



CANADIAN
PARENTS
FOR FRENCH

**Logging in
to Learn!**

**Se brancher
pour apprendre!**



Advocacy-Oriented

Research Brief

How are students, parents, volunteer tutors and teachers experiencing online teaching and learning?

It is important to address inequality regarding learning opportunities for young people living in rural and remote communities as an ongoing source of concern.

Growing up in rural Newfoundland, CDLI/remote learning allowed me to access high quality Core French education that would have otherwise not been available. My teachers always went above and beyond to provide us with authentic learning experiences, while putting an emphasis on communication skills. Thanks to this experience, I was able to complete my university studies completely in French and was inspired to become a French teacher myself in the nation's capital.

We only have one computer at home, and three children. Setting up homeschooling is complicated since a computer is needed for everything.

I have been teaching for 30 years and am learning every day, but I am somewhat limited in my skills and creativity. To me the biggest challenge has been assessment; we have to come up with other types of assessment when we know students have access to all the resources they would not be able to use in class. The one thing I miss the most is the possibility for one-on-one discussion with my students. I guess I must be "old school", but it has taken me some time to start to enjoy and feel I can do a good job online.

Mon apprentissage de français en ligne était le même qu'à l'école. C'était plus facile d'apprendre à la maison. Je pense que mon français est resté plus ou moins le même.



Online All the Time!

Introduction

BY WENDY CARR PROFESSOR OF TEACHING, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,
CPF NATIONAL, DIRECTOR AT LARGE AND SECRETARY

We have had to adapt all parts of our world to new constraints, and online teaching, learning, working and socializing are more prominent than ever in our lives.

Some people have found opportunities and freedoms in spending more time online while others have seen their ability to succeed reduced due to challenges related to equity, access and insufficient resources and/or supports. A recent Université de Montréal study (2020) ^{Ref 1} with nearly 5,000 parents and over 6,000 K to 12 students was conducted during the early months of the pandemic to understand the benefits and challenges faced by families when most teaching and learning was conducted online. A key finding was that existing inequalities were exacerbated, and Canada's most vulnerable communities were disadvantaged in relation to access to technology and the degree to which educational supervision was provided by working parents. In addition to the time required to supervise, many parents did not

feel they had the pedagogical skills to help their children, especially when it came to French instruction.

Organizations across the world pivoted, including Canadian Parents for French, which shifted its fall conference to a virtual format, organized online French tutoring in some provinces ^{Ref2} and now offers a *Concours virtuel* ^{Ref3}. School boards and educators had to quickly restructure how teaching and learning took place and, from the very beginning, gaps and inequities became evident. Educators were expected, in some cases, to deliver online as well as modified in-person instruction, and resources were not always available, including technological tools, internet access, teacher professional development and/or French curriculum materials suitable for online learning. Additional threats to program delivery

Canadian Parents for French has rallied during this past year to provide just-in-time supports for online learning, virtual networking and professional development.

and quality occurred in boards/districts where teacher shortages were caused by class size and distancing protocols ^{Ref4}, where core French was deemed too challenging to offer in some cases due to multiple-class delivery, and where the threat loomed that students might lose their school FSL program placement if parents opted for online delivery at home ^{Ref5}.

In addition to outlining some supports and recommendations to address some of the challenges experienced during recent months, we are also highlighting a few of the many programs, initiatives and resources to show that online language education has been thriving in many parts of Canada for decades. These can provide lessons for how we approach online and hybrid delivery models in the days ahead.

Some examples include:

- rural FSL programming offered online in Newfoundland and Labrador by the Centre for Distance Learning & Innovation (CDLI),
- online secondary French immersion courses developed by the North Vancouver School District, providing a broad variety of online course options for BC's secondary students,
- an online early years' immersion program for rural areas of New Brunswick in which digital modules support students' early oral communication, reading, writing, and more (also used by learners in the Yukon),
- professional learning for educators and resources for students and parents based on *IDÉLLO*, a French learning website created by *Télévision française de l'Ontario*,
- online professional learning for language teachers offered in My Virtual Classroom webinars by the Cdn Assn of Second Language Teachers, and in *Zone pédagogique* by the Cdn Assn of Immersion Professionals.

With these and other examples of innovation occurring across the country (outlined in more detail [on pp 5-6](#)), it has never been more important for provinces, territories, school boards and organizations to work together to challenge usual jurisdictional boundaries so that the resources and practices in one area can benefit learners, educators and families in others. The ability to share promising practices via technology is, after all, one of its great advantages.

