacted schools directly using marketing pieces, mail-outs, and faxes.

Oxford Canada publishes approximately fifty to sixty books a year, ten of which account for half the branch's domestic revenue. According to Allen, in secondary school publishing, a good book will normally bring in \$300,000–\$400,000 in sales a year and will predictably achieve three, four or even five years of significant sales. In elementary school, publishing sales are even higher. Due to restricted budgets, schools do not repurchase textbooks every year for the same subject, which means that publishers need to maximize their sales efforts into schools when the time is right for adoptions and funding. Textbooks tend to have a predictable seven-year shelf life before changes to curriculum necessitate new resources.

Curriculum revisions also make it easier to predict sales because schools generally purchase new textbooks to match newly devised educational objectives. Astute publishers paying close attention to the market can capitalize on trends in government funding and policy, which can make a dramatic difference to the bottom line. Every book has a budget based on sales expectations that are generated by the sales manager. If the estimates are wrong, the sales manager may offer another book at a discount to assuage the difference in revenue.

The *Communi-Quête* series faced six significant challenges in reaching its sales target of \$500,000 in revenue per year. The first was that government funding to schools was allocated to subjects other than FSL. According to president Joanna Gertler, as of September 2005, the

Communi-Quéte series had not lived up to expectations because core subjects, such as math and science, were given priority for government funding over the last couple of years. Consequently, part of the revenue Oxford anticipated for FSL did not materialize and thus projected sales were not achieved. Since Oxford does not publish math or science textbooks and had invested considerably in FSL, it felt the absence in revenue even more acutely than other publishers developing textbooks for the former two markets. Despite *Communi-Quéte's* slow start in the market, Gertler remained positive about the potential for increased sales because the series had good sales in the East, and she was anticipating more in the West, as British Columbia and Alberta were respectively the second and third largest markets in the country for Core French.

Oxford also faced a second challenge: unfamiliarity in the market. When Oxford's FSL department was created in 2002, sales agents began informing educators of Oxford's expanding presence in the market with its new FSL series and began establishing its reputation as a FSL publisher.

Unlike trade publishing, the educational publisher's names and reputations do contribute to book sales. Company names become associated with the disciplines they publish and the quality of their products: a solid reputation in a particular domain helps to sell textbooks. French teachers had never bought from Oxford or used its textbooks in classrooms, so Oxford's challenge was to prove to teachers its worth as a FSL publisher. According to Allen, Oxford's competition—Pearson and Thomson-Nelson—were perceived as having books of better quality because both firms had spent more time in the market than Oxford. His response to their biases: “we're new, but the people developing [*Communi-Quéte*] are not.”

To improve sales of the series, Oxford's strategy was to leverage the reputation of its author team who were responsible for an already successful and recognizable entity in the FSL market: the *Acti-Vie* series. The *Communi-Quéte* series was designed for grades 7–9 and represented a continuation of the lessons conveyed in the *Acti-Vie* series for grades 4–6. Despite quality-by-extension sales techniques, sales still lumbered. Allen and his salespeople continued to increase familiarity in the market by developing relationships with customers and establishing networks. Attempts, however, to build a reputation for Oxford as an FSL publisher were undermined, in part, by Oxford missing advertised release dates for units of the *Communi-Quéte* series.

The third challenge Oxford faced was meeting deadlines. Despite the experience of the author team, Oxford itself was unprepared for the production demands of the series. Oxford had never before sold or produced French textbooks, and this lack of experience resulted in missed publication dates. The number of resources that needed producing for each unit only compounded

the challenges associated with meeting deadlines. As previously noted, FSL publishing requires many more resources than other courses. It requires all the bonus materials as well: cassettes, videos, workbooks, teacher resources, strategy cards and kits. Each unit was quite varied in its themed-content and presented its own developmental challenges, which made it difficult to gauge the time required to complete the theme for each unit. As a new player in the market, delays did not help improve educators' impression of the program or Oxford as a credible publisher. Nor did they help sales agents to promote the series and establish it in the market.

The fourth challenge was provincial buying habits. In Canada, provinces use one of three separate methods of adoption. All three have their advantages and disadvantages for publishers competing in the market.

1. Centralized Option A - Single Provincial Adoption

One method of textbook selection is Option A, otherwise termed 'single provincial adoption' where one textbook or series is listed for use in each grade and each subject (Lorimer, 1981, p. 10). Provincial ministries evaluate a wide range of resources and list only one per course. If a particular publisher's textbook meets the necessary adoption criteria, that one textbook becomes mandatory throughout the entire province. As a result, the chosen publisher automatically captures a guaranteed market and ensures the publisher a certain level of financial success for the project.

Publishers whose textbooks do not make the grade are automatically denied access to a portion of the Canadian market. Regardless of effort, the market becomes impenetrable to them—a loss compounded if a number of provinces have consolidated their efforts to approve a single publication between them. Two provinces still enact the single adoption method: Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. Teachers' choices for textbooks are made easy with a single adoption system because they do not have a choice in resources. However, the single adoption method may result in a teacher being stuck with a textbook that does not suit his or her personal teaching style. Schools might not benefit from discounts for a bulk buy of textbooks, either, because publishers have little incentive to negotiate with a ministry-approved textbook that must be purchased for the classroom, regardless of price.

2. Centralized Option B

Option B is more expansive than Option A. Instead of a single adoption, the ministry recommends a certain number of textbooks for each course. Using Option B, each provincial Ministry of Education evaluates a wide range of resources before selecting the textbooks (usually two) that best fit its curriculum. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick use this method.

Under this selection system, publishers rarely capture the whole market, but it is not unusual for one series to predominate. Textbook or series that meet approval

can have significant sales. Even though the selection pool is small, teachers still have a choice of classroom resources.

B. Decentralization

British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario, have moved away from Options A and B in favour of a decentralized system that offers more choice to teachers. In these provinces, the Ministry of Education reviews a number of textbooks and series, and can approve a wide range of resources that school boards and teachers can select according to their own individual needs. Decentralization allows for a greater number of publishers to have their textbooks or series approved for use in schools. The downside for publishers, however, is that there are no guarantees that their textbooks will be adopted in large numbers or that the same level of FSL education will be achieved throughout the province.

Across Canada, committees in every province do an initial selection of resources, from which teachers then choose their classroom resources. “A free market has never existed in any provinces allowing a teacher to use any book he/she might so choose” (Lorimer, 1981, p. 10) without input from the Ministry of Education. The major difference between all the systems of adoption is the range of choice afforded to teachers: Options A and B offer teachers little, if any, choice in selecting their own teaching materials in order to achieve a more unified approach to provincial education whereas decentralization allows for more teacher autonomy to select resources that best suit their own personal needs in the classroom. With a diverse means of textbook selection throughout the country, an educational publisher such as Oxford must work hard to tailor its sales efforts to each province’s purchasing habits, adding another level of complexity to publishing for the Canadian market.

