



CANADIAN  
PARENTS  
FOR FRENCH

# THE STATE OF FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CANADA 2018

FOCUS ON FRENCH SECOND  
LANGUAGE TEACHERS





**CANADIAN  
PARENTS  
FOR FRENCH**

The State of French Second Language Education in Canada 2018

Canadian Parents for French

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# PREFACE

We are delighted to present the 2018 edition of Canadian Parents for French's The State of French-Second-Language Education in Canada. The 2017 edition published last year provided an in-depth examination of FSL students who participate in various FSL programs (core, extended, intensive and immersion) across Canada. The current edition focuses on teachers, while the upcoming 2019 edition will shine the spotlight on FSL programs.

This Report opens with a review of the research in the current millennium relating to FSL teaching and teachers, both preservice and inservice. Mimi Masson, Stephanie Arnott and Sharon Lapkin report that most of the studies occurred in French immersion settings and involved teacher perspectives and needs, as well as approaches to teaching. Areas emphasized for teacher professional development include inclusive pedagogy, CEFR-informed teaching practices, digital literacies and attitudes towards English language learners (ELLs). The review highlighted a need for studies of FSL teacher proficiency and acknowledged a welcome trend involving teacher-led research where teachers are viewed as experts and knowledge creators.

We then present four regional updates from across Canada on research topics of interest to CPF stakeholders: FSL teacher supply and demand, issues relating to core French in western Canada (and elsewhere), a professional language portfolio as a tool for reflective practice, and the potential of the CEFR to support FSL teachers.

- David Jack, Research Lead on the Ontario Labour Market Partnership Project, describes new research on issues relating to teacher supply and demand yielding recommendations for key stakeholder groups. Some of the issues addressed in this large-scale study echo themes arising in the literature review in the opening article, such as teacher proficiency and confidence.
- Wendy Carr, Associate Dean of Education at UBC, offers important insights into teaching and teachers of core French in western Canada. Teacher proficiency is a recurring theme, as are the retention of teachers in core French and the marginalization of the program that serves the largest number of FSL students across Canada.
- Still in western Canada, Meike Wernicke, Assistant Professor, UBC explores FSL teachers' professional identity using a tool that encourages reflection on their linguistic and cultural experiences and allows them to develop focused personal action plans.
- Joe Dicks, Professor and Director, Second Language Research Institute of Canada at UNB, discusses the relevance of the Common

European Framework of Reference for describing various dimensions of language and teaching competence and a set of resources intended to support teachers in their practice.

Other items in this report include a listing of recent national studies, provincial and territorial ministry of education policy documents and resources, statistics on FSL teachers and enrolments, CPF position statements and a glossary of terms.

Research plays a critical role in supporting advocacy and, to that end, we conclude the State of French as a second language Education in Canada with our "Agenda for Change" that we hope CPF volunteer and staff leaders can use to support and promote Canadian bilingualism as they consult education stakeholders across Canada.

Canadian Parents for French is hopeful that these recommendations, drawn from the research findings in this report, are considered thoughtfully and encourage national, provincial, and territorial governments to build upon this work by conducting more comprehensive studies about multiple approaches to learning French as a second language, including contexts other than immersion (e.g., core, intensive, extended).

As a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home, we strongly urge the Government of Canada, ministries of education and school districts to play a leadership role in the delivery of and access to quality FSL education programs.



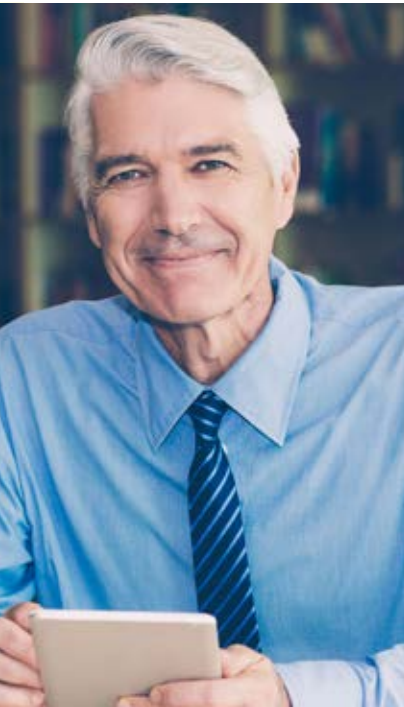
Sharon Lapkin and Wendy Carr  
Chairs of the CPF National Research Support Group 2017-2018





# TEACHERS IN K-12 FSL PROGRAMS: WHAT ISSUES ARE TOP OF MIND IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY RESEARCH?

Authors: Mimi Masson, Stephanie Arnott, and Sharon Lapkin



## INTRODUCTION

A larger study exploring the dominant trends in 21st century FSL literature\* found that of the 166 peer-reviewed articles appearing between 2000-2017:

- 49 (30%) involved teachers;
- Most were set in urban Ontario contexts;
- The majority (55%) focused on French immersion (FI), whereas 24% focused on core French (CF), and 4%, respectively, each focused on intensive French (IF) and extended French (EF);

Here we discuss two main themes: Professional Development (PD) and French Language Instruction. Studies focusing on FSL teachers ranged from gathering information on teacher needs and perspectives to reporting outcomes of new initiatives that teachers launched in their classrooms. Studies on PD aimed to understand how teachers learn and what they (want to) learn. Studies on French language instruction investigated different techniques teachers (can) use in the classroom and their outcomes.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Studies on FSL teacher PD highlight key areas of interest in the field, such as using digital technology and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). They also foreground important concepts in the profession, such as inclusion and teacher as lifelong learner. In the following section, we summarize three sub-themes that emerged from our analysis of the PD study findings: pedagogical practices, PD practices, and teacher identity and language proficiency.

### PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Research questions about pedagogical practices in the literature have focused on classroom teaching practices which require using technology or the CEFR. Since the turn of the century, digital technology has become an increasingly important resource for teachers. For FSL teachers, this raises questions about how to implement technology use in a language learning environment to best serve student needs and improve teacher efficiency (e.g., Murphy, 2002; Turnbull & Lawrence, 2003). In addition, research shows that teaching digital literacy skills can expand FSL students' learning experiences and identity development (Pellerin, 2013; Taylor, 2015). Still, recent studies suggest that FSL teachers need more support integrating technology in the classroom (Taylor, 2015).

The CEFR is a set of benchmarks created to track the linguistic and cultural competencies language learners develop over time. The resource has proven a useful one to help teachers understand their students' language levels and has been adapted all over the world to local contexts. Canadian researchers have explored CEFR implementation in various contexts. For example, Mison

and Jang (2011) investigated teachers' concerns about the CEFR, while FSL teachers from another study (Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, & Crowley, 2011) noted how CEFR-informed instruction increased student motivation, built learner self-confidence, promoted authentic language use in classroom, and encouraged learner autonomy. In another study investigating pedagogical practices, teachers were successful in integrating CEFR-based portfolios into their practice when given time to experiment, reflect, discuss and reassess their practice (Kristmanson, Lafargue, & Culligan, 2011). A more recent exploratory study tracked and supported FSL teachers with guided reflection to help transform their evaluation process by integrating it more strategically into their practice (Piccardo, 2013).

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD) PRACTICES

Studies on teacher PD practices investigate how FSL teachers learn and develop professionally. Those studies published since 2008 have been mainly situated in a sociocultural framework that encourages teachers to be active learners in their professional development, indicating this as a fairly recent trend. Findings suggest that teachers need time to lead their own PD (Kristmanson et al., 2011) and benefit from blended (face-to-face and virtual) PD opportunities (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010). Research also shows that teachers can develop innovative resources, such as the *Écriture cohérente et raisonnée en immersion* (ÉCRI) process writing model, when they use collaborative inquiry and democratic dialogue (Kristmanson, Dicks, & Le Bouthillier, 2009; Kristmanson, Dicks, Le Bouthillier, & Bourgoin, 2008). Findings demonstrate that collaborative inquiry and exchange are important to FSL teacher practice: in a study comparing English-only, French-only and dual-track (i.e., immersion) schools, FI teachers in dual-track schools reported collaborating most among peers (compared to English-track and French-track teachers) to create resources for their classrooms (Jacquet & Dagenais, 2010).