Even with innovative programs/resources and the contribution they are making to increasing access for learning, there are other programs that are being closed, e.g., Alberta's Distance Learning &

Education, which has served Alberta's, Northwest Territories', Nunavut's and international students for decades ^{Ref6}. The void will be partially filled by Vista Virtual School and by posting existing available courses on the [Learn Alberta](#) website; however, the range and variety of courses will no longer be available, which will significantly affect learners and families.

To learn more about how Canadian families have experienced distance learning, CPF National staff sent a survey to those who took part in the Virtual French Tutoring Program and also circulated it to CPF Branches and Chapters in BC, YK, AB, MB and NT. (Some of their comments are included, among others, at the beginning and end of this Brief.) Feedback from approximately 150 respondents was mixed: access and quality varied according to family, school and board circumstances; some educators were better prepared or resourced than others; and learners responded to the online environment in different ways, particularly in relation to their French second language learning.

It should be noted that learning online can pose extra challenges for some learners. According to educator Amanda Morin, ^{Ref7} "Students who have difficulty processing auditory information may have trouble with video lessons, students who need more visual support may struggle with text-heavy directions and materials, and English language learners may have difficulty accessing content without the support they'd typically have in the classroom." Similarly, students with diverse learning needs or who do not focus or are easily distractible may find online learning more challenging than in-person learning where additional support can be provided by peers and teachers.

Maximizing access to online learning opportunities involves building awareness about resources and how to use them as well as ensuring that all families have access to hardware, software and the internet (with sufficient bandwidth to operate multi-users and multi-media). It is also essential to support parents and educators doing their best to facilitate learning among Canadian youth. Ensuring equity for all learners means minimizing barriers to access and success. ^{Ref8}

Canadian Parents for French has rallied during this past year to provide just-in-time supports for online learning and to represent families and their interests with its various governmental and organizational partners. Time is needed to fully distill the lessons learned from this period of intense change and challenge, but it is clear that the benefits of online teaching and learning will influence FSL education in the years to come. ■



Online Language Education

Review of Current Research and Practice

BY CAMERON W. SMITH DOCTORAL STUDENT, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA AND
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Online language learning provides exciting opportunities as well as challenges when reimagining the innovative work that is already being done with technology in second language classrooms. Research-based conversations in the field continue to shift from whether teaching online is more or less effective than in-person to a focus on how technology is used to make language teaching and learning more effective at a distance, as well as in face-to-face contexts ^{Ref1}. Below, we briefly explore some of the approaches and key recommendations for online language education.

Generally speaking, research has shown that incorporating technology can have a positive effect for learners of all ages, across language competencies and components, e.g., oral and written comprehension, production, interaction, grammar, spelling, etc. (Chang & Hung, 2019). Its use can also increase student motivation and engagement, foster positive attitudes, and highlight the relevance and global connection of language learning (Hinkelman, 2011; Koua, 2013).

The “flipped” learning approach to learning has been used for a number of years and has received increased attention from both



second language researchers and teachers. This approach is a way to augment in-person teaching and/or to facilitate distance learning. In second language learning contexts, students interact with specific language resources (e.g., videos, websites) before and/or at the start of class time, and the content is then actively taken up through discussions, groupwork, or writing (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2021). The approach enables the prioritization of communication in the classroom and has been shown to promote work on grammar and vocabulary at a student's own pace by repeating content as needed and using a variety of technology tools in a scaffolded sequence.

Maximizing the use of time outside of the scheduled class is particularly important when working online, and not just in flipped classroom designs. Rather than focusing on assigning a particular number of hours of homework, research suggests ensuring that the activities and learning move students towards the same proficiency goals – such as ‘Can Do’ statements – that would normally be addressed in a classroom (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2021). This might take the form of discussion or chat posts, giving peer feedback, speaking and listening activities, grammar and vocabulary practice, or participating in synchronous group activities. The additional time needed to complete work in the online environment should be considered when structuring these beyond-class tasks; the need to keep online content manageable and purposeful is a consistent lesson from pandemic experience (Deslandes-Martineau et al., 2020).