The fifth challenge to Oxford’s sales was its lengthy development and uneven sales. To meet annual sale projections and make an annual return on its investment, Oxford attempted to sell the series while still in production. The first year, the sales staff only had one unit *le Grand voyage* ready to present, which was not enough to convince customers to buy into the whole series. Even though provinces such as Saskatchewan were approving resources as they were coming available from publishers, Oxford found that the majority of teachers wanted to see all the units and how they worked before purchasing. The lack of full availability hampered sales and defeated financial forecasts for the series. According to its budget, *Communi-Quéte* was projected to net \$500,000 per year. It failed to do so, leaving the company in a precarious position, as it had to draw funds from other departments. The financial challenges associated with the project were exacerbated because the series overspent and undersold.

The sixth challenge that Oxford faced was a lack of commitment to FSL in the West. Despite Oxford's desire to tailor the series to the national market, its publishing proposal overlooked the fact that western provinces, a large portion of the market, are not strongly committed to FSL education. In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, FSL courses are not mandatory for any grade, and British Columbia only makes FSL compulsory for grades 5 to 8—a market *Communi-Quête* would barely capture as the series is intended for grades 8–10. Federal funding is based on provincial *Action Plans* for FSL education (CPF, 2002, p. 3), the current number of students in FSL programs and hours spent on instruction. Without the necessary commitment to FSL education in the West, those provincial governments are less likely to receive as much funding for FSL programs or textbook purchases as provinces where FSL education has more of a presence like in Ontario. In May 2004, for instance, the Ontario Ministry of Education allocated \$14.5 million in a one-time textbook investment for secondary schools (press release, Ontario Ministry of Education, 18 May 2004). Oxford, however, was unable to capitalize on any increased funding allocated to French-as-a-second-language until February 2006 when *Communi-Quête* level 3 was officially approved for grade 9 applied Core French on Ontario's recommended resources list, called the Trillium list.

One major oversight in the publishing proposal for the national market was the Alberta market. Alberta counts for 16 percent of the national market for FSL grades 7–9 and is the third largest market for Core French textbooks in Canada. In 1999, the Ministry of Education in Alberta started developing its own Core French resources for the province for grades 7–9, called the Alberta Education Kits. They each consist of four units per grade. Today, these homemade kits are recommended as primary resources on the grade 7, 8, and 9 correlations of resources, as they meet more than 80 percent of the curriculum objectives. Other resources meeting only 50 to 80 percent of the curriculum are recommended as support resources: grade 7 (Pearson Education: *Ça marche !* Level 1 *Mémo-photos* and *Venez chez nous*); grade 8 (Thomson-Nelson *Tout ados: Attention, magazineurs !* and *Mystères sous-marins*); and grade 9 (Oxford *À l'action!*).

Alberta operates on the Option B system of adoption that more closely resembles a single adoption system because it recommends one primary resource and a number of support resources to its teachers. Alberta is a large market, but it is not generating the kind of textbook revenue that FSL publishers such as Oxford would have hoped.

If publishers' textbooks are not approved as primary teaching material, they generally do not sell well. Sales data obtained for Core French for grades 7 to 9 in Alberta proves the negative impact that a "support resource" recommendation has on sales. The one recommended *Communi-Quête* resource, *A l'action !*, and the two *Tout ados* resources, *Attention, magazineurs !* and

Mystères sous-marins, have sold no units in all of Alberta and *Ça marche !* has sold only six copies each of the student books *Mémo-photos* and *Venez chez nous*. These results are somewhat skewed because the main resource list for teachers neglects some crucial information about each of the publishers resources. For the one Oxford unit recommended, the order number listed is wrong: it uses a seven-digit code (6187212) instead of a six-digit (618712). None of the two approved units from the Thomson-Nelson *Tout ados* series appear on the list, and only one of the two units approved from Pearson’s *Ça marche !* series appear on the recommendations list, and that is *Mémo-photos*: the unit *Venez chez nous* is not listed.

These oversights and mistakes by the Alberta Ministry of Education on the resource recommendation lists they distribute to teachers can unwittingly sabotage publishers’ sales efforts. Publishers need to be careful that ministries of education in every province publish correct material about their resources by double-checking the information that is delivered to teachers. Otherwise, publishers could unnecessarily forgo sales. Customers cannot buy what they do not know is available to them. *Communi-Quête* is also listed as a support resource in Manitoba, and the information is correct.

Without the purchasing power and support of Alberta, all FSL publishers lose a substantial source of potential revenue of approximately \$18 million, and the national market for Core French grades 7-9 shrinks from 39% to 33%! Such realities make it even more challenging for FSL publishers to receive a return on their investment.

Table 2: 2002–2003 Core French Enrolment for grade 7–9 (8–10 in BC)

2002-2003 Core French Enrolment by Grade and by Province										
Grade	Ontario	British Columbia	Alberta	Nova Scotia	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Newfoundland	New Brunswick	Prince Edward Island	Total
7	133,785		15,880	9,835	9,482	9,551	5,883	4,172	1,446	190,034
8	131,039	36,397	10,801	9,793	9,067	8,715	5,819	4,219	1,511	217,361
9	71,311	21,462	8,758	9,891	5,465	4,007	5,418	5,064	1,406	132,782
10		16,262								
Totals	336,135	74,121	35,439	29,519	24,014	22,273	17,120	13,455	4,363	556,439

Source: *The State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2004*

To boost sales, Oxford’s sales manager wrote a proposal in 2004 to capture the Ontario market that had not been previously a part of the sales plan because it did not follow the National Core French Study: “Since *Communi-Quête* was not originally targeted for Ontario, any sales that result... will be gravy in terms of the product’s financial picture” (Meschino, OxCan News, January 2005, p. 5). At the time Oxford’s second proposal was created, Ontario represented 56

percent of the overall FSL market in Canada and 61 percent of the national market for grades 7 to 9—precisely the target market for the *Communi-Quête* series.

Recognizing the sales potential in Ontario, national sales manager Chris Allen devised a plan to sell the series into the Ontario market, and publisher Beverley Biggar determined that Oxford could adapt the series, as previously discussed, by creating a teachers resource book specifically for the province's curriculum requirements. The student book, however, would remain unchanged, saving Oxford the enormous expense of redesigning the books for the Ontario market.