### TEACHER IDENTITY & LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

The trend since 2011 has been to investigate how FSL teachers develop or "perform" their professional identities. FSL teacher identity has become essential to understanding how teachers operationalize their practice and interact with students and colleagues in the profession. For instance, findings show that FSL teachers are creative and resilient when faced with challenges in their schools (Knouzi & Mady, 2014) and that they believe in implementing inclusive practices (Mady, 2012). Teachers also exercise agency and engage their sense of plausibility when adapting teaching methods to their FSL classroom, such as the Accelerated Integrated Method (AIM) (Arnott, 2011). Such studies are integral to rewriting the narrative about who FSL teachers are and show the potential for meaningful shifts in FSL teaching practices. The latest research exemplifies the complexity of FSL teachers' beliefs systems and their potential to impact teachers' practices. For example, Wernicke (2016) showed

\* For more details see: Arnott, Masson & Lapkin, forthcoming; Masson, Arnott & Lapkin, 2017, Masson, Arnott, Knouzi and Lapkin, forthcoming.





Figure 1. Keywords in teacher-focused articles.

how some teachers deem European French to be superior to Canadian French because European varieties are more 'authentic', which has implications for the way teachers understand their status as Canadian Francophones and how they relate to the French language.

There is very little research on FSL teacher language proficiency. The last study on the topic, published in 2005, indicated there was no standard measure for French proficiency in universities across Canada (Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). This continues to be true today.

### **FRENCH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION**

Studies focusing on French language instruction investigated teacher beliefs or instructional practices (IP). The IPs were either implemented by researchers (e.g., quasi-experimental designs), by teachers alongside a research team (e.g., action research) or were observed and documented by a research team (e.g., case studies).

### **TEACHER BELIEFS**

Beliefs are an essential part of understanding how teachers practice the art of teaching French. Studies in this area have provided diverse findings about teachers' beliefs. Murphy (2002) suggests that effective use of online FSL teaching tools requires an understanding and acceptance of the way in which the tools redefine classroom control, knowledge and the practice of teaching in general. Jean and Simard (2011) revealed that FSL teachers and students find grammar instruction necessary but not fun, and that girls enjoy it more than boys. Research has also tracked teacher beliefs about using CEFR task-based approach in the FSL classroom (Faez, Taylor, Majhanovich, Brown, & Smith, 2011). In an effort to challenge long-held assumptions about students in FSL classrooms, Mady's (2014) research used testing

on students to investigate teacher beliefs about student performance as it relates to immigrant status. This research builds on prior findings (Mady, 2012) suggesting that FSL teachers believe in the inclusion of ELLs in their classrooms. This particularly salient research helped counter ideas of FSL as an elitist and exclusive program and redefine the role that teachers play as gatekeepers to FSL programs. More recently, Milley and Arnott (2016) delved into the interplay of teacher and principals' beliefs and how they affect FSL teachers' experiences in the profession. Investigating CF teacher and principal pairs' beliefs about core French program implementation and support in the school reveals that principals who use "defensive leadership postures" risk reproducing core French marginalization and limiting proactive initiatives principals can take. Overall, these findings on teacher beliefs have implications for different teaching contexts in which teachers find themselves. They help form the basis of assumptions with which researchers must work.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES (RESEARCHER-LED)**

Studies that investigated specific IPs of teachers were generally situated in the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Behavioural Psychology. These quasi-experimental studies have provided a semi-controlled look into the IPs that FSL teacher implement in their classrooms. For instance, Germain and Netten (2004) investigated the realization of an IF program in Newfoundland and Labrador. The IF program has since spread to other parts of the country with great success. Other topics targeted by quasi-experimental research is corrective feedback (Lyster, 2004), bilingual read-aloud practices (Lyster, Collins, & Ballinger, 2009) and the use of CEFR task-based approach and "can-do" statements (Faez, Majhanovich, et al., 2011; Faez, Taylor, et al., 2011).

Lyster (2004) specifically focused on determining "the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) and corrective feedback on immersion students' ability to accurately assign grammatical gender in French" (p. 399). Findings suggest that FI students benefit from form-focused instruction (FFI), especially when combined with the use of prompts.

Research into literacy teaching practices has investigated the use of a read-aloud project across several classrooms (Lyster et al., 2009). English- and French-language teachers collaborated on lesson plans and read alternating chapters from the same book to their students. The project demonstrated opportunity for teachers and students to focus on language content and form, and promoted cross-linguistic awareness by looking for patterns across French and English. It also provided teachers the opportunity for cross-disciplinary collaboration which is not yet a common practice in language classrooms.

Faez and her team investigated core and immersion French teachers' beliefs about the CEFR "can-do" statements and the implementation of task-based learning after teachers received CEFR-related training

(Faez, Majhanovich, et al., 2011; Faez, Taylor, et al., 2011). Teachers in the study reported increased student ability to perform tasks in French and use authentic French. They also reported increased student motivation, learner autonomy and self-confidence among students.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES (TEACHER-LED)**

Studies that featured IPs investigated and developed by teachers generally anchored themselves in a sociocultural or socio-constructivist model for learning, inviting teachers to become part of the research process. Kristmanson and her colleagues (2009, 2008) supported a group of teachers over several years in New Brunswick to develop the ÉCRI writing model for FI students. In 2013, Pellerin investigated the use of digital technologies to support inclusive practices in early FI classrooms (Pellerin, 2013). Findings suggest that using digital technologies enables FI teachers to introduce inclusive instructional strategies by providing multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement for students.

These articles are instrumental in showcasing the active role that teachers can play in the creation and implementation of new pedagogical practices and resources in their classrooms, promoting a grass-roots approach to change in FSL classrooms.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES (OBSERVED)**

This group of studies rooted in sociological and ethnographic tradition mainly observe teachers in their practice to provide an analysis on the current state of the FSL profession. They also deal with a variety of topics, depending on the researchers' specialization. Arnett (2010) suggests that teachers' beliefs and ability to implement education for children with exceptionalities will determine their ability to effectively use inclusive practices in the language classroom. Arnott (2011) studied teachers' use of the Accelerated Integrative Method (AIM), revealing its potential for enabling CF teachers to use more French, exercise agency and engage their sense of plausibility when creating lesson plans. Observations of CF literacy teaching practices suggest that FSL teaching can benefit from or echo literacy principles taught in English Language Arts classes (Arnott & Mady, 2013), offering possibilities for collaboration between teachers of different subject matters. In addition, FSL teachers have demonstrated they plan for and use a range of strategies to promote language transfer (Thomas & Mady, 2014). In this vein, Moore and Sabatier's (2014) ethnographic study into bilingual and multilingual books in Reading Corners (i.e., spaces for reading in the classroom) can introduce primary French immersion students to multiliteracies and places value on their linguistic knowledge funds. Given the growing importance of literacy research, projects investigating students' multiliteracies and interlanguage awareness could assist FSL teachers who want to include those elements in their practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

In terms of PD, key areas of interest include technology, digital literacies, inclusive practices, and using the CEFR. PD practices reported in the research in recent years seem to suggest that fostering collaborative inquiry-led PD initiatives may be beneficial to FSL teachers on several levels: to develop locally relevant resources, to promote camaraderie with other teachers and to foster teacher autonomy and engagement in the profession. Understanding how teachers view themselves and are viewed in the profession is another dimension being investigated through teacher identity research and the cultural supports available to them in the Canadian context. Last, there is a clear and pressing need for research on FSL teacher language proficiency, whether it be to assess and develop linguistic and/or cultural proficiency, or to create a standardized assessment measure to assist teacher education programs, school boards and teachers in setting benchmarks and goals for success in French proficiency.

In French language instruction, key areas of interest intersect with those outlined in the PD section. They include grammar teaching, attitudes towards English language learners in FSL, teacher literacy practices, inclusive practices, writing instruction, classroom feedback, and teacher implementation of AIM, the CEFR or an intensive French program. Ultimately, this section of research suggests PD is moving from researcher-led (2004-2011) to teacher-led (2008-present) initiatives. This means that teachers are increasingly involved in the research in which they take part or lead. The increase in observation-based ethnographic case study approaches (2010-present) implies an expansion of research methods and approaches used in FSL research, one that aligns with the trends that reposition teachers as experts and knowledge-creators when it comes to FSL pedagogy.