Whether online or in person, the use of technology can help L2 students access multimodal input, produce varied output, and interact synchronously or asynchronously (Moneypenny & Simon, 2017). Teachers can tailor the same tool to different competencies and learning goals, without having to repeatedly explain how to use another tool. Encouraging multimedia immersion through songs, podcasts, videos, and other authentic texts – often freely accessible online – has also become easier as content creation becomes more accessible. Authentic texts are also beneficial for promoting student motivation and engagement, and sparking motivation and connection beyond the immediate topic for ongoing, online learning (Deslandes-Martineau et al., 2020).

Of course, while FSL educators may be motivated to use technology, they face numerous systemic barriers in schools related to access, support, and limited language-specific resources (see Smith, 2020, for an exploration of FSL teachers' experiences with technology). In response, educators are constantly weighing the benefits and limitations of teaching online, some of which are explored in the Introduction to this Brief. Targeted professional

learning can support the technical and pedagogical skills for using technology in second language teaching, both in-person and online (Hinkelman, 2011). Adapting technological tools to FSL settings (e.g., with learners at different language levels, in varied contexts) or using tools that may not be made for language learning, requires creativity and know-how on the part of the teacher, and professional learning in this regard must respond to teachers' beliefs, confidence, skills, and needs in their schools (Lawrence, 2014).

When teaching FSL online, research has revealed an even greater need for clear communication of instructions, expectations and routine ^{Ref 1}. Students (and parents) may need extra support to understand the topic, assignments, assessments and the resources associated with a lesson. This also includes reminders about virtual resources (e.g., dictionaries) and general language learning strategies that students need to succeed (e.g., what to do if they are struggling with a word or phrase).

Although selecting the right tools or resources is fundamental to technology planning in online language learning, using them in ways that enhance the learning goal remains the ultimate purpose (Hinkelman, 2011). Considerations include how effectively the tool will aid students in achieving their “Can Do” goals, the ease of use, accessibility, the “fit” with learner needs, and the ability to support rich assessment, among others (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2021). Both technological and pedagogical factors must work together to find the right tool for the right task.

Teachers also need to consider how they are using peer and teacher interactions for both support and feedback in learning the language (Hinkelman, 2011). Online presence and engagement are different than in-person, and personal connections need to be established and nurtured. Social media, classroom blogs, and other community-oriented spaces can be used to maintain those connections beyond the scheduled class time. As well, teachers need to consider all aspects of language activity (production, reception and interaction) when adapting performance-based activities such as portfolios, plays, dialogues, and presentations for online spaces (Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2021).

Technology presents important opportunities for language learning, whether online or face-to-face, and it is here to stay. When thinking about online language education, we need to consider how to convert content to “flip” language learning, make full use of the available tools and resources, and structure engaging and effective learning opportunities. When FSL teachers are supported in their use of technology through professional learning and infrastructure, they are able to realize effective practices with technology and teaching in online spaces. ■

Promising Practices Across Canada

OUR THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS: GLENN CAKE AND VALERIE PIKE CDLI-NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR, JOANNE ROBERTSON NORTH VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT, BRITISH COLUMBIA, FIONA STEWART DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NEW BRUNSWICK, LESLEY DOELL ACPI, PASCAL ST-LAURENT AND SOFIE MAURICE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, YUKON AND DENIS COUSINEAU IDÉLLO-TFO, ONTARIO



Newfoundland & Labrador: Centre for Distance Learning & Innovation

CDLI delivers FSL programming to high school students in rural areas and supports professional learning for FSL teachers province-wide. FSL teachers and students work together in real time, using various multimedia learning objects and distance education technologies for autonomous and group learning. CDLI programming features *la Francophonie* throughout Newfoundland and Labrador as well as student-led interviews of popular francophone figures in the province. Many students would never have had the opportunity to complete a Core French program were it not for CDLI, and many have excelled, e.g., House of Commons Page Program, CPF National Concours participants and winners, and going on to study French at the post-secondary level and gain meaningful employment in many sectors, including FSL teaching.

<https://cdli.ca/inukshuk/>



British Columbia: North Vancouver School District Online Secondary French Immersion Curriculum

A district team produced a variety of secondary courses (*Planification 10, Carrières et leadership 10, Sciences naturelles 10, Médias et communication numérique 11, Explorations en sciences humaines 11*, plus *Français* courses) to address the need for online options in Core French and French immersion across the province (and reduce attrition in secondary programs). The most recent courses feature engaging learning opportunities for students to explore current social issues of global concern (e.g., climate change, social inequality, racism), within the content areas. They also prioritize the use of embedded technologies, virtual exchanges, and online resources that enable students to experience authentic Francophone language and cultures while enhancing their linguistic competencies.