In the January 2005 issue of *OxCan News*, Mary-Lynne Meschino predicted that “many [Ontario] boards will spend [their] money at the Grade 9 level, where [Oxford's] *Communi-Quête* program is the only new product available.” On February 22, 2006, the Ontario Ministry of Education approved all six units of *Communi-Quête* level 3 for use in grade 9 applied Core French. Due to the different natures and educational focuses of grade 9 applied and academic courses, *Communi-Quête* could not be used for both, as it could not satisfy the curriculum criteria for each course. A description of each follows.

In Ontario, Core French is only mandatory for students until grade 9. In this final year, the course is streamlined into two cohorts: applied Core French and academic Core French. Students can take either one to complete their required courses in French. Both courses share the same learning objectives, yet they each take different approaches to teaching: academic courses are more theory-based whereas applied courses focus more on practical application of the language (i.e. speaking). Students struggling in the subject require a resource of their own, and the *Communi-Quête* series fills that void along with three other competing FSL titles also approved on the Trillium list. These four textbooks are competing for a substantial market of 58,089 students in grade 9 applied Core French, more than 81 percent of the 71,311 grade 9 students in Core French in Ontario. Workshopper Anne Normand conducted in-service for Ontario teachers to show them how best to use the series in applied classrooms.

Ontario was eager for new resources, but the resources still had to match the curriculum. Despite the decentralized system in Ontario, not all publishers' resources make the recommended resources list. The Ministry of Education still must review and approve them before they appear on the list. Ontario is a unique market with specific needs and wants, and publishers must tailor their textbooks to the curriculum and the market in order to make the impact they intend.

Based on publisher Beverley Biggar's proposal for the Ontario market, Mary-Lynne also anticipated series adoptions for grades 7 and 8, which did not materialize. Courses for these two grades are more academically focused and follow Ontario's traditional, grammar-based

curriculum. Oxford specifically created teacher resource books for all six units for grades 7 and 8, costing time, resources, manpower and funds that were never justified with sales. Pearson and Gage captured sales for these two grades because they each developed a two-level series specific to Ontario's curriculum. Pearson created the *On y va!* series and Gage created the *Tout ados* series, both of which were the only resources approved for the Trillium list for those grades. Thomson-Nelson attempted to sell the Ontario series *Tout ados* that it acquired from Gage for grades 7 to 8 to the national market, but it was not approved in most provinces because it was not designed in accordance with the National Core French Study.

Both Oxford and Thomson-Nelson, two first-time FSL publishers, tried to sell their series to markets for which they were never intended: *Communi-Quête* was created for the national market, not Ontario, and *Tout ados* was created for the Ontario market, not the national market. Consequently, their series were not readily adopted in these markets. Pearson, on the other hand, who has been publishing Core French textbooks longer, created separate textbooks for the national market and in Ontario for grades 7 and 8, grade 9 academic and grade 9 applied. Pearson tailored all its products to their appropriate market, and they all appeared on the Trillium list and the national market recommended resource lists. To be successful and financially responsible, educational publishers need to know their market and understand its particular wants.

Despite the challenges Oxford faced entering the market as a first-time FSL publisher, and developing and selling the *Communi-Quête* series, national sales manager Chris Allen believed it would have been unwise for Oxford to discontinue publishing French-as-a-second-language, especially after all the initial work and investment. It takes an enormous amount of effort to establish a new series, and publishers need patience while awaiting sales to produce a return on their initial investment. Now that all three units have been completed, sales of the series have been catching up in the market, thanks, in part, to Oxford's sales representatives.

The Sales Representatives' Role

Sales representatives are the face and the voice of any publishing operation. They meet with customers directly and also inform the publishing process by reporting back to the author team the wants, needs, desires and sometimes criticisms of potential buyers for a particular series or textbook. Their feedback often helps the author team to make improvements to its textbooks before publication. Because *Communi-Quête* was being developed and sold at the same time, it also benefited from constructive criticism its sales agents related to the author team.

In the experience of Catherine Dryer, Oxford's BC and Alberta salesperson, educators are usually interested in new programs. With interest, however, also comes added attention and

pressure to deliver. The 2003 *Action Plan for Official Languages* issued by the federal government primed the industry “for a new way of doing things,” so educators were anxious to see what Oxford would bring to the market. It was an opportune time for Oxford to impress and make a name for itself as a FSL publisher.

To generate awareness and sales for the new series, Dryer contacted FSL teachers and district consultants in her territory via telephone, faxes, product mailers and in-person sales calls. Her own personal reputation with many of the consultants facilitated the process.

As a small publisher, Oxford’s sales force is small: four sales representatives were promoting and selling *Communi-Quête* compared to Pearson’s twenty-two representatives for *Ça marche !* and Nelson’s thirty-four representatives for *Tout ados*.

Table 3: FSL Sales Representatives for Oxford, Thomson-Nelson, and Pearson

	Ontario	British Columbia	Alberta	New Brunswick	Manitoba	Nova Scotia	Sask.	Newfoundland	Prince Edward Island
Oxford	0	1/2	1/2	1/4	1/2	1/4	1/2	1/4	1/4
Pearson Education	11	4	3	1/4	1	1/4	1	1/4	1/4
Thomson Nelson	17	5	5	1/2	2	1/2	3	1/2	1/2

In educational publishing, sales representatives are trained on how to sell individual products: textbooks generally have a longer life, approximately seven years, in the market compared to trade titles that are introduced into the market twice a year. Successful sales representatives need to ensure that they present the materials without pretending to be more knowledgeable about the subject matter than the teacher: any condescending behaviour on the part of the sales representative can have a negative effect on sales.

Sales in educational publishing tend to be cyclical and dependent on the school calendar, which favours some months more than others. The sales year takes place from September 1 to August 30. Sales peak in August, as teachers prepare for the back-to-school rush in September, and another rush occurs in December for the start of the second school semester in January. Sales representatives work hard between September and November, and January and May to contact teachers and consultants for purchases.

It must be remembered, however, that the FSL series is one product of many that sales representatives have to sell. For publishers to succeed in general, sales representatives have to meet a certain quota in a particular year. Realistically, they could not spend too much time on the *Communi-Quête* series, especially when many textbooks were not ready for purchase in that same fiscal year. Pre-selling was done but proved challenging because teachers, as previously stated,

wanted to see the whole series before making a final decision on resources. Teachers want to be sure of the resources they are buying because they will be using them in the classroom until the next adoption cycle in approximately seven years.

As a result of customers' reluctance to commit to the series, sales representatives began showing at least one theme from each unit to indicate how the series would progress. Since the completion of the series in early 2006, adoptions for the series have increased dramatically, as evidenced in the province of British Columbia.

