



Initially, Alexis Ewacha never set out to teach French Immersion. Alexis earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of BC (UBC); majoring in history, with a minor in geography. “After high school, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do,” explains the 24-year-old, adding that taking history was influenced by her father, a history teacher. “However, during my second year at UBC, I decided to go into teaching, to pursue my love of both history and French.”

Alexis was exposed to French early on. Her parents thought their daughter should be academically challenged, so they enrolled Alexis in French Immersion in kindergarten. “Neither of my parents spoke French, but they had friends whose children were in French Immersion,” says Alexis.

She soon excelled at French. An exchange program to Quebec City for three weeks in Grade 10 cemented her love for the French language.

“I thought it was really cool to speak another language,” says Alexis. “French Immersion expanded my curiosity.”

After her first year of university, she admits she felt a little intimidated and nervous with her “rusty French speaking skills.”

That got her questioning if any of her classmates also thought of linguistic insecurity, which is feelings of anxiety or a lack of confidence when speaking a second language.

“During my practicum, teaching a Grade 10 social studies class, we discussed linguistic insecurity, even though the students were from Francophone families,” says Alexis. “I found out it was a very common feeling. In order to help alleviate that insecurity, I had to encourage a sense of comfort.”

Alexis is a French Immersion teacher, with a special interest in linguistic insecurity, at her former high school, Ecole Earl Marriott Secondary. Here, she encourages her students to think about how French fluency can expand their horizons.

“French Immersion teachers are in high demand, and at 24 I had my own classroom,” says Alexis. “Studying French helped me secure a full-time teaching position much faster.”