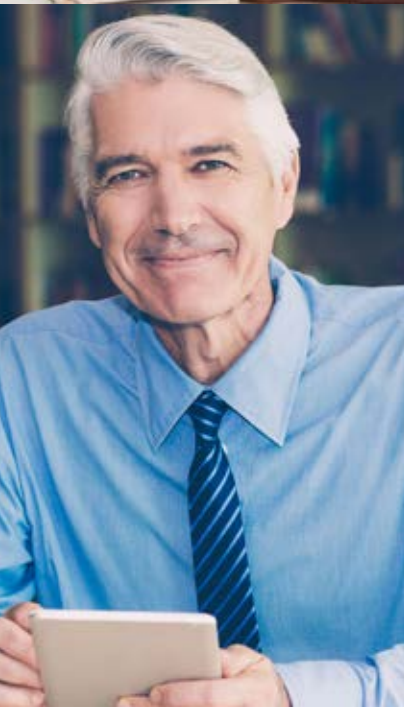
References available on CPF National's website at [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca).





## GUEST COMMENTARIES

Canadian Parents for French is known for sharing evidence-based research on a variety of contemporary issues in French as a second language education. These four guest commentaries begin with the summary of an extensive labour market analysis of French language teacher supply and demand in Ontario, followed by three articles related to teacher proficiency and professional development: retrospectives and updates from British Columbia and an account from New Brunswick describing CEFR-based resources for pre- and in-service teachers.



# MEETING LABOUR MARKET NEEDS FOR FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN ONTARIO

## UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER LABOUR MARKET ISSUE

By David Jack and Judith Nyman

### Summary

*The Ontario Labour Market Partnership project, Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario, is envisioned as a three-year project. The full report, Understanding Perspectives Regarding the French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue, the list of recommendations, next steps, and Executive Summary can be found on the Ontario Public School Boards' Association website at [www.opsba.org](http://www.opsba.org)*

In 2017, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association was approved for an Ontario Labour Market Partnership to lead a research project into the French as a Second Language (FSL) teacher shortage issue, and to partner with key stakeholders to develop recommendations towards workable solutions to this persistent and growing labour market challenge. The project, Understanding Perspectives Regarding French as a Second Language Teacher Labour Market Issue, was guided by two objectives:

1. to study the supply and demand issues specifically related to the recruitment, hiring and retention of FSL teachers;
2. to develop and begin to implement recommendations towards workable solutions with key stakeholder groups.

Funding for this Labour Market Partnership Project was provided in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. This summary report has been condensed from the comprehensive full report, which can be found at [www.opsba.org](http://www.opsba.org)

### KEY FINDINGS - PAST STUDIES AND REPORTS

There are several factors that weigh into the challenge of recruiting, hiring and retaining FSL teachers. These include the uneven concentration of French speakers across the country, varying provincial requirements for students to study French, the demand for French-speaking individuals in many other economic sectors, and ultimately, the hard-to-predict decisions people make in choosing a career path. Similarly challenging has been the time required for education systems to respond to the increasing demand for more French programs.

### KEY FINDINGS – PERSPECTIVES FROM HUMAN RESOURCES (HR)

Ninety-six percent of English-language boards' HR departments responded to an online survey organized under three key questions:

- How do we understand FSL teacher demand?
- How do we understand FSL teacher supply?
- What do boards do to recruit FSL teachers and how effective are their strategies?

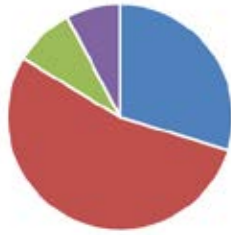
### FSL TEACHER DEMAND

The demand for FSL teachers is often a direct function of two variables: the range and intensity (grade levels and hours of French instruction) of FSL programs offered in a board, and any related increases in student enrolment. The survey revealed 3 key findings relating to demand:

- about 90% of school boards in Ontario offer at least one discretionary FSL program (usually French Immersion);
- because of the instructional time requirements for discretionary French instruction programs (e.g., 50% of the school day for French Immersion), these programs currently require nearly twice as many FSL teachers than the mandatory French instruction programs (known as Core French);
- most school boards currently require many more FSL teachers (approximately 5 times more) for all program types in the elementary grades than in secondary grades.

Figure 1 below shows the relative demand for FSL teachers in Ontario according to the range of FSL programs offered by school boards as of September 2017.

The Ministry's enrolment statistics for French Immersion programs in particular have shown an annual average 5% increase, with several large suburban boards reporting increases between 10 and 15 percent. As such, the need for FSL teachers is concentrated in discretionary FSL programs offered by boards in response to public demand, programs that require considerably higher instructional time in French to meet Ministry requirements.



- Elementary: Mandatory Core FSL (grades 4-8 only)
- Elementary: Discretionary Intensive, Extended, Immersion (all grades)
- Secondary: Mandatory Core FSL (gr. 9 only)
- Secondary: Discretionary Intensive, Extended, Immersion (all grades)

Figure 1. Demand for Teachers by Program Type, September 2017

## FSL TEACHER SUPPLY – EXTERNAL

New FSL teachers are hired primarily from Ontario Faculties of Education but can also include those FSL teachers who have earned their qualifications elsewhere in Canada and internationally. School boards reported a 54% drop in the number of applications received from FSL teacher graduates in the past 3 years. This finding corresponds to a significant overall drop in applications to Ontario Faculties of Education following the introduction of the new 4-semester teacher education program in 2015 (OUAC Statistics, March 2015).

While the overall number of FSL jobs offered to external FSL teacher applicants has declined in the past 3 years, this should not be interpreted as a decreased demand for such teachers. With 90% of boards in Ontario offering French Immersion, and with student enrolment in French Immersion programs growing by as much as 15% since 2012 in several large suburban school districts, the increasing demand for Immersion teachers is exacerbated by the decreasing volume of external applicants (see Figure 2 below).

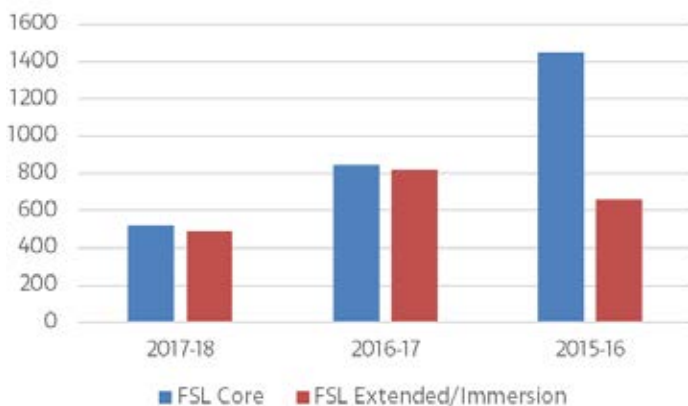


Figure 2. Number of FSL jobs offered to external applicants by program type

School boards were also asked to compare the FSL teacher supply-demand situation in their respective boards in recent years. Two-thirds of school boards report that their efforts to satisfy their demand for FSL teachers has become more or much more of a challenge over the past 3 to 5 years, with no boards reporting the challenge has diminished. Similarly, approximately 75% of boards

reported that despite using multiple recruitment strategies, they felt their overall FSL teacher recruitment efforts to be only modestly successful with the low number of applicants being cited as the greatest concern.

## FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

School boards identified applicants' French proficiency as a factor affecting their FSL recruitment efforts. Language pedagogy researchers have made the case for FSL teachers to develop high levels of language competence to optimize their effectiveness teaching a second language (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Veilleux & Bournot-Trites, 2005). As such, school boards were asked if they include assessment of FSL teacher applicants' French language skills as part of their recruitment and hiring processes in order to secure FSL teachers with high levels of language competence. Eighty-seven percent indicated they typically conducted an assessment of some, but seldom all, of applicants' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in French.

There was considerable variation in the assessment practices across boards with many (80%) focusing heavily on assessing applicants' oral (listening and speaking) language skills holistically (i.e., not measured against pre-determined standards) during a job interview setting. Approximately 30% of boards measured applicants' oral French skills against standards developed by the board itself, while many fewer boards (4%) engaged applicants in a more comprehensive assessment process rating their oral French against an international French language assessment tool such as the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française (DELFF).

For written language skills, more boards (24%) were inclined to use board-determined standards to assess applicants, with approximately 4% using international standards to measure writing skill in French.