Under the decentralized system in British Columbia, the BC Ministry of Education recommends resources: districts or teachers then decide individually which of those they want for their classroom. Teachers are even encouraged to mix and match resources from different series if it suits their needs better. Despite a decentralized system province-wide, certain districts in BC have single adoptions based on the recommended resources lists issued by the Ministry of Education. For instance, curriculum consultants in the Surrey, Abbotsford and Richmond adopted Oxford's *Communi-Quête* for the whole district while others in Delta, Vancouver and Mission adopted Pearson's *Ça marche !* series. Before committing to purchasing a series, the district usually engages in a lengthy evaluation process of publisher presentations, piloting materials, examining resources, teacher feedback, and in-service with workshopers. The Surrey district, for example, required three years before deciding on the *Communi-Quête* series above all others. The Ministry did not approve Nelson's *Tout ados* series because it was considered incomplete for not offering a series for grade 10 and thus was not a resource option in any district in BC.

In terms of centralized purchasing, Oxford exclusively captured the Newfoundland market (17,120 students) and Prince Edward Island market (4,363 students) after extensive piloting of the *Communi-Quête* series whereas New Brunswick (13,455 students) adopted Pearson's *Ça marche !* series. Nova Scotia (29,519 students) purchased both competitors textbooks. (A complete chart of the adoptions can be found in appendix D).

Discounts to Match the Purchasing Habits of Each Province in the National Market

All publishers offer discounts to their customers: some, however, are more favorable than others. Most educational publishers are also distributors, so they sell and ship directly to their customers without the added cost of an intermediary. It also means they can negotiate special pricing. The general industry discount is around twenty percent, which is also the standard discount for the *Communi-Quête* series. Discounts as high as thirty-five percent are also possible in the industry for bulk purchases. The latest trend in the Canadian education system involves

schools placing their own orders with publishers. Such a system creates infinitely more complicated and more labour intensive distribution for publishers because they must now package and send resources to each school individually, instead of to a central, provincial distribution centre, as was once the norm.

Many provinces had central purchasing and warehouses that, thanks to bulk purchasing, enabled them to receive greater discounts. With decentralization and district purchases, those provinces now have less collective bargaining power for more favorable discounts. Conversely, publishers are not compelled to offer better discounts to provinces with centralized adoptions Options A or B. Once the Ministry of Education has made its adoption selection, the chosen publisher knows it has a captive market and less reason to negotiate price points.

Provinces with decentralized adoptions can negotiate with publishers for better deals because teachers are not bound to any particular textbook. As long as the resource is on the recommended reading list and meets curriculum requirements, teachers are free to purchase from competitors for a better price. Most school boards, except in Prince Edward Island, have their own budget and grants for textbooks, so they are more mindful of their expenditures.

Teacher Conferences: Meeting Ground for Publishers and Customers

Teacher conferences are an excellent place for selling and networking. At these venues, publishers can show off their wares, raise awareness about their programs, and encounter potential customers. Through these interactions, publishers can also receive feedback about their products and learn about teachers' needs and wants for classroom materials. The importance of these conferences for publishers' sales should not be underestimated, as these kinds of events help establish and anchor products in the market. As a new FSL publisher, Oxford's presence and attendance at modern language conferences was crucial to launching and promoting the *Communi-Quéte* series in the market and to keeping the series profile high.

Through workshops and presentations, publisher Beverley Biggar and workshopper Anne Normand had the opportunity to speak directly to teachers from around the province about the merits of its FSL program and also personally answer any questions about the series. According to Wendy Carr of the *British Columbia Association of Teachers of Modern Languages* (BCTML),

Topics [publishers address at conference workshops] are less to do with overt selling of products and more to do with generic methodology. This is a change over the past few years. People objected to 'book-hawking.' (Carr, email, November 2005.)

Booths, however, are also set up to display resources and make contact with educators: it is one of the ways for publishers to reach customers. To attract teachers' attention, publishers also furnish promotional material for registration packages, give away canvas bags with their logo, and host a post-conference wine and cheese: the latter two roles alternate between publishers from year to year.

Educators who attend teacher conferences are oftentimes the most enthusiastic about the subject. Generally, those with the greatest need for supplementary FSL information are unlikely to attend because of the limited number of professional days allocated to teachers per year. Teachers only receive a certain number of paid professional days yearly, and most educators would prefer to use those days for subjects they enjoy (Rehorick 79). Consequently, the incentive is not there for most non-specialist French teachers to become more knowledgeable about a subject that holds little interest for them. Teachers who do not attend conferences rely more heavily on ministry approved resource lists and other teachers' recommendations when purchasing their textbooks. Oxford could reach these teachers through mail-outs, personalized visits by sales representatives, or information sessions for individual districts or schools, all three of which are more costly endeavours however than meeting many teachers face-to-face at conferences and creating good word-of-mouth publicity there for the *Communi-Quête* series. Conferences are an essential element in any educational publishers' sales strategy.

Oxford found its sales affected by both positive and negative developments in the educational industry. From timely funding to inopportune strikes, all publishers must adapt to the changes that come with the times. In October 2005, for instance, a two-week strike in BC resulted in the cancellation of the modern languages conference, which hurt both teachers and publishers alike. Oxford President Joanna Gertler had hoped to see increased sales in the West for the *Communi-Quête* series; however, without the proper forum to meet BC teachers, publishers such as Oxford could not inform their main customers of their products, which made sales that year even more challenging. As the second largest market in Canada for Core French resources, BC represents 34 percent of the national market for grades 7 to 9, a substantial market for Oxford to capture.

As a new FSL publisher, Oxford needed to capitalize on as many opportunities as possible to establish itself in the market. FSL teachers were not familiar enough with the *Communi-Quête* series to buy it on speculation, as they might have with Pearson or Thomson-Nelson whose FSL products have been in the market longer. The BC Ministry of Education approved both Oxford's *Communi-Quête* series and Pearson's *Ça marche !* series as Core French resources for grades 8 to 10, but without the opportunity to see and try the *Communi-Quête* series

due to the strike, many BC teachers making decisions on textbook purchases that same year might have selected the *Ça marche !* series simply because they recognize Pearson's name and know it to be a reputable FSL publisher.

Fortunately, the government released \$56 million dollars to schools to compensate for the strike. According to an article in the *Globe and Mail* published in December 2005, "the first priority for districts in spending their \$50 a student is textbooks and learning resources (Fong, S3)." How much of these funds were actually allocated to French textbook purchases in particular was not disclosed. Two months after the increase in textbook funding, however, all three levels of both the *Communi-Quête* series and the *Ça marche !* series were approved province-wide, so both series could have benefited from the increased funding. With perfect timing and equal adoptions, purchasing decisions between the two series were thus based on district and teacher preferences—two factors difficult for any publisher to gauge accurately on their sales forecasts.

