

**CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH
THE STATE OF FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN CANADA 2017:
FOCUS ON FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS**

1. In this report you will find an extensive review of current FSL education literature conducted by Stephanie Arnott, Mimi Masson, Sharon Lapkin, & Ibtissem Knouzi in order to identify key trends. The authors found that most of the research studies they reviewed were focused on French immersion programs with attention to French-language form and literacy.

Explicit Teaching of Form

- Research has documented the persistence of FI students' low accuracy, most notably with target forms that they rarely hear in the classroom (e.g., past tenses) or that are not linked to the meaning of the message.
- There is a definite movement towards encouraging FI teachers to provide feedback that addresses grammatical errors to promote accuracy and prevent fossilization.

Use of L1 in French Class

- Several researchers question the rigid exclusion of students' L1 from the FI classroom, drawing on work by Cummins (1979) suggesting that there is a common underlying language proficiency facilitating bilingual learners' use of both languages.
- There is a growing consensus that the metaphor of 'language interference' does not adequately capture the relationship between the L1 and L2. Instead, there is a call for a dynamic approach that acknowledges and capitalizes on the L1 as a strong cognitive tool, especially in facilitating the learning of linguistic forms.

Peer Collaboration

- Has been researched and endorsed as a valuable classroom practice in several studies.
- Studies have shown that peer collaboration often results in students negotiating meaning and form, as well as noticing and self-repair

Form and Literacy

- In several studies, the focus on form was part of a larger approach to enhance or support FI students' literacy achievement.
- Researchers compare findings from L1 and L2 studies with special attention to the role of linguistic form in literacy skill development in both languages.

Identifying Early Predictors of Literacy Achievement and Risk

- Several studies explored the possible link between proficiency in a learner's repertoire of languages (e.g., English or other languages as L1, French as an L2/ increasingly as an L3) in view of predicting, identifying and assisting students at risk of experiencing literacy delays.
- Some studies explore teaching practices that can lead to greater student engagement and accuracy

Promising Literacy-Related Practices

- Many studies documented the impact of literacy teaching practices designed to help FI students improve their reading and/or writing abilities or overcome delays,
- Several studies reported innovative practices tapping into students' strengths (e.g., L1 knowledge, L2 proficiency or literacy).

French Immersion Student Identity Construction and Literacy Practices

- There is growing interest in investigating the formation and negotiation of the FI student "literate" identity, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Studies suggest a broader definition of literacy that goes beyond the mere act of decoding.

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

French Immersion Students: How Good is Their French Now? Joe Dicks & Paula Kristmanson, University of New Brunswick

- Recent research is helping inform new teaching methods that put the right balance on meaning and accuracy. Initiatives to bring everyday French language into the classroom and the learners into French-speaking communities are also helping FI students to become more versatile in their use of French.
- French immersion students have a level of proficiency that is (and should be) the envy of many.

Including English Language Learners in French as a Second Language Learning Opportunities - Callie Mady, Nipissing University

- Research comparing immigrant English language learners' FSL achievement to the achievement of two groups of Canadian-born students [found that], where there were statistical differences, these favoured the immigrant ELL group. In fact, in the research conducted within the French immersion program, the ELL group outperformed the other two groups on components of the English test.
- Teachers expressed not only their belief that ELLs should be included in FSL programs but that they were well equipped to make adaptations to support such inclusion.

BC Students Speak Up About Core French - Paule Desgroseilliers, Independent Researcher

- A small group of BC-based, core French students found their experience tedious, noting that initial expectations of spontaneous communication with French speakers lowered as they navigated a secondary program lacking cultural opportunities and necessitating constant self-motivation.
- The students expressed admiration for allophones who have added one or both official languages to their first language and envied the language progress and cultural opportunities of their immersion counterparts.

3. Provincial/Territorial Reports and Policy Documents

- Provide updated overarching principles of FSL education and guides for FSL school administrators.
- Identify recent documents outlining policies and guidelines relating to FSL; useful for anyone, anywhere in Canada.

4. Insert: FSL Enrolment Statistics 2011-2012 to 2015-2016

- National and provincial/territorial enrolment by year, grade and type of FSL program.
- An infographic presenting 5-year trends in national and provincial/territorial FSL enrolments.

5. An Agenda for Change

In response to the findings from reviews of the research literature, expert commentaries and provincial/territorial policies and reports, Canadian Parents for French recommends that:

- The Government of Canada increase investments in official language research to inform FSL approaches and provide insight into students' experiences in FSL contexts *other than immersion* (e.g., core, intensive, extended).
- Ministries of education, faculties of education and school districts build upon this work by conducting more comprehensive studies in current, literacy-focused and other innovative pedagogies that maximize student engagement, participation and success.
- The Government of Canada increase investments in official language promotion and learning, taking into account the active promotion of bilingualism, increased official language proficiency, innovative practices and funding.
- The Government of Canada put an emphasis on increased dialogue and cohesion between Ministries of Education and among school districts to increase parental understanding of the supports available to and for FSL students in their choices of appropriate French language learning opportunities - in and out of classroom settings - as well as interaction opportunities with Francophones to enhance student / youth confidence and motivation to sustain bilingualism in Canadian society.
- Ministries of education, faculties of education and school districts enhance support for professional development for FSL teachers in current, literacy-focused pedagogies and bring attention to pedagogical strategies that maximize student engagement, participation, and success.

The State of French as a Second Language in Education 2017 is available for download:

<https://cpf.ca/en/files/State-of-FSL-Education-Report-Final-Web.pdf>

French as a Second Language Enrolment Statistics 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 are available for download:

<https://cpf.ca/en/files/Enrolment-Stats.pdf>