Nearly 10% of school boards indicated they do not assess the French language skills (oral or written) of any FSL teacher applicants. Regardless of the degree or type of French language assessment used when recruiting external teacher applicants, boards who used an assessment protocol for FSL teacher applicants reported that an average of 27% of applicants did not meet their language proficiency thresholds and therefore were not considered for FSL teaching jobs.

## KEY FINDINGS – PERSPECTIVES FROM RECENTLY HIRED FSL TEACHERS

Through an online survey, more than 380 FSL teachers in their 1st or 2nd year shared their impressions about becoming an FSL teacher, getting hired, and the early phase of teaching. Focus groups were also organized across the province to explore survey topics in greater depth.

RECRUITMENT/HIRING EXPERIENCE	KEY FINDINGS
Strongest factors influencing decision to apply to specific boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity of board to desired place of residence</li> <li>• Prior knowledge of the board</li> <li>• Practicum experience in the board</li> </ul>
Number of boards applied to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36% applied to 1 board only</li> <li>• 60% applied to 2 to 5 boards</li> <li>• 4% applied to more than 5 boards</li> </ul>
Number of interviews granted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86% of applicants were granted 1 to 3 interviews; 10% were granted 4 to 6 interviews; 2% were granted none</li> <li>• 85% of teachers attend most of the interviews granted; 6% attended half of them; 7% attended only a few; 2% attended none</li> </ul>
Ratings of elements of job interviews (Participants were asked to elaborate on low-rated items. )	<p>Highest rated elements of the interview experience were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interview venue and disposition of the interview team</li> <li>• opportunities to ask questions</li> <li>• French language evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Lowest rated elements of the interview experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunity for feedback</li> <li>• usefulness of feedback when given</li> <li>• clarity of what to expect during interview</li> </ul>
Challenges that dissuaded applicants from pursuing an FSL job in a particular board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of specific information about available jobs</li> <li>• location of interviews</li> <li>• timing of job applications</li> </ul>

Figure 3.

## GETTING HIRED

One part of the survey explored the under-researched area of FSL teacher recruitment. Questions centred on how teachers come to learn about FSL job opportunities, factors influencing where they apply/where they don't apply, how many boards they apply to, and their impressions of various elements of the job interview process. Figure 3 summarizes key findings about new FSL teachers' hiring experiences.

## EARLY PHASE OF TEACHING FSL

New teachers were also asked about their confidence in teaching FSL and the rewards and challenges encountered at this early phase in teaching. Eighty percent indicated they were confident or very confident and identified many positive experiences as contributing to their overall confidence. Approximately 20% of new teachers, however, indicated a lack of confidence in their FSL teaching. Focus group participants elaborated on possible reasons contributing to diminished confidence: lack of mentorship, isolation, unsatisfying practicum placements, and communication skills in French.

Drawing from the abundance of literature on the potential positive effects of professional learning on teacher practice (Campbell, et al., 2016), new FSL teachers identified their top 3 professional learning needs at this early stage of their careers as follows:

1. availability of effective teaching resources (78%);
2. opportunities to improve French language skills (45%);
3. knowledge of effective teaching strategies (43%).

## FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Because the question of French language proficiency appeared as a concern in the Human Resources survey, new FSL teachers were asked to self-rate their skill as a French language user using the global scales of the French Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). For the purposes of this study, the basic categories A1 and A2 were not available as criteria choices. FSL teachers could also identify themselves as native speakers of French. Figure 4 shows the distribution of self-ratings by new FSL teachers.

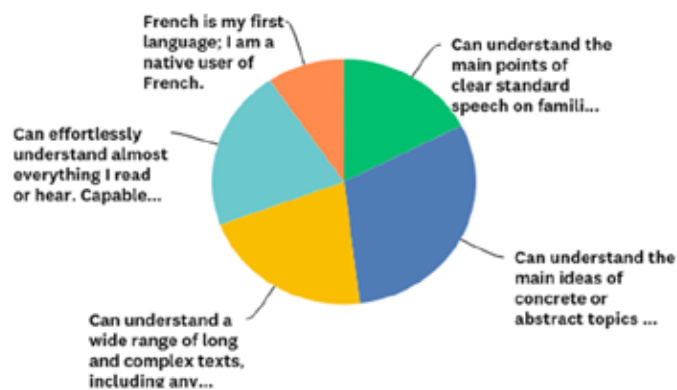


Figure 4. Distribution of self-ratings as French language users based on CEFR global descriptors

Because so few boards (4%) reported using international standards such as the CEFR criteria to evaluate FSL teacher applicants' French proficiency, it is not possible to correlate the self-ratings of new FSL teachers' proficiency levels with board-by-board hiring thresholds. This lack of board-to-board consistency was reported as a source of considerable frustration among new FSL teachers.

# CORE FRENCH TEACHERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

By Wendy Carr

In 2007, the largest ever study (n=823) of core French teachers in BC was conducted to explore their teaching context, background and experience, the support they receive, and preferred forms of professional development (Carr, 2007). The survey was based largely on the instrument used in a similar national study of FSL teachers (Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006). In some cases, the results of the national and provincial studies were similar; however, there were some key differences, particularly at the elementary and middle years levels. The pressing challenges for BC core French teachers identified in this study were how to achieve provincial learning outcomes given the limited instructional time and low value allocated to core French, and generally low levels of teacher language proficiency and background in core French methodology.

Just prior to the BC study, I surveyed 32 language coordinators about the quantity and quality of instructional time dedicated to core French education (in the mandated Grades 5 to 8) in their school districts (Carr, 2006). These perspectives were included in the larger study and depicted a less than positive view:

*Time allotments for teaching elementary core French vary greatly from school to school - from a low of 30 minutes per week to 120 minutes per week. This inconsistency, coupled with varying levels of teacher competence, suggests very uneven program delivery.*

*A few of the 6/7 teachers are less comfortable with French . . . lots of anxiety and a real challenge for many.*

*Les profs de 8e ne sont pas tous des spécialistes – loin de là. Alors, le niveau de langue qui est enseigné n'est pas très élevé dans plusieurs cas.*

*For some teachers, French is often the class that is the first to be dropped in the need to do something urgent. Of course, we might also question how they are also using their French time - some doing translation, lots of art, not much communication, etc.*

*Many of our schools have the generalist teacher deliver French to their own classes . . . time has been reduced and teachers are teaching French who do not know it – and against their will.*

*Teaching of core French is not treated as a mandated and valued program nor as an integral part of the literacy program of the school but, rather, as a discretionary subject.*

## WHAT IS THE SITUATION TODAY?

In 2018, I surveyed 30 BC language coordinators using the same questions used in 2006 to see if and/or how the situation had changed. Almost all respondents indicated that the situation had changed very little in the last decade; two indicated that it was actually worse (less quality and quantity of instruction) and two indicated that it was somewhat better, evidenced in part by more engagement in professional learning activities.

*It is still the case that the generalist teacher does not value the importance of French or understand why our students are "forced" to learn it.*

*Il existe pas mal d'anxiété autour du français de base. La situation s'empire petit à petit, à mon avis.*

*Most teachers at the elementary level do not speak French and therefore avoid teaching French or teach it poorly, developing negative attitudes towards French language. We offered different kinds of opportunities to support these teachers, but most were not interested. Possible reasons: not seeing it as a priority, too much on their plate already, and feeling self-conscious about lack of language ability.*

*Au secondaire [8 à 12], en général, on a des profs de français qui le parlent plus ou moins bien.*

*In the last 10 years, there has been an improvement in so*



*far as we have a coordinator for core French. Teachers, therefore, have someone to whom they can ask questions, seek resources, etc. [Translated from French]*

*There is still tremendous inconsistency. For some it is the first subject to go. Sometimes I hear students do not get French for a long time as the teacher is not comfortable with it; other times, I hear teachers are teaching French every day. There is a wide range!*

*It's more or less the same scenario. We have many teachers who are not comfortable teaching core French. We try to offer support through workshops, but it's not always possible with shortages of teachers on call. It's always the first subject that teachers drop when there are other more pressing things to teach. [Translated from French]*

The recommendations that emerged from the 2007 study remain as pertinent in 2018 as then to build French second language capacity among BC core French teachers in order to ensure quality experiences for BC learners in the provincially mandated Grades 5 to 8:

- sustained second language study as an integral part of secondary students' graduation path,
- mandatory second language methodology course for all preservice teachers,
- ongoing professional learning opportunities with a language-development component,
- minimum amount of instructional time per week (100 min in Gr. 5 to 7; 185 min in Gr. 8),
- linguistic and methodological thresholds for core French teachers,
- district-level consultant or mentorship support for core French teachers,
- support and recognition for professional development undertaken by teachers.