Workshops and Series Demonstrations: Convincing Customers to Buy

The role of the workshopper is to conduct seminars and information sessions to show teachers how to use a particular publisher's resources most effectively in the classroom and describe how those materials meet classroom needs and curriculum criteria. Oxford brought in workshopper Anne Normand during the second year of the *Communi-Quête* series in 2004 to lead various workshops for teachers.

Workshoppers are vital to publishers because teachers are generally averse to traditional sales pitches and sales representatives. Teachers prefer to be taught about products by someone who understands pedagogical principles, and workshoppers function in this capacity as non-threatening sale representatives. As a workshopper, Normand believed she had more credibility because she was also a teacher, which marketing manager Carolyn Cobham and sales representative Catherine Dryer confirmed to be true.

Catherine Dryers' experience is that teachers want to hear about textbooks from other teachers. In presentations, sales representatives talk about resources from the publisher's point of view whereas workshoppers discuss how they themselves use the resources in the classroom. Teachers know that most sales representatives do not know much about the teaching and even less about French as a subject, so they feel better about buying a textbook or series from other FSL teachers. To promote the *Communi-Quête* series and talk to teachers directly, Anne Normand travelled the country for two years, conducting information sessions at conferences, schools and ministries of education.

At Conferences

Depending on the province, conferences are held either once or twice a year. At these events, publishers promote their resources by way of display tables and through workshops on specific themes. Teachers are adverse to direct sales pitches, so publishers look to present their products during workshops as the solution to teachers' classroom needs. Themes such as "cooperative learning" or "engaging adolescent learners" provide the context necessary to discuss the merits of the *Communi-Quête* series and thus entice teachers to try it.

Presentations at conferences are often held in English to assist teachers with minimal knowledge of French and also because most teachers are Anglophones who speak French-as-a-second-language themselves. FSL teachers hoping to acquire an accurate idea of all the various resources on the market and make informed purchases will experience difficulty, as many information sessions for competing textbooks are often held at the same time. Such realities also undermine publishers' sales efforts.

At the Ministry of Education

Presentations are made to the Ministry of Education in each province as "sales pitches" to secure an adoption. Once an adoption is granted, publishers offer more complete customer service by sending workshopers to districts to conduct detailed training sessions for teachers on how to use the program effectively at a provincial, district or even school level. To effectively demonstrate the series, workshopers need to familiarize themselves with provincial curricula and local issues related to FSL to be as knowledgeable as possible about teacher concerns.

At the Train-the-Trainer Sessions

In the spring 2005, Oxford began holding "train-the-trainer" sessions to train other teachers/consultants to lead workshops and in-services for other teachers in their areas. Normand, for example, conducted sessions in Ontario and also in British Columbia where she returned in May 2006 to hold another session for the Surrey district because it had just adopted the *Communi-Quête* series.

The teacher community is a network: teachers hear about textbooks from other teachers who then become advocates for a particular program themselves. In a decentralized adoption system, such as BC, where teachers purchase their own textbooks, it is especially important to train other workshopers, so they can educate other teachers about *Communi-Quête* and thus generate sales for the series on their own.

According to the national sales manager Chris Allen, FSL workshops are highly expensive due to the travel and expenses incurred. In the past, he has flown teachers from Manitoba to Toronto to attend trainer sessions where Normand would instruct teachers on how to use the *Communi-Quête* series most effectively in the classroom to meet curriculum requirements. In July 2005, for instance, six Ontario teachers went to the Oxford offices to be trained. Now that the development of the *Communi-Quête* series has ceased, adoptions have been

made, and trainers trained, Normand is no longer working full time for Oxford and is back in the classroom teaching Core French.

As a result of the training sessions Anne Normand conducted, Oxford has created an effective network of series promoters and a more efficient and inexpensive use of its resources to promote and generate sales for the *Communi-Quête* series.

Chapter 7: Overview and Conclusions

***Communi-Quête:* Oxford's First FSL Series—Is it the Last?**

After three years of development, the *Communi-Quête* series was completed in June 2006. It included 18 student books spanning three levels each; 18 national teacher resource book; 18 Ontario teacher resource book; 18 workbooks; 18 reproducible masters; 14 CDs and videos. Bringing a series of this scope into being demanded a major commitment from Oxford Canada.

As a small publisher with only five percent market share, Oxford Canada bravely entered the FSL market already inhabited by the largest educational publishers in Canada: Pearson Education and Thomson-Nelson. It was a David-and-Goliath match up, yet Oxford reckoned it could develop a series that could compete with the multinationals, and it did.

Oxford was moved into action for a number of reasons: the main one was timing. The federal government had just renewed its financial commitment to FSL education, Ministries of Education were calling for new resources, and numerous mergers had minimized the FSL publishers in Canada, creating space for new players. Oxford was keen to expand its publishing operations, and FSL publishing was a natural extension of its burgeoning language arts program. It had access to an experienced author team with a history of developing successful Core French resources according to the principles of the National Core French Study. All of these factors contributed to Oxford's willingness to enter the FSL market and attempt to capitalize on this growth opportunity.

Good timing, however, did not ensure that the project would be executed without difficulty. It just meant Oxford felt confident that the end result would justify the challenges that lay ahead.

As a first-time FSL publisher, Oxford encountered many challenges in developing the *Communi-Quête* series: unfamiliarity in the market and with the market; time constraints and missed deadlines; hiring challenges and staff working out-of-the-office; curriculum requirements and sales expectations; underselling and overspending; a large market and a small sales force.

Unlike its competition that eased itself into the market by acquiring textbooks and building its customer base and reputation before creating its first FSL series, Oxford undertook the enormous task and complex challenge of developing its own indigenous FSL series without being a known entity in the national market. If, in 1999, Oxford had purchased Pearson's three divested FSL textbook—*Acti-Vie*, *En Direct*, and *Entre Amis*—instead of Gage Learning Corporation, Oxford might have found it easier to sell the *Communi-Quête* series. With those three assets, Oxford's name would have already been known in the FSL market for grades 7-9

because of the *Entre Amis* series, and its author team would have been more closely associated with the *Acti-Vie* series that it had created originally for Prentice-Hall. Each of Oxford's competitors entered the FSL market through different strategies, and each achieved different levels of success depending on those strategies.

The difficulty of publishing a new FSL series, as an unknown FSL publisher, was compounded by the size of the national market: it was a large and diverse customer base that only four sales representatives were servicing. The national market is much harder to penetrate with no previous rapport established with the FSL clientele, an advantage that Oxford's competitors had. The biggest challenges Oxford faced however were inexperience and inadequate research of the national market that created overly optimistic sales expectations.