<https://sd44.ca/school/onlinelearning/ProgramsServices/EcoleVirtuelle/Pages/default.aspx#/=>



New Brunswick: French Learning Opportunities for Rural Areas (FLORA)

Parents in rural New Brunswick communities felt disadvantaged when Immersion was not accessible to their children. The early elementary program is designed to support learners in developing early oral communication, reading and writing skills in French and includes additional activities/experiences/games integrating some music, math and art and even yoga. The digital modules are also accessible from home so that parents can participate by reading, singing and playing along. Google Analytics indicate that there were over 90,000 users of FLORA between April and June 2020 from Moncton, Fredericton, Saint John, Hamilton, Halifax, Ottawa, London, Saskatoon and Regina.

<https://flora.nbed.nb.ca>



Ontario: IDÉLLO-Télévision française de l'Ontario (TFO)

Groupe TFO Média has produced a comprehensive learning website, IDÉLLO, that provides resources for the community: learners, parents, teachers. MiniTFO and the reading app, Boukili, engage with early learners. Students in Grades 6 to 12 appreciate the humour and authentic situations with #écouteça. Other popular series at the elementary level include “Là, où je dors,” “MathXplosion”, and “Top Sciences”. Webinars and teacher professional development based on these series are available and linked to the Common European Framework of Reference.

<https://idello.org/en>

continued next page...



Manitoba Education

Manitoba Education has long been committed to providing quality distance learning options and increased educational opportunities for learners in Manitoba, regardless of geographic location and respecting local community decisions regarding programming. InformNet, Manitoba's only fully online high school, was expanded to provide a province-wide platform for remote learning with approximately a dozen courses available in French each semester. To benefit students with no/low Internet connectivity, funding for the Teacher Mediated Option was expanded in 2020-21. <https://informnet.mb.ca/courses.html>



The North

Traditionally, the Nunavut and NWT Departments of Education have had an agreement permitting students to access courses via the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC), now slated to shut down. NWT foresees expanding its own well regarded Northern Distance Learning initiative, which allows students in remote communities to join classes by video link where they would otherwise have to study online, alone. The Nunavut Department of Education is in the process of developing a delivery plan for distance education to be implemented in the near future. The Yukon Department of Education entered into an agreement with New Brunswick Department of Education to access and use the FLORA program noted earlier. <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/education-renewal/northern-distance-learning>



Contact North | Contact Nord

A community-based bilingual distance post-secondary education and training network and not-for-profit in Thunder Bay allows underserved residents in 800 small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities to access education and training without leaving their communities. 116 online learning centres are located in communities across Ontario and deliver services in English and French. In March 2021, Contact North's reputation as a global leader in online post-secondary education and training has been recognized to serve as model to establish Contact North BC. The pilot will provide support to residents in rural and remote communities in northwest BC to access online and distance education programming in their communities from all 25 of the province's post-secondary institutions.

<https://contactnorth.ca>



LEARN QUEBEC

LEARN's Virtual Campus provides high quality instruction aligned with the Quebec curriculum, and allows for equity of course offerings across the province no matter the size, staffing, or geographical location of the school. It includes supports for blended and online learning and summer school for secondary students, and a no-charge tutoring program with experienced teachers for both elementary and secondary levels. Their *Learn at Home* initiative collated subject specific and cross curricular content and resources.

<https://learnquebec.ca/virtualcampus> and <https://learnquebec.ca/learnathome>

SOFAD

SOFAD (*Société de formation à distance*) serves as the province's distance learning centre, founded by the Department of Education in partnership with all Quebec school boards, with the goal of centralizing the design, production, research and development of distance education materials including vocational training and skills development.

<https://sofad.qc.ca>



The Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC)

The Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC) has existed in several iterations since 1923. Its support of the distance learning needs of not only Alberta's students, but also of those in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and internationally, ceased at the end of June 2021 as funding has been phased out. This void will be partially filled by Vista Virtual School, the posting of existing available courses on the Learn Alberta website and the expansion of existing services being provided by a variety of Alberta school boards. This closure has a significant impact on French second language education and particularly for rural students, as there will be no province-wide agency or body offering any French second language distance courses moving forward.