## HOW HAVE THESE RECOMMENDATIONS BEEN ADDRESSED?

BC's proposed graduation requirements with regard to core French (BC Ministry of Education, 2018) have not changed since the earlier 2004 version: "Second language courses are elective options in Grades 9-12 (not required for graduation)" (p. 25). Only one teacher education institution (University of British Columbia) requires all elementary and middle years teacher candidates to take a course in core French methodology. Simon Fraser University and UBC offer professional development opportunities for FSL teachers (core, immersion, intensive), including immersive weekends (SFU Bootcamp FrancoFUN, Séjour-UBC) and summer institutes (e.g., UBC's *Institut de français*, University of Victoria's *Maison française*). Core French is still taught mainly by generalists, with no district or provincial proficiency thresholds, and there is a great variance of district-level support, e.g., no consultant, a 20% position or, in the case of only a very few metro districts, a full-time position that supports all second language education programs.

Districts do provide financial support for general professional development, and teachers can elect where to focus their efforts and funding. With critical teacher/teacher-on-call shortages in BC since 2017, there is next to no in-school-time professional development, but there are after-school and dinner sessions. As well, provincially-managed federal bursaries to offset registration and accommodation expenses related to summer immersion programs are offered and used by BC core French teachers.

There is still much work to do to increase the valuing of core French – the pathway by which the majority of Canadians are introduced to learning their second official language – as well as the linguistic and methodological development of core French educators. Some promising first steps with professional language portfolios (see Wernicke and Dicks, in this issue), along with more language-development-focused professional learning development opportunities (supported by school districts), may serve to encourage BC core French teachers (and other FSL educators) to continue their language learning trajectories. Ensuring that introductory experiences to learning French are taught by those who feel confident, competent and valued is our best hope for maximizing the potential for success for core French learners.

References available on CPF National's website at [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca).

## WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT FSL TEACHERS IN THE FIELD?

By Mimi Masson

The French teacher shortage has been in the news for well over a decade (Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Dumouchel, & Roy, 2008; MacFarlane & Hart, 2002; Pan, 2014). In addition, research and media reports from across the nation indicate that schools are struggling to retain their French as a second language (FSL) teachers. FSL teachers are mainly made up of core French teachers, who teach 76% of students enrolled in French, and French immersion teachers, who teach 24% of students enrolled in French (Canadian Parents for French, 2017). Many FSL teachers have expressed feeling disconnected and isolated in their schools (Karsenti et al., 2008; Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2009), even marginalized in the workplace (Richards, 2002). The ongoing phenomenon of 'FSL teacher flight' suggests that many FSL teachers who enter the profession do not stay; they either leave the profession or transition out of teaching French (Carr, 2007; Lapkin & Barkaoui, 2008). In fact, up to 40% of FSL teachers end up leaving or consider leaving the profession (Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006).

...continued on page 14



# TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF FSL TEACHER IDENTITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

By Meike Wernicke

In 2009, a cohort of 87 French second language (FSL) teachers from British Columbia embarked on a federally-funded two-week professional development sojourn to Vichy, France, for an introduction to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The study abroad initiative was a response to changes in language curricula and the incorporation of CEFR-based methodologies based on Canada-wide recommendations (Council of Ministers of Education, 2010; Vandergrift, 2006) and focused on training BC educators as trainers of examiners for the DELF (Diplôme d'études en langue française) in conjunction with pedagogical workshops.

The study conducted in association with the sojourn (Wernicke, 2010) shed important insights on how FSL teachers understand and perceive their linguistic, cultural and instructional competences in light of an overwhelming and persisting orientation to a native speaker standard, despite decades of research calling into question this idealized standard (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, 2016). By closely examining how especially non-francophone teachers negotiate a professional identity as second language educators, the study demonstrated that we need to rethink current simplistic views of teachers as learners and adopt a more complex understanding of this dual identity in terms of life-long professional learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). A key finding of the study showed non-francophone teachers facing a significant dilemma in their professional settings: on the one hand they are required to engage in ongoing language development and, on the other, they are expected to demonstrate (to colleagues, students, parents, and administrators) native language proficiency, a standard that ideologically precludes any kind of continued language learning (Wernicke, 2017). Many of these FSL teachers drew on a variety of resources and strategies to demonstrate their proficiency as French speakers. The most successful of these involved embracing an alternative, plurilingual identity as FSL teacher which emphasizes professional expertise beyond native-speaker competency and provides a much more relevant, suitable model for the linguistically diverse students in our FSL classrooms.

Given the high proportion of FSL teachers who use French as an additional language in BC (approximately 2 out of 3) (Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006) and the increasing number of French immersion graduates entering the profession, the study provided a critical impetus to develop professional development opportunities and tools that take into account FSL teachers' existing professional identity while focusing

on ongoing language development within a practice-oriented framework. One such initiative is the Professional Language Portfolio (PLP), recently developed at the University of British Columbia in collaboration with Simon Fraser University, which aims to support French language and professional competencies among both BC teachers and teacher candidates. Adapted from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers' Canadian Language Portfolio for Teachers (Turnbull, 2011), the BC portfolio places particular importance on reflective practice (Strong-Wilson, 2009) by providing users with a means to document their linguistic, intercultural, and instructional knowledge and ongoing learning experiences in order to deepen awareness of their competencies and professional responsibilities as educators. In other words, the tool allows teacher candidates and practising teachers to reflect on their linguistic and cultural experiences through self-assessment of their competencies as speakers and teachers of a second language within a Canadian context. Unlike other language portfolios, the content of the BC portfolio emphasizes users' professional contexts (classroom, school, conferences, meetings, further study, etc.), encouraging teachers to become aware of and reflect on both their language use (Arnott & Vignola, forthcoming; Mandin 2010) as well as their professional responsibilities expressed through the language they are learning and teaching and shaped by cultural and pedagogical knowledge. By gaining an awareness of the challenges involved in meeting their professional responsibilities and competencies as outlined in the portfolio, teachers are encouraged to use the portfolio to develop a focused plan of action that includes relevant, concrete strategies. This iterative process of documentation and reflection, as well as regular prompts for follow-up, are designed to ensure manageable action goals that can be accomplished on an ongoing basis.

The overall purpose of the Professional Language Portfolio is to foster a professional culture that values and supports continued learning as an integral component of second language teachers' professional engagement. In this sense, the portfolio is meant to accompany language educators during every stage of their professional lives, as second language learners with an interest in teaching, through teacher education, and into a career as second language educators.

The portfolio project thus constitutes a platform for FSL teachers to benefit from and engage with ongoing professional development in BC, including established degree and certificate programs as well as short-term

language immersion initiatives. Current Master of Education programs delivered in French attend to issues in second language education, including diverse learning contexts (e.g., Simon Fraser University), additional language methodologies, and more recently intercultural learning and Indigenous perspectives (e.g., University of British Columbia). Professional certification in FSL programming further provides pre- and in-service French immersion teachers with an opportunity to update their teaching and French language fluency (e.g., University of Victoria). Alongside these credit programs, short-term weekend activities and summer institutes attend specifically to FSL teachers' language development with a focus on improving oral proficiency for both generalist and immersion French teachers. At present, language support is needed, especially at the B1 level, to help emerging French immersion teachers attain the required language expertise to respond to the high demand in French immersion programming (French Education Stakeholders Advisory Committee, 2016).

Given FSL teachers' hesitancy at times to attend French language professional development (Wernicke, 2017), weekend immersive events can encourage teachers to pursue more extended language and professional learning experiences during summer institutes or week-long courses. The federal government's renewed five-year Action Plan for Official Languages with increased funding for French language minority and second language education (Canadian Heritage, 2018) represents an important piece in maintaining ongoing development of relevant professional programs for FSL teachers and teacher candidates. Another crucial element that must accompany these initiatives in programing and implementation is research in the form of program evaluations and in-depth inquiry into how teachers experience professional learning – including challenges, ideological constraints, and the affordances it provides.