The *Communi-Quête* series Oxford developed based its *raison d'être* on a need expressed throughout the national market for resources. Primary research for the series consisted of speaking with teachers who desired resources more specifically tailored to their needs. These conversations spurred Oxford on to capitalize on this underserved market before the competition. The Press hired an experienced staff to gain a market edge and also minimize the mistakes that it would make as a first-time FSL publisher. Despite its best efforts, Oxford's inexperience publishing language textbooks proved a liability and caused the company costly mistakes.

Oxford placed great faith in the expertise and reputation of the management and author team responsible for the success of the *Acti-Vie* series. The market for the *Acti-Vie* series however was not the same as that of the *Communi-Quête* series. More refined research would have revealed the challenges unique to publishing for the national market for Core French in grades 7-9. The national market is a minority market in Canada, representing only 39% of the Core French market for grades 7-9. Research would have shown that the lack of commitment in the West to FSL education. In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, FSL courses are not mandatory for any grade, and British Columbia only makes FSL compulsory for grades 5 to 8—a strong market that *Communi-Quête* would barely capture as the series is intended for grades 8 to 10. Without a commitment to FSL, funding in those provinces for new FSL textbooks is not necessarily a top priority.

Research would have also revealed that Alberta had been making its own textbooks since 1999, a significant market that would not necessarily be available to FSL publishers. Without Alberta, the third largest Core French market in Canada, the national market for Core French resources for grades 7-9 reduced to only 33 percent!

With 61 percent of the entire Core French market for grades 7-9, Ontario is a hard market to avoid, and yet Oxford tried to do just that, despite the comparative ease of publishing for the

Ontario market than the national market. Ontario is a substantial and financially viable market, condensed into one province. Sales efforts in Ontario are dispersed over a smaller area, and the province's uniform curriculum, compared to the national market, makes it easier for publishers to develop resources. In many respects, Ontario is a more straightforward market because the author team only has to please one province, instead of eight. Oxford, however, started publishing for the most challenging FSL market, the difficulty of which was only heightened by Oxford's inexperience and unfamiliarity in the market. Publishers starting with the larger and more streamlined Ontario market, instead of the national market, can generate revenues while incurring the costs of developing FSL materials for the national market. Gage, for instance, before selling to Thomson-Nelson in 2003, successfully published in 2001 its first FSL series *Tout ados* for grades 7-8 in Ontario.

Although the Ontario market has its many advantages, it would not necessarily have been the best market for Oxford to attempt when it entered the market in 2002 as a first-time publisher. At the time, Pearson had already captured the Core French market for grades 7 and 8, and grade 9 academic and applied. Because of Pearson's dominance, Thomson-Nelson did not publish for this market, either. Even if the timing was right, Oxford's author team was not specialized in the grammar approach required for the Ontario market. It specialized in the communicative approach coveted by the national market, so its efforts to capture the Ontario market would have been misplaced.

When Oxford did eventually enter the Ontario market in 2005, the timing was right for new resources for grades 7-9, but the product was wrong. Although *Communi-Quête* level 3 was approved for grade 9 applied Core French, Oxford lost precious time and resources creating Ontario teacher resource books for grade 7 and 8, as the existing resources did not meet the grammar-focused curriculum that distinguishes Ontario from the other provinces and thus were not adopted by the Ministry of Education. From the case study of the *Communi-Quête* series presented in this report, it is uncertain whether the additional sales that Oxford received for grade 9 applied Core French compensated for the development costs of the Ontario teacher resource books for grades 7 and 8, or whether those grade 9 sales did, in fact, assist Oxford in improving its overall financial picture for the series.

Oxford originally entered the Ontario market to generate additional revenues because it was not receiving the revenue from the national market that it had expected. The *Communi-Quête* series required a large financial outlay, and it was not meeting its sales target of \$500,000 per year. Teachers were reluctant to purchase the series without seeing it in its entirety. Because Oxford could not readily sell the series, as it was still being developed, it could not achieve its

sales objectives. The program became a financial strain on the whole company, forcing the Press to draw money from other departments. As a small company, it was difficult for Oxford to withstand the expense and the periods without revenue.

The *Communi-Quête* series was underselling and overspending, and Oxford was in a rush to complete the series. Deadlines were unmet, and consequently it did not give as much consideration to the budget as it might otherwise have. Any systems or processes in place for cost-effective business dealings were not well respected. The necessary checks and balances on spending were not well enforced, and no firm leadership emerged in terms of finance management. Many key employees were rarely in the office, and in the absence of budget-conscious managers, some hasty spending decisions were made, only compounding the financial problems for the series. Some employees left in charge had never had to concern themselves with budgets in the past, so finances were spent at times without the necessary caution. With the added pressure of time constraints, Oxford sometimes did not have the luxury of finding a means to reduce costs or seek out simple, inexpensive solutions, either. Communication broke down at the management level, and the finance manager's words of wisdom were not heeded: "If you do not measure it, you cannot manage it." If Oxford had managed to tame its expenditures, the series would have been less of a financial burden and worry to the company.

In an effort to capture extra sales and improve its revenues, Oxford also put itself in the difficult position of trying to produce a series for both the Ontario and the national market at the same time, which only added pressure to the already tight deadlines and the financial stress of the project. More experience publishing for the Core French market in Ontario would have helped Oxford to avoid creating resources not suited for their intended audience and capitalize on the profits from resources that were well suited. Ontario is such a lucrative market that it would be wise for Oxford to publish an FSL series for it in the future, provided its author team can meet the province's curriculum expectations.

To be successful and financially responsible, educational publishers need to know their market, so they can tailor their products to its specific needs. All that knowledge only comes with experience. Such pointed publishing efforts work to build customer confidence in their products and also establish a strong brand name and identity in the market that help sales efforts. Attempts to sell into any market for the "chance" of increased revenue only weaken a publisher's credibility because teachers hear about which publishers' resources did not meet the ministry's standard of approval.

As Oxford experienced, investing in textbook development, especially foreign languages, is expensive and challenging—one reason why multinationals are the few financially capable of

doing it. Despite the Press' small size and the developmental and financial challenges it faced, Oxford succeeded on two important levels: it published a complete series, and it met curriculum expectations for the national market.

Even though it was a challenge to develop the series and a financial strain on the company, Oxford continued publishing the entire *Communi-Quête* series. The series stayed its course, and it is now righting itself in the market, garnering Ministry approvals, capturing adoptions, and selling in every province, except New Brunswick. The various acceptance levels throughout the provinces, from no adoptions to support resources to single adoptions, best exemplifies the difficulty of successfully publishing for the entire national market and each province's specific curriculum expectations.