<https://learnalberta.ca>

FOR TEACHERS



Canadian Association of
Second Language Teachers
Association canadienne des
professeurs de langues secondes

CASLT Online: My Virtual Classroom Webinars

The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers has created My Virtual Classroom webinars to help teachers function more effectively in a distance teaching and learning environment. Offered in English and French, the focus is on harnessing technological tools in the second language classroom, including introduction to remote/blended learning, creating an interactive online classroom, developing oral competency online, multiliteracies, and many more topics.

<https://caslt.org/en/professional-development/workshops-professional-learning/online-pd-activities>

Association canadienne des
professionnels de l'immersion



ACPI - Zone pédagogique

The Canadian Association of Immersion Professionals has developed an online resource for French immersion teachers to assist in their professional development as well as support their classroom teaching. There are 3 levels of membership (including free) that allow varying levels of access to teaching sites, podcasts, webinars with immersion experts, tools and documents, research briefs, cultural items and more. Each month, there is new material added, e.g., online teaching modules comprising promising practices from immersion teachers across Canada. There are also components that help teachers practise their French while learning new pedagogical tools.

<https://membre.acpi.ca/zone-pedagogique>

Logging in to Learn French

Improving Quality and Access

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What we all can do:

Advocate for more online FSL courses and support for all learners.
Support the district purchase of licenses to digital libraries and tools in French.



For French Learners:

- Learn French online, *oui c'est possible!*
- Reach out online to other French speakers and learners. Share your favourite apps, podcasts, or radio or television programming in French.
- Seek out opportunities to use French as often as possible in daily life.



For Parents:

- Connect with teachers, librarians and other parents to learn about strategies and resources to help your child learn French online.
- Start with fun activities such as online games, stories, songs and interactions with others.
- Ask lots of questions, such as, when is it appropriate to use a translation tool? Does my child have access to headphones and language software?
- Praise your child's efforts in using French and celebrate progress.
- Encourage your child to use French with friends and family on the phone and online.
- Embrace a growth mindset and acknowledge that errors are necessary steps in learning.
- Recognize that your child's teacher may still be learning how to teach online and that is okay.
- Sign up your child for virtual French conversation or tutoring through CPF.
- Reach out to others in your network for tech support if necessary.



For Teachers:

- Amplify your online 'classroom' with links to school board and public library licensed resources.
- Make lessons interactive using small group breakout rooms. Enhance oral interaction with voice recordings and text-to speech features.
- Engage in co-teaching and team approaches for planning and teaching.
- Connect online with another French class in a virtual exchange locally or across the country.
- Invite guest speakers, authors, celebrities, scientists, politicians and Elders to your online class.
- Tour the francophone world on a virtual field trip. Visit historic sites, museums, parks, and attend plays, exhibitions and concerts.
- Organize a "Musique mercredi" or "Manie musicale" competition as an excellent way to engage students in language, music, and culture.
- Expand your repertoire of resources, strategies, tools and support through online professional development.
- Participate in CPF's Concours virtuel to give students an authentic audience.

FOR YOUNGER ONLINE LEARNERS:



Remember that songs, interactive media, and play are important for language development.



Borrow French music from the library and find fun, age-appropriate French language programming such as *Mini TFO*.



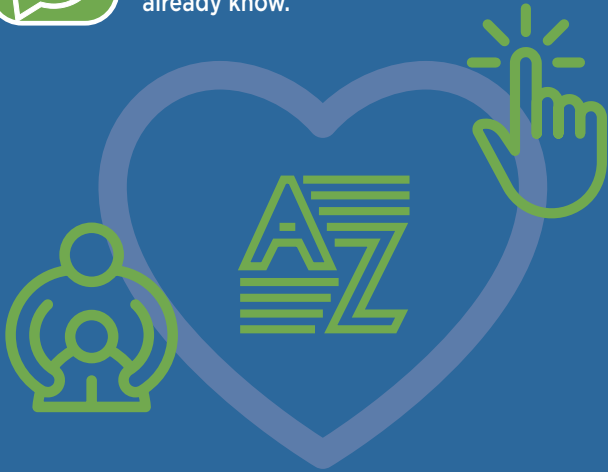
Look for audiobooks and animated picture books as a great way to introduce language and culture.



Try Baby Shark/*Bébé Réquin* (or another favourite) *en français*! Children love to learn through music and dance.