References available on CPF National's website at [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca)



Compounding the issue of FSL teacher flight are the unequal working conditions of French teachers that have been well documented over the last four decades (Arnott et al., 2015; French & Collins, 2014; Karsenti et al., 2008; Lapkin, 1993; Lapkin et al., 2009; Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009; Stern, 1982; Stern et al., 1976). National and provincial studies report persistent deficiencies in FSL programs: inadequate space allocated to teachers, meager resources, under-appreciation of French in schools and/or surrounding communities, and insufficient funding and support for professional development (Arnott et al., 2015; Carr, 2007; Lapkin, MacFarlane, & Vandergrift, 2006; Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2006; Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2009; Mollica, Philips, & Smith, 2005). In a report titled, *Why are new French immersion and French as a second language teachers leaving the profession?* (Karsenti et al., 2008), the authors report five factors that contribute to French teacher dissatisfaction: poor working conditions (i.e., excessive workload, lack of time), lack of instructional materials, difficulty in forming relationships (i.e., with administrative staff or mentors), fear of failure and being judged, lack of trust, difficulty with classroom management, and poor initial training.

To address FSL teacher shortages, it is important to consider that sustained teacher dissatisfaction over time can erode French teachers' professional well-being, creating stressful working conditions that contribute to FSL teacher flight. Potential remedies might include co-creating more pedagogical resources targeted to FSL teachers' contexts, rethinking the approach to professional learning so FSL teachers' may voice their immediate concerns, and increasing administrative and cross-school collaboration to address those concerns.

This column has been adapted from research published in Masson, M. (2018), *A critical re-imagining of French-language teacher learning and professional identities*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Toronto, ON.

References available on CPF National's website at [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca).



# TOWARDS A COMMON FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGE TEACHER COMPETENCE: SUPPORTING LANGUAGE TEACHERS

By Joseph Dicks

As someone directly involved in pre-service and in-service teacher second language teacher education, I recognize the importance and the complexity of describing and developing language teacher competence. In order to plan and deliver education courses and professional learning sessions that are meaningful and effective, it is essential to have a comprehensive grasp of what language teacher competence involves. According to Jack Richards (2010), there are ten “core dimensions of skill and expertise in language teaching: language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focussed teaching, specialized cognitive skills,

European Framework (CEFR) for Language Teaching Competence” has as its ultimate goal to assist teachers in a variety of language teaching contexts to become familiar with various elements of competence, to be aware of their own particular strengths, to set goals for improvement, and to take pathways provided to enhance their teaching competence.

With the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, I was the Canadian partner on this important ECML project; I had the opportunity to witness first-hand how the project evolved and to interact directly with the project team and with experienced teacher educators who were excited about the project and provided valuable feedback from a user’s perspective. I will now outline the main features of the project and some implications for use in the Canadian context.

As the title indicates, this project explores the feasibility of a common framework of reference for language teachers working in a variety of contexts. In doing so, the project team has identified, verified and categorized a large number of frameworks and other resources that describe various facets of language teacher competence. These resources will be available on the project website and will be searchable according to teaching level (e.g., primary, secondary, higher education), by program/context (e.g., bilingual education, language of schooling, second/additional language teaching), and by focus (e.g., language and cultural competence, individual learner’s needs). While the project targets European language teachers, there are clear applications for the teaching of French as a second language in the Canadian context including core French, intensive French, and French immersion.

The website and its resources promise to be particularly valuable for those involved in FSL pre-service and in-service teacher education in Canada. Those designing and delivering courses in teacher education programs and facilitating professional learning sessions for teachers will have access to a thoroughly researched and carefully structured set of tools that describe various dimensions of language teaching competence, including language competence and pedagogical competence. FSL teachers themselves, working in a wide range of contexts and at different levels, will also be able to directly access these resources, reflect upon their competence, and set goals for professional growth.

**The website and its resources promise to be particularly valuable for those involved in FSL.**

theorizing from practice, joining a community of practice, and professionalism.” Richards goes on to unpack each of these constructs in relation to competence and performance of language teachers. It is beyond the scope of this brief article to examine each of these elements; however, it is important to keep in mind that language competence is multifaceted and extremely complex. Language teaching occurs in a wide range of contexts ranging from the teaching of a second language as a subject (e.g., teaching French in core French programs) to the teaching of complex subject matter content, either in immersion programs or as the language of schooling to newcomers. In our increasingly plurilingual world, language teaching and learning are becoming more important than ever.

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) recognizes this reality of language teaching and also understands that language teacher competence is critical to learner success. The ECML project “Toward a Common

Our own work at the Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L2RIC) at the University of New Brunswick (Kristmanson, Lafargue, & Culligan, 2013) connects with this project and will benefit from it. The resource "I Can: Empowering Language Learners" is designed to help teachers promote learner autonomy as they work with learners who have diverse needs and interests in a variety of language learning contexts (e.g., French immersion, core French, intensive French programs, English as an additional language). Teachers can use these materials and ideas as a starting point for incorporating the Common European Framework of Reference Language Portfolio and its related principles. Competence frameworks of the ECML project related to autonomy and learners' needs related to language and content learning will complement the L2RIC resource.

The ultimate goal of the ECML project is to help teachers help their students learn languages effectively. Regarding a potential common language teacher framework, project director Lukas Bleichenbacher underlines that we need to ask, "how can it best support the teachers in their work?"

To find out more about the ECML language teacher competence project, visit

<https://www.ecml.at/Teachercompetences>

References available on CPF National's website at [cpf.ca](http://cpf.ca).



# FSL TEACHERS ... IN

After a brief period of over-supply from about 2008 to 2015 during which time some faculties of education in central and eastern Canada reduced the number of FSL teacher spaces, national government and provincial/territorial ministries of education, school districts, teacher associations and a number of FSL education stakeholders began warning that FSL teacher demand would again exceed supply, beginning as early as 2010. The issue of not meeting the demand for FSL teachers in parts of Canada has prompted media attention across Canada in the last 24 months.

## 2016 /2017 – SUPREME COURT OF CANADA DECISION AFFECTS BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Supreme Court of Canada decision in 2016 forced the BC provincial government to restore staffing to 2002 levels after it ruled a former government improperly took away the union's right to bargain class size and composition. The agreement was reached in March 2017 and, as a result, the Ministry of Education was required to hire thousands more teachers. This exacerbated an existing shortage of FSL teachers due to the increase in demand for French immersion programs.

## MAY 2017 – REPORT OF THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The report, *Horizon 2018: Toward Stronger Support of French-Language Learning in British Columbia* states that the challenges identified within the report are not unique to BC, and the lessons learned can be applied in other jurisdictions. Witnesses confirmed the need to educate an adequate number of French second language teachers and the importance of promoting French teaching as a profession. Requests were made to create incentives, provide for interprovincial and interregional mobility, increase the recruitment of teachers from elsewhere and offer scholarships as well as mentoring programs. The Report also underlined the importance of addressing the barriers that still exist to recognize teachers' degrees from outside the province. Individuals spoke about the merits of bursaries for language development available to those with a teaching certificate.

## MAY 2017 - CANADA-WIDE AGREEMENT TO ADDRESS NEED FOR FRENCH-LANGUAGE TEACHERS

A letter of intent signed at the French Embassy in Ottawa by the Conference of University Presidents (CPU), the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) and Universities Canada addresses the growing need for French-language teachers in Canada. This agreement encourages students and graduates of French-as-a-foreign-language teaching programs in France to come to Canada. After completing

# N THE NEWS

the required supplemental education in a Canadian university and meeting the accreditation standards specific to each province, these individuals could hold positions as primary or secondary French-language teachers in francophone institutions or schools offering French immersion programs. The initiative paves the way for collaboration among the leaders of French and Canadian universities, delegates from several provinces, and representatives from the governments of Canada and France.

## MARCH 2018 - INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE 2018-2023: ACTION PLAN FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ANNOUNCEMENT

The federal Government of Canada revealed its *Action Plan for Official Languages*, which states that between 2003 and 2013 Canada saw a 52% increase in French immersion enrolment, although access is unequal across the country. It notes as a common roadblock to FSL programming the lack of qualified teachers. The government announced an investment of \$31.29 million in recruiting and retaining teachers for French immersion and other FSL programs.