One of Oxford's biggest strengths was its author team, but it was also one of its weakest links. The *Communi-Quête* series is selling and being adopted in the national market because it met the curriculum and stayed true to the National Core French Study. The framework of the National Core French Study and the confines of the curriculum both demand that textbooks consist of certain pedagogical principles. FSL publishers who deviate from established curriculums run a high risk of not selling into schools and not making a return on their investment, as Oxford experienced in the Ontario market when it attempted to "adapt" the *Communi-Quête* series to the curriculum for Core French for grades 7 and 8, instead of publishing specifically for it.

Both *Communi-Quête* and *Ça marche !* met most curriculum standards for the national market, so purchasing decisions came down to teacher preference, and their preferences, unfortunately for publishers, cannot be predicted. Both series equal acceptance by every Ministry shows that they were relatively comparable entities and that Oxford's author team did its job.

The experience of Oxford's author team allowed the *Communi-Quête* series to transcend its many troubles and impress its customers, but it was also many of their errors that caused many budget overruns. Oxford's FSL publishing program could have been more successful if it understood its market better from the start and tamed its expenditures.

Although the *Communi-Quête* series presented its challenges, President Joanna Gertler had no overall regrets. In retrospect, however, she indicated that, in future, she would develop one level at a time, dedicate one person to write the manuscript, and develop a more complete sales and marketing plan before commencing the project. The most difficult challenge she faced was convincing the parent office in the UK that the program was successful, as projected sales did not materialize from the outset. Once the series was complete, adoptions started to come and sales

began to follow after securing single adoptions in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and 50 percent of the FSL market of Nova Scotia.

Oxford's greatest success as a first-time FSL publisher is its timely entrance into the FSL market. In 2003, Thomson-Nelson had just acquired Gage Learning Corporation, and it was considering developing a national version of the *Tout ados* series, but it was already a year behind its competitors in terms of development. Thomson-Nelson had also never published its own FSL series and was technically as inexperienced as Oxford as an FSL publisher. It was looking for a possible entry point into the market. Because Oxford was already developing the *Communi-Quête* series, Thomson-Nelson decided not to produce a competitive series for grades 7–9, leaving Pearson as Oxford's only major competition. Both publishers' sales benefited from Thomson-Nelson's lack of participation in the national market. If Oxford did not enter the market when it did, it might never again have had the chance to enter the FSL market: Thomson-Nelson would have gained the first-time experience of an FSL publisher, instead of Oxford.

Oxford's FSL department has gained knowledge and grown along with its fledgling FSL series. With the series complete, the department has disbanded. Most FSL staff members were on contract. Some have been absorbed into other areas of the company while others' contracts have not been renewed. Oxford has had some discussion about developing another FSL series for grades 10-12, but that has yet to be determined. Publisher and senior author Beverley Biggar, whose contract has not yet been renewed, would have the responsibility of investigating future options based on recommendations from the director of the education division. Both the president of Oxford Canada Joanna Gertler and the director of the education division Mary-Lynne Meschino have ceased working at Oxford, so the impetus for another FSL program may have diminished with their departures.

The FSL department is currently not being used as a long-term revenue source, and without any projects, it is not economically feasible for Oxford to continue with the department at this time. Without an active FSL department, Oxford could lose its market edge that it worked so hard to attain. While its FSL department lays dormant, Pearson and Thomson-Nelson's FSL departments are continuing, and Thomson-Nelson could usurp Oxford's place in the market. With the FSL products that Thomson-Nelson acquired through its merger with Gage, it has now had a chance to ease itself into the market and build a rapport with its clients before attempting to develop its first indigenous series, which it is planning to do.

Oxford Canada will have to work hard to reestablish its FSL department and find qualified staff, should it reopen the department. Most of the staff who worked in the FSL department are no longer there, except for some key players, such as the managing editor and a

production editor. Although they are now working in other departments at Oxford, they have the experience and some of the necessary understanding of the FSL department's structure to revive it, if need be. Oxford does not seem to be closing any doors on publishing FSL resources in the future, but it is not actively trying to open any either. Time will tell whether Oxford continues publishing for Core French. New textbooks are required approximately every seven years, and it takes three years to produce them. Thus, Oxford still has a number of years before 2013 to decide whether, or not, it will capitalize on all its initial hard work of entering French-as-a-second-language publishing and making a name for itself as an FSL publisher.

Appendices

Appendix A: Quête-Language Content

Communi-Quête Level 1 Quête-Language

1. La guerre aux déchets

Accord de l'adjectif
Place de l'adjectif
Préposition pour + infinitif
Verbes réguliers qui se termine en -er
Verbes irréguliers
Adjectives démonstratifs

2. Consommation!

Adjectives démonstratifs
Accord de l'adjectif
Place de l'adjectif
Verbes irréguliers: être et avoir
Comparatif

3. Phénomènes Canadiens

le présent
le passé composé
le futur proche
prépositions et les noms de provinces et territoires
les questions
les adverbs

4. Entrepreneurs en Herbe

Adjectifs possessifs
Article partitif
Préposition + article défini
Poser des questions
ER verbes: laver.
IR verbes: garnir, servir, venir, recevoir.
RE verbes: attendre, prendre, mettre, cuire.

5. Le Grand Voyage

Pays
Moyen de transport
Impératif
POUVOIR
DEVOIR

5. Mosaïque

Adjectives
Verbes irréguliers: être et faire
Verbes réguliers qui se termine en -er:
(adorer, aimer, parler)
Négatif
contractions
faire de, jouer à, jouer de

Communi-Quête Level 2 Quête-Language

1. En route vers la Francophonie

Questions
Pronoms compléments directs
Accord de l'adjectif
Place de l'adjectif
Superlatif
Adjectives possessifs
Verbes – future proche

2. A l'action!

Présent des verbes réguliers: jouer,
réussir, entendre
Présent des verbes irréguliers: avoir,
être, recevoir, faire, tenir
Imperatif des verbes réguliers: jouer,
finir, descendre
Il faut + verbe à l'infinitif
Pour + verbe à l'infinitif
Expressions faire de et jouer à

3. Les mystères de la science

Verbes – présent
Frotter, remplir, attendre
Avoir, être, faire, mettre, sortir
Imperatif des verbes irréguliers:
regarder, choisir, suspendre
Il faut + verbe à l'infinitif
Adverbes de temps
Article partitif

4. Retro-Monde

Accord de l'adjectifs
Place de l'adjectifs
Superlatif
Verbes – passé composé
Il faut ou On doit + verbe à l'infinitif