Check out French Netflix and TV cartoons that children already know.



FOR OLDER ONLINE LEARNERS:



Switch the language of the app or keyboard to French, and use the built-in spelling, grammar and word-prediction to express yourself with confidence.



Share what you care about: find ways to represent in French what you know about favourite topics.



Switch the language on the TV, *Netflix* or *Youtube* to watch familiar programs and movies in French.



Check out francophone song playlists on Spotify, Youtube and Facebook.



Set the text messaging system to French.



Use *Bon Patron* or *Antidote* instead of Google Translate.



Watch programs and listen to music videos with French subtitles.



Check out your CPF branch resources on the new website. They are divided into youth, parent and educator categories.



Visit frenchstreet.ca, accentalberta.ca and accentquebec.com to see what is happening in your community.

What can we do to improve the availability of French online courses for our learners?

How can we ensure internet accessibility and computers for all families and schools?



Learning FSL Online in Ontario

BY CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH ONTARIO,
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Learning FSL online when
in-person schooling was suspended
took place in a variety of delivery formats
that we review below, along with some of
the associated benefits and challenges.

Online or distance learning is a longstanding approach that has evolved from correspondence learning whereby students completed school work that was mailed by government officials. When in-person schooling was suspended in Ontario due to the pandemic, learning FSL online took place in a variety of delivery formats that we review below, along with some of the associated benefits and challenges.

Learning Online During a Crisis

Learn at Home, a website offered by the ON Ministry of Education, was in place from March to June 2020. Parents/guardians supported the students' learning at home during this time, supplying laptops, tablets and/or cellphones and internet connections (in some cases augmented by school boards). Teachers stayed in touch using email, telephone and/or video or voice online conferencing. They provided learning materials and assignments using various platforms including Brightspace-Virtual Learning Environment (D2L) and Google Classrooms. Many parents not proficient in French found it very challenging to support their children in their FSL programs.

Starting in the fall of 2020, many Ontario secondary schools began using a quadmester system where students completed 2 credits at a time over a few weeks. Students' class time was divided between in-person (in the school building with their class and their teacher), synchronous online learning (at the same time with their class or individually with their teacher) and asynchronous online learning (assigned work completed on their own time). Many of the French programs continued as usual with teacher-led online learning. The length of the school day and proportion of asynchronous and synchronous teaching and learning time were set out by the Ministry of Education. Depending on students' credit selection, timetabling and school board decisions regarding the time allocated to the learning of/in French, some students may have had quadmesters with no French learning.

Virtual School

The Government of Ontario gave parents who absolutely did not want their children to enter a school building during the pandemic the option to sign them up to attend «virtual school. It was made available to elementary and secondary students to ensure that every child would continue his/her education during the pandemic. School boards then managed the virtual school within their jurisdiction just as they would a regular school with the exception that students would only work remotely and could come from locations across the entire school board. The virtual school was assigned a principal but there was no parent council as there would have been in a community school. Most virtual schools offered the full curriculum options, although a few school boards did not offer elementary core French or French immersion for students who normally attended these programs.

Virtual school classes may be a mix of students who otherwise would have attended different schools. Online learning takes place synchronously and asynchronously. Resources and materials are entirely online or, in some specialized cases, may be delivered to students' homes. The length of the virtual school day and the time allotted to asynchronous and synchronous learning are set out by the Ministry of Education.

Benefits

- Virtual schools are offered at the discretion of the school board.
- Parents can choose virtual school based on their family's health and safety and the needs of their child(ren).
- Social and emotional connections to the teacher and classmates take place virtually.
- There may be a mix of students from across the school district who might only be together at the virtual school.

Challenges

- Some parents had difficulty helping their children with the various platforms being used.
- Access to a computer or tablet and/or internet may not have been sufficient.
- Resources were limited to those available virtually and accessible through the virtual learning platform and other online platforms including virtual libraries.
- Teachers may have little or no background in effective teaching in a virtual environment.
- The movement of large groups of students from virtual to their school building as circumstances changed required repeated reorganization of teacher allocations and staffing models.
- Offering in-person and virtual schools within a school board sometimes required additional teachers and administrators that were not fully covered in existing school board funding.
- The already limited supply of FSL-qualified teachers was exacerbated; however, it was possible to hire beyond the local community for virtual school.
- Adaptation of activities for some aspects of the curriculum was needed, particularly to allow for physical education. Consideration of materials and resources that are available in the home.