## APRIL 2018 - QUEBEC PROVINCIAL BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT

The number of future teachers in Quebec universities is at its lowest in five years, a dramatic trend that raises fears for the future. The decline in the number of future teachers is worrying principals, who are already struggling with a lack of staff, including in-service and supply teachers. The *Journal de Montréal* polled the province's 12 faculties of education about the number of students enrolled in recent years: of the 10 universities that responded, eight saw a drop in the number of students across all programs combined. In most cases, the number of students in primary or secondary education is at its lowest since 2012. The new Quebec provincial budget announced a 5% increase in education over the previous year to begin to address the current situation, including \$15 million in financial compensation per year for students enrolled in the required fourth-year internship of a teacher education program.

## APRIL 2018 - B.C. DELEGATION LOOKS TO EUROPE TO RECRUIT FRENCH-SPEAKING TEACHERS

The BC Ministry of Education sent a delegation to Europe in early April with hopes of signing government-to-government agreements with France, Belgium and the Netherlands to promote teacher mobility and exchanges. To help break down barriers for teachers and prospective teachers from France who are interested in working in BC, five new \$3,000 teacher education scholarships and 10 new \$1,250 placement scholarships have been

created. These scholarships will help teachers from France with costs for tuition and relocation to teach in British Columbia. In Paris, the delegation made commitments to remove teacher mobility and accreditation barriers to teach in BC, with options ranging from temporary work permits to pathways to citizenship. Work is underway to sign a declaration of intent with Belgium that is similar to the agreement signed with France. These government-to-government agreements support BC's school districts' efforts to directly offer employment to teachers from these French-speaking countries.

## JUNE 2018 – DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE CONSULTATION TO DEVELOP FSL TEACHER SUPPLY STRATEGY

Canadian Heritage, Official Languages Support Branch invited representatives of the provincial and territorial ministries of education and interested community organizations (including CPF) to a one-day discussion session on recruitment and retention strategies for French second language teachers. Participants shared specific challenges in the recruitment and retention of FSL teachers and identified potential solutions that were organized by themes, including research, valuing the profession and bilingualism, working conditions and mobility. The parameters for stakeholder collaboration and project selection were also discussed. A call for project submissions is scheduled to follow in late 2018 or early 2019 to allocate the government's announced Action Plan investment of \$31.29 million by 2023.

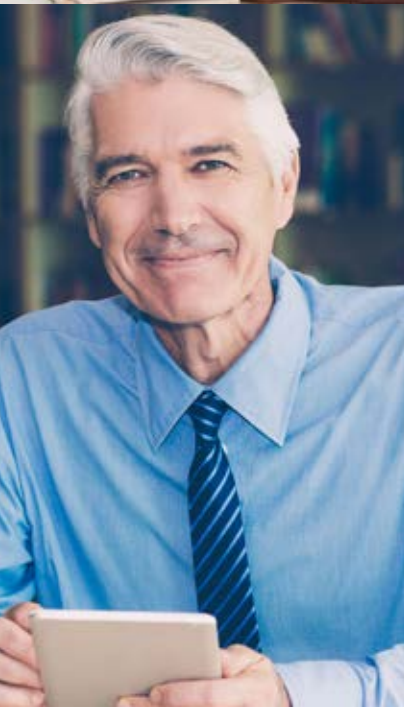




# RECOMMENDED READING

Three national reports share results and recommendations of a pan-Canadian survey of immersion teaching professionals and findings on the changes to FSL classroom teaching practices.

These are followed by recent provincial and territorial policy and related documents on the changes in the supply and demand for FSL teachers. Some of these address issues of recruitment, retention and hiring as well as shifts occurring in the profile of the teaching workforce.



# NATIONAL FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION REVIEWS

## **Immersion Journal Final Report: Canada-Wide Consultation**

[http://www.acpi.ca/documents/evenements/Vol40\\_n1\\_Printemps\\_2018\\_final\\_en\\_web.pdf](http://www.acpi.ca/documents/evenements/Vol40_n1_Printemps_2018_final_en_web.pdf)

## **The Classroom Practices of DELF Teacher-Correcteurs: A Pan-Canadian Perspective**

[https://www.acpi.ca/documents/documents/Rehner\\_Report\\_2018\\_final\\_mars\\_2018\\_EN\\_final.pdf](https://www.acpi.ca/documents/documents/Rehner_Report_2018_final_mars_2018_EN_final.pdf)

## **The State of French Second-Language Education Programs in Canada: Report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages**

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/41-2/LANG/report-1>

# PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS ON FSL EDUCATION

## *BRITISH COLUMBIA*

### **Report Presented by the Minister's Task Force: Recruitment and Retention Challenges**

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/uploads/task\\_force\\_report.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/uploads/task_force_report.pdf)

The multi-stakeholder task force sought to study supply and demand issues related to the recruitment, hiring and retention of FSL teachers and provided recommendations for addressing current challenges.

### **Horizon 2018: Toward Stronger Support of French-Language Learning in British Columbia**

[https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/OLLO/reports/Report\\_OLLO\\_2017-03-29\\_E.pdf](https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/OLLO/reports/Report_OLLO_2017-03-29_E.pdf)

Summary of meetings held with various BC stakeholders in French first- and second-language education. Access to programs was a key focus.

### **Exploring Implications of the Increasing Demand for Education Programs in French in British Columbia**

[http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2017/667861/stakeholders\\_advisory\\_committee\\_report\\_spring\\_fall\\_2016\\_en.pdf](http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2017/667861/stakeholders_advisory_committee_report_spring_fall_2016_en.pdf)

Recommendations include: 1) Address the shortage of qualified educators in French programs; 2) Encourage and support inclusion in French programs; 3) Create a strategy and/or platform to help connect and share successful practices and tools for French programs.

### **Falling Behind: 2015 Report on the Shortage of Teachers in French Immersion and Core French in British Columbia and Yukon.**

<https://bc-yk.cpf.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/Falling-Behind-2015-Report-On-The-Shortage-Of-FSL-Teachers-In-BC-YK1.pdf>

The report examines critical FSL teacher shortages in BC and compiles best recruitment and retention practices.

## *YUKON*

### **Yukon Education's Workforce Profile 2012**

[http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/schools/yukon\\_education\\_workforce\\_profile\\_draft\\_november\\_2012.pdf](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/schools/yukon_education_workforce_profile_draft_november_2012.pdf)

The report cites the challenge of meeting the demands of a 25-50% increase in enrolment in French Immersion and Francophone programs over the previous five years while experiencing high rates of new teacher and rural teacher turnover.

## ALBERTA

### **A Transformation in Progress: Alberta's K-12 Education Workforce 2012/2013**

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460106884>

Key findings of this report include: (1) Some difficulty finding employment in urban schools, but apparently no trouble in more rural/remote areas; (2) Greater demand for second language teachers than others.

## SASKATCHEWAN

### **Handbook for Leaders of French as a Second Language (FSL) Programs, 2015**

[https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/xid-858306\\_1](https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/xid-858306_1)

Handbook for division, school administrators and teachers of FSL programs (French immersion, core French, intensive and post-intensive French).

## ONTARIO

### **Meeting Labour Market Needs for French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario**

[http://www.opsba.org/Media%20Desk/Pages/New-Report-Identifies-Key-Factors-in-French-as-a-Second-Language-\(FSL\)-Teacher-Shortages-in-Ontario.aspx](http://www.opsba.org/Media%20Desk/Pages/New-Report-Identifies-Key-Factors-in-French-as-a-Second-Language-(FSL)-Teacher-Shortages-in-Ontario.aspx)

The study sought to study supply and demand issues related to the recruitment, hiring and retention of FSL teachers, and then develop recommendations for solving current problems with various stakeholder groups.

### **Teaching French in Ontario**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/teaching-in-french-eng.pdf>

This brief, useful document outlines requirements for teaching French in Ontario.

### **Transition to Teaching 2017**

[https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/2017%20Transition%20to%20Teaching/2017%20T2T%20Main%20Report%20EN\\_Final.pdf](https://www.oct.ca/-/media/PDF/2017%20Transition%20to%20Teaching/2017%20T2T%20Main%20Report%20EN_Final.pdf)

Among other findings: FSL and French first language teachers continue to be in high demand relative to the reduced supply of these teachers.

## NOVA SCOTIA

### **Nova Scotia Public Education Teacher Supply and Demand, 2012 Update**

<http://0-nsleg-edeposit.gov.ns.ca.legcat.gov.ns.ca/deposit/b10653521.pdf>

Like relevant reports from across the country, this report also documents difficulty in recruiting teachers in subject areas including core French, French immersion, the sciences, mathematics, special education, technology education, and guidance.

