

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH THE STATE OF FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CANADA 2018: FOCUS ON FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

1. In this report* you will find a review of current FSL education literature conducted by Mimi Masson, Stephanie Arnott, & Sharon Lapkin to identify key trends, which include *professional development* and *French language instruction*. Absent from the research is information on FSL teacher language proficiency.

Pedagogical Practices

- Studies show that using digital literacy in the FSL classroom can expand students' learning experiences and identity development. However, studies suggest teachers need more support integrating technology in the classroom.
- One study found that CEFR-informed instruction can increase student motivation, build learner self-confidence, promote authentic language use in the classroom, and encourage autonomous learning.

Professional Development (PD) Practices

- There is a move in PD to encourage FSL teachers to become active life-long learners.
- French immersion teachers in particular collaborate the most (of all teachers) with their colleagues to share resources, concerns, and advice. Online and face-to-face collaboration works well for teachers.

Teacher Identity & Language Proficiency

- Increasing trends in research are aimed at understanding how FSL teachers “perform” their professional identities (e.g., as French speakers, as French teachers, as French learners, etc.), as it affects, among other things, how students learn.
- There is no standard proficiency level targeted for FSL teachers upon graduation from Teacher Education programs.

Teacher Beliefs

- FSL teacher beliefs are essential to understanding how teachers practice the art of teaching and interact with students
- For instance, recent research shows FSL teachers believe in the inclusion of English Language Learners in their classroom, which counters ideas of FSL (particularly FI) as an elitist and exclusive program.

Instructional Practices (researcher-led)

- Research reported the successful implementation of the Intensive French program in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- Studies also examined using corrective feedback and prompts to help FI learners improve their language form;

Instructional Practices (teacher-led)

- Studies demonstrated teachers can create the necessary resources to address their specific and localized needs (e.g., ÉCRI writing model for FI learners; developing digital literacies)
- Overall, the studies using a teacher-led approach demonstrate the active role FSL teachers can play in creating and implementing new pedagogical practices and resources in the classroom when given time and support.

Instructional Practices (observed)

- Observations of CF literacy teaching practices suggest that FSL teaching can benefit from or echo literacy principles taught in English Language Arts classes, offering possibilities for collaboration across different subject matters.
- Teachers who use bilingual and multilingual Reading Corners in their classrooms introduce primary FI students to multiliteracies and promote the value of their diverse linguistic knowledge funds.

* The State of French as a Second Language in Education 2018 is available for download:
<https://cpf.ca/en/files/The-State-of-French-Second-Language-Education-in-Canada-2018.pdf>

2. The report also includes four guest commentaries by expert French as a Second Language researchers

Meeting Labour Market Needs For French as a Second Language Instruction in Ontario – David Jack, Independent Researcher

- The strongest demand for FSL teachers is in discretionary programs (primarily FI).
- Over 80% of school boards mainly assess FSL teacher candidates' oral skills 'holistically' during the interview process. Only 4 % of boards use an external/international standard to measure proficiency (such as the DELF). Almost 10% of boards do not assess FSL teachers' French proficiency at all.

Core French Teachers in British Columbia: Where Are We Now? – Wendy Carr, University of British Columbia

- Great disparity identified in 2007, in the delivery of core French in BC due to some generalist teachers feeling unprepared to teach French, persists in 2018. Program coordinators report not much has changed.
- Recommendations include: sustained language study, mandatory second language methodology course, ongoing professional learning, set amount of minimal instructional time per week, setting linguistic and methodological thresholds, consultant and mentorship support, support and recognition for undertaking professional development.

Towards A Better Understanding of FSL Teacher Identity: Implications for Professional practice – Meike Wernicke, University of British Columbia

- Non-francophone teachers face a significant dilemma in their professional setting: they are required to engage in ongoing language development, while simultaneously being expected to demonstrate native-like proficiency to colleagues, students, parents and administrators.
- One way to address the complex nature of FSL teachers' professional identities is by using a Professional Portfolio, which helps teachers document and reflect on their linguistic, intercultural and instructional knowledge with regular prompts for follow-up and manageable action goals that can be set on an ongoing basis.

Towards A Common Framework of Reference For Language Teachers Competence: Supporting Language Teachers – Joseph Dicks, University of New Brunswick

- Understanding and supporting language teacher competence is critical to learner success. A new project is underway which explores the feasibility of a common framework of reference for language teachers working in various contexts.
- The website provides useful resources for those involved in FSL pre-service and in-service teacher education (www.ecml.at/Teachercompetences)

3. Provincial/Territorial Reports and Policy Documents

- Provide updated overarching principles of FSL education and guides for FSL school administrators.
- Recent documents outlining policies and guidelines relating to FSL; broad use for all across Canada.

4. An Agenda for Change, Canadian Parents for French recommends that:

- 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).
- 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).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.