



Although Danielle Senyk's father grew up in Quebec and spoke a little French, it wasn't until Grade 5 that Danielle was exposed to French.

"I was in a fairly small school and Core French was a relatively new program," says Danielle. "Although both my parents and teachers encouraged me, it was my choice to take French Immersion in Middle School because I liked the language."

Her parents enrolled her at New Westminister's Ecole Glenbrook Middle School in late French Immersion.

"I did find it challenging at the beginning because some of the other students in my class already spoke a little French," says Danielle. "Verbal presentations weren't my favourite thing but I was strong at it. I'm a huge advocate for late French Immersion because it was such an enriching experience."

Even though Danielle found it difficult at times, she persevered through to Grade 12. A trip to Quebec with a friend in Grade 12 reinforced her decision to further her French studies.

After high school, Danielle was accepted into the French program at Simon Fraser University (SFU).

“Because I was in French Immersion in high school, I was able to skip a few beginner courses at SFU,” Danielle says, adding she knew from Grade 2 that she wanted to become a teacher. “Studying French taught me to appreciate the beauty of speaking a second language and to recognize the value of other cultures.”

As the second most widely learned language in the world after English, Danielle knows that learning French is inherently valuable. As a French Immersion kindergarten teacher at Qayqayt Elementary in her hometown, she enjoys communicating her feelings of the language with her young students.

“I love French so much, and in kindergarten it’s challenging because you want to make sure your message is conveyed in a welcoming way,” says Danielle. “I recognise my students are coming into a new language, so I try to incorporate as much play as possible into the learning.”