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

### **The PEI State of French Second-Language in Education**

<https://pei.cpf.ca/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/State-of-FSL-Report-CPF-PEI.Feb17-2017.pdf>





# AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Canadian Parents for French is pleased to feature the extensive review of literature conducted by Arnott, Masson, and Lapkin, which provides stakeholders with an overview of research in French second language education in the 21st century (2000-2017). This comprehensive database of 166 research articles will also be drawn upon for our 2019 report focusing on FSL programs.

An analysis of the database shows that, with respect to teachers, there is a strong focus on teachers' perspectives and needs as well as on teaching approaches and professional development. A common theme in the latter areas is use of the Common European Framework of Reference, not only in informing classroom-based practices but also in assessing teachers' French language proficiency. A positive trend was noted where teacher-led research is becoming more prevalent, which bodes well for diverse forms of future knowledge creation.

It is important to note that other sections of this report, notably the compilation of provincial reports and Jacks' Ontario labour market report echo the aforementioned themes of teachers' linguistic proficiency and professional development while also illuminating chronic challenges in FSL teacher recruitment and retention across the country. Addressing these challenges represents a call to action not only for ministries and school districts but also Canadian Parents for French.

## CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH RECOMMENDS

- That the Government of Canada increase investments in various forms of official language research needed to inform FSL approaches and provide insight into teachers' experiences in FSL contexts other than immersion (e.g., core, intensive, extended).
- That the Government of Canada increase investments in FSL teacher recruitment and retention, including incentivizing mobility of Francophones across the country, supporting the mentorship of early career teachers, and subsidizing ongoing teacher professional development (both pedagogically- and linguistically-focused).
- That the Government of Canada put an emphasis on increased dialogue and cohesion with ministries of education and among school districts to increase parental understanding of how to strategically target investments for the biggest impact in increasing overall supply of FSL teachers across Canada.
- That ministries of education, faculties of education and school districts enhance support for professional development for FSL teachers not only in current pedagogies but also linguistic development to increase their teaching competencies, career satisfaction and impact on student learning.
- That educational decision-makers at provincial and school district levels ensure that French proficiency assessments are calibrated to the Common European Framework of Reference in order to build coherent understanding about the linguistic goals and competencies of teachers as well as their students.



# CPF POSITION STATEMENTS

Canadian Parents for French represents 26,000 members across Canada. We are a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that champions the opportunity to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home. Canadian Parents for French is the most recent recipient of the Commissioner of Official Languages Award of Excellence – Promotion of Linguistic Duality.

We promote and create opportunities for youth and support parents in all aspects related to French language learning.

## 1. Universal Access

In Canada, all students have the opportunity to learn French and to access the French as a second official language program that meets their needs and aspirations.

## 2. Effective Programs

All students have access to a wide variety of effective, evidence based French as a second language (FSL) programs from Grades one to 12 and at the Post-secondary level.

## 3. Recognized Proficiency Levels

The proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and French-language proficiency testing (such as the DELF) are used to provide language learners, parents, educators, post-secondary institutions and employers with a common understanding of each learner's French-language skills and the expected outcomes of each respective FSL program.

## 4. Leadership Accountability

Education leaders, school jurisdictions and provincial/territorial and federal governments are accountable for student achievement in French as a second language programs. Parents and community stakeholders are actively engaged with educational leaders in their decision making. Reporting is meaningful, timely and available publicly.

Within the findings of the research reported here, Canadian Parents for French sees shared key priorities that will provide opportunities for the Government of Canada, Ministries of Education, Faculties of education and school districts to work together to increase the dissemination of information regarding the importance of promoting official language bilingualism and French as a second language education programs across the country.

# GLOSSARY

**Accelerative Integrated Method (AIM):** This is a language teaching method that uses gestures, music, dance, and drama to help students learn. The basic premise of AIM is that students learn and are more likely to remember when they use a gesture as they say words, e.g., as they say 'regarder' (to look), they hold their hands in the shape of binoculars.

**Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR):** This language proficiency framework provides a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the development of language curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment materials. Language proficiency is defined by 6 global levels of performance.

**CEFR-Informed Practices:** These are teaching, learning and assessment practices inspired by the CEFR that emphasize the development of students' ability to develop into independent language users by communicating in French in authentic, everyday situations.

**Collaborative Inquiry:** This is a form of professional learning, a method for problem solving and a systematic approach to generating professional knowledge. In schools, this typically involves groups of educators working together with student learning as a focus (and may involve students as partners in the inquiry).

**Core French Program / Basic French Program:** This is a program in which French is taught as a subject among others in a regular English program in two to five lessons a week for usually 30 to 40 minutes. Also known in some jurisdictions as Basic French Program or French Second Language Program.

**Corrective Feedback:** This is a common assessment practice in education whereby students receives feedback from their teacher or peers on their performance on various tasks. In FSL classrooms, this may involve explicit correction, a clarifying question, repeating what was said in a different way, etc.

**Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration:** In second language contexts, this refers to teaching a skill (e.g., literacy) in more than one subject area in the curriculum; learners and teachers work together to achieve a common goal.

**Democratic Dialogue:** This form of dialogue in the classroom where the student voice is honoured and valued.

**Digital Literacies:** These refer to an individual's ability to find, evaluate, produce and communicate clear information on various digital platforms.

**Discretionary FSL Program:** These are programs of choice, e.g., French immersion, as opposed to mandatory programs, such as core French (the default option offered in most Canadian schools).

**Diverse Learner / Student with Diverse Learning Needs:** Describes learners whose learning needs may present challenges to their performance in school and/or require additional support.

**Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF):** The official French-language diploma awarded by France's Ministry of National Education to recognize French proficiency among non-native speakers. The DELF is taken by those whose proficiency is A1, A2, B1, or B2 on the CEFR.

**Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALF):** The official French-language certification for non-native speakers, composed of two independent diplomas corresponding to the top two levels, C1 & C2, of the CEFR.

**English Language Learners (ELLs):** Students in English-language schools whose first language is not English. It includes newcomers from other countries, as well as children born in Canada and raised in families or communities where languages other than English are spoken.

**European Language Portfolio:** An assessment tool incorporating three components (language passport, language biography and dossier) used to track and document language learner progress according to the 6 CEFR levels.

**French Immersion (FI):** A second-language education program in which French is the language of communication and instruction. The term is an inclusive one that can be used to refer to a number of variants of immersion (based on entry year, amount of time and intensity, etc.)  
See also: Early French immersion, Middle French immersion, Late French immersion, Bilingual programs (also known as 50/50 programs) and early, middle and late partial immersion variants.

**Inclusive Practice:** This is an approach to teaching that recognizes the diversity of students, enabling all students to access course content, fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge and strengths at assessment.

**Learner Autonomy:** This is when students take control and responsibility for their own learning, both in terms of what they learn and how they learn it. It takes as its starting point the idea that students are capable of self-direction and are able to develop an independent, proactive approach to their studies.

**Learner Exceptionalities:** This refers to learners whose physical, behavioral, or cognitive performance requires additional support in order to meet learning outcomes.

**Linguistic or Language Competence:** This is a system of linguistic knowledge possessed by users of a language.

**Multiliteracies:** This is an approach to literacy learning that recognizes the multi-modality of texts (print, visual, audio, digital, etc.) as well as cultural and linguistic diversity that affects language use, meaning-making and representation of learning.

**Official Languages in Education Programs (OLEP):** This refers to a federally funded set of programs administered by the Federal government and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to assist provinces and territories in providing second-official-language education programs as well as official minority-language education.

**Pedagogical Practice:** This type of practice refers to methods, strategies and/or styles of instruction.

**Professional Development:** This refers to a wide variety of educational opportunities or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competencies and effectiveness.

**Proficiency Levels:** This term refers standard or reference by which language learners' progress can be measured.

**Quasi-Experimental Designs:** These are empirical research studies used to measure/analyze the impact of an intervention (e.g., a new teaching approach) on a non-randomly selected group. This differs from experimental design where an intervention is explored with a randomly selected group (and may be compared to a control group that did not participate in the same intervention).

**Recruitment / Retention (of FSL Teachers):** These are a set of actions for enlisting new people into the teaching profession, part of the hiring process. / Strategies of retaining FSL teachers in the profession.