5. Faisons une différence!

Verbes – passé composé avec avoir et
avec être
Participe passé
Passé composé au négatif
Vouloir, devoir, pouvoir + un verbe à
l'infinitif
Futur proche

6. Ca brasse!

Accord de l'adjectif
Place de l'adjectif
Superlatif
Adjectives possessifs
Futur proche

Communi-Quête Level 3 Quête-Language

1. Studio Créateur

Accord de l'adjectif
Adjectif démonstratifs
Passé composé
Passé composé avec avoir et avec être
Participe passé des verbes
Pour + un verbe à l'infinitif
Conjunctions
adverbes

2. Mission: Survie

Présent des verbes réguliers: visiter,
choisir, perdre
verbes irréguliers: aller, avoir, être
manger, partir, prendre, voir
VOULOIR + POUVOIR + un verbe à
l'infinitif / Imperatif
Passé composé avec avoir et avec être
Participles passés des verbes

3. Folklore urbain

Accord de l'adjectif
Place de l'adjectif
Passé composé avec avoir et avec être
Imparfait
Participles passés irréguliers

4. Et maintenant, passons aux nouvelles

Passé composé avec avoir et avec être
Participe passé réguliers
Participe passé irréguliers
Future proche
Verbe + à ou de + un infinitif
Pronoms relatifs
Superlatif et comparatif de bon et bien

5. Bombes Météo

Le passé composé avec avoir et être
Les participe passés
Les verbes réfléchis
Verbe + à ou de + un infinitif
Les adjectives démonstratifs
Les adverbs
Les pronoms compléments directs
Les pronoms relatifs 'qui' et 'que'
Le pronom en

6. Un avenir à découvrir

L'accord de l'adjectif
La place de l'adjectif
Les adjectives démonstratifs
Le comparatif
Le superlatif
Les conjunctions
Le passé composé
Les verbes réfléchis
Le future simple

Appendix B: *Ça marche !* series

Table 4: The 17 Themed Units of *Ça marche !*

Pearson Education— <i>Ça marche!</i> —grade 7-9 (grade 8-10 BC)		
Level 1 (Grade 7)	Level 2 (Grade 8)	Level 3 (Grade 9)
Mémo-photos	L'école de l'avenir	Ma chambre, ma vie
Salut, mes amis!	Aventures en plein air	Mission : Emploi
Bon appétit !	Mon style, ma mode	Nous, les Canadiens
Venez chez nous !	Mordu du sport !	Mes trésors, mes souvenirs
A toi le choix !	Musique-mania !	Films à l'affiche !
Incognito	Action jeunesse	Stress sans détresse

Table 5: Series Pricing for *Ça marche !*

Modular	(six individual units)
Class Kit	\$ 275.00 net
Student Edition	\$ 7.95 net
Workbook	\$ 1.95 net
Teacher's Guide	\$ 49.95 net
Audio CD Package	\$ 24.95 net
Video	\$ 34.95 net
Textbook Edition	(six modules)
Student Edition	\$ 35.00 net
Workbook	\$ 7.95 net
Teacher's Guide	\$ 250.00 net
Audio CD Package	\$ 200.00 net
Video	\$ 100.00 net

Appendix C: Tout ados series

Table 6: The 16 Units of the *Tout ados* series

Level 1 (grade 7)	Level 2 (grade 8)
Vedettes du Cirque	Expo 1900
Attention, magasiniers!	Vagabonds de l'espace
Portraits canadiens	Ado Monde
A votre sante	Fêtes et Mardi gras
Zone Sportive	Sous un soleil imaginaire
Manèges merveilleux	Ado carrières
Réunion à Quebec	le tour du monde francophone
Mystères sous-marins	Quoi de neuf?

Table 7: Pricing for the *Tout ados* series

Starter Set	\$ 264.95
Student Book	\$ 7.45
Teacher Resource Guide	\$ 44.95
Workbook	\$ 1.75
Workbook	\$ 51.95
Audio CD	\$ 22.95
Game Board	\$ 8.95
Transparency Package	\$ 72.95
Video	\$ 22.95

Appendix D: Textbook Adoptions by Province

Provincial Adoptions for Core French										
Adoption System	Ontario	British Columbia	Alberta	Nova Scotia	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Newfoundland	New Brunswick	Prince Edward Island	Total
	Decentralized	Decentralized	Option B	Option B	Option B	Decentralized	Single: Option A	Option B	Single: Option A	
Grade 7										
Enrolment	133,785		15,880	9,835	9,482	9,551	5,883	4,172	1,446	190,034
Oxford	n/a		n/a	Communi- Quête 1	Communi- Quête 1	Communi- Quête 1 (support)	Communi- Quête 1	n/a	Communi- Quête 1	
Pearson	On y va! 1 (academic)		Ça marche! level 1 (support: only 2 units)	Ça marche! level 1	Ça marche! level 1	Ça marche! level 1 (main text)	n/a	Ça marche! level 1	n/a	
Nelson	Tout ados level 1		n/a	n/a	n/a	level 1 (support)	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Grade 8										
Enrolment	131,039	36,397	10,801	9,793	9,067	8,715	5,819	4,219	1,511	217,361
Oxford	n/a	Communi- Quête 1	n/a	Communi- Quête 2	Communi- Quête 1	Communi- Quête 2 (support)	Communi- Quête 2	n/a	Communi- Quête 2	
Pearson	On y va! 2	Ça marche! level 1	n/a	Ça marche! level 2	Ça marche! level 2	Ça marche! level 2 (main text)	n/a	Ça marche! level 2	n/a	
Nelson	Tout Ados level 2	n/a	level 1 (only 2 units)	n/a	n/a	level 2 (support)	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Grade 9										
Enrolment	71,311	21,462	8,758	9,891	5,465	4,007	5,418	5,064	1,406	132,782
Oxford	Communi- Quête 3 (applied)	Communi- Quête 2	Communi- Quête 3 (only 1 unit)	Communi- Quête 3	Communi- Quête 3 (only 3 units)	n/a	Communi- Quête 3	n/a	Communi- Quête 3	
Pearson	Autour de nous (applied)	Ça marche! level 2	n/a	Ça marche! level 3	Ça marche! level 1 (support: only 3 units)	n/a	n/a	Ça marche! level 3	n/a	
	Quoi de neuf? frontières (academic)									
Nelson	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Grade 10										
Enrolment		16,262								16,262
Oxford		Communi- Quête 3								
Pearson		Ça marche! level 3								
Nelson		n/a								
Totals	336,135	74,121	35,439	29,519	24,014	22,273	17,120	13,455	4,363	556,439

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