French Study Booms in Quebec and U.S.

By HOWARD JACOBS

RECIPROCAL FRENCH LANGUAGE instruction in Louisiana, New England and Quebec is booming in primary and elementary grades, bolstered by sizable federal grants.

So advises Leo LeBlanc of Lafayette, representative of the Quebec government. LeBlanc noted that in September there will be three federally funded programs in Louisiana and four spread out in New England.

He praised as "a key person in this rapprochement," Homer Dyess, supervisor of foreign languages in the State Department of Education. Dyess is currently in Quebec meeting with educational leaders from Washington, Louisiana, New England and Quebec. The meetings are at Jonquiere, north of Quebec City, where 132 Louisiana students and teachers are undergoing an intensive five-week French course at the College of Jonquiere. It's an annual program jointly sponsored by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) and the Quebec government. The enrollment is double that of 1971.

Quebec gives $10,000 to the program each year, a sum matched by CODOFIL with scholarships to top French students in Louisiana high schools.

Crediting Dyess for initiation of the Jonquiere program, LeBlanc said that this year at Jonquiere, New England and Louisiana teachers are engaged in a pilot project serving as a kickoff for full-year university programs in Quebec leading to a master's degree in bilingual teaching at the elementary level, first such program in the U. S. for the French language.

Concluded LeBlanc: "Why was Quebec chosen as the stage for setting off bilingual teacher training? Because that state is the only living proof that the French language is vigorously viable in a North American technological context."