Hybrid Flex Teaching and Learning

A few Ontario school boards chose this model, which places the teacher in their classroom (indoors or outdoors) teaching students who are physically present and students who are joining the class online via audio and/or video from their computers at home. Hybrid means a school day with a mix of asynchronous and synchronous learning. Flex indicates that, on a daily basis, students may opt to join the class in person in the physical classroom or virtually via online streaming. French second language programs continued as usual.

Benefits

- Hybrid Flex is offered at the discretion of the school board.
- It allows for a more seamless transition for students from school buildings to online learning as family and community circumstances change.
- Students and families continue their connection to their teacher, class, and their local school community.

Challenges

- Staffing allocation is the same as during any ordinary school year. Reorganization of classes and reassignment of teachers is minimized, and the hiring of additional FSL teachers is unlikely to be required unless occasional teacher rosters are depleted.
- Teachers may or may not have any background in effective teaching in hybrid flex, which requires both in-person teaching skills and virtual teaching skills.
- Resources are chosen from those available virtually and accessible through the virtual learning platform and other online platforms including virtual libraries.
- Adaptation of activities for some aspects of the curriculum was needed, particularly to allow for physical education. Consider the use of materials and resources that are available in the home.
- Extra care needs to be taken to ensure that students joining the class online are having their social and emotional needs met and not feeling left out.

These approaches to online learning during a health crisis presented families and school boards with opportunities to maintain learning and respond to changing circumstances; however, there were also multiple challenges caused, in part, by the speed at which solutions needed to be found, eliminating the possibility of advance planning. The lessons learned in Ontario, along with those learned across the country, could inform more permanent options for online learning via virtual, hybrid and other models. A key takeaway is the importance of ensuring FSL programming as an integral component of any delivery mode in order to maintain the gains that have been made in French second language education in Canada.



CPF Network Calls to Action

Canadian Parents for French wishes to focus attention on the need to ensure access to quality FLS learning opportunities for all students across Canada. Distance learning permits cross provincial / territorial sharing in a manner not possible in traditional settings, eliminating geographical boundaries for student / school participation. Learning from our 2020-2021 experiences, we can shift our teaching and learning practices to better embrace and highlight the strengths offered by technology, including leadership from teachers skilled in the use of technologies and the opportunities for more collaboration among teachers. Advocacy for continuity, quality and possible expansion of FSL programming can include references to promising practices using technology.

School & Boards

1 Review distance and online educational learning programs with a FSL lens:

- a.** Consider taking steps to ensure consistent, equitable access for a quality continuum of learning based on selected program pathways underway and the diverse learning needs of students across every school.
- b.** Include FSL programming and proven language learning practices in planning, funding, resource development and policy provisions for online courses, delivery, management of a cadre of supply teachers, and professional learning.
- c.** Provide outreach education to parents who wish to support their child/ren's online language learning.

Provincial/Territorial & Federal Governments

2 Review existing Centres for Distance Learning models with success in FSL and language learning practices:

- a.** Support funding for the expansion of Centres for Distance Learning (e.g., CDLI in NL) online courses (synchronous, asynchronous) to augment options for rural language programming and for schools where limited courses are offered at the secondary level (a contributing factor to student attrition) and to increase sharing across jurisdictions, with other provinces/ territories.
- b.** Support funding for increasing and improving internet access and provision of basic equipment by rental or purchase to families in currently underserved areas in all provinces and territories.
- c.** Support funding for the expansion of online professional learning opportunities (including language development) for FSL educators.

3 Require school boards or educational institutions to develop a digital learning framework and policies for effective delivery of online FSL programs:

- a.** Address web accessibility, regular data collection and ways to evaluate practices to eliminate barriers and make appropriate accommodations for all students.

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

4 Conduct and support a research project or publish an issue paper with a specific focus of examining the current state of all forms of K-12 FSL e-learning, similar to briefs published by Canadian eLearning Network:

- a.** Review programs providing strong FSL e-learning opportunities (distance, online and blended learning), examine a range of issues that are current and relevant to the design, delivery, support and regulation of all forms of K-12 e-learning in Canada, and propose an agenda for further improvement.

5 Create a pan-Canadian consortium to encourage collaboration in online FSL resource development and sharing of expertise and resources across school boards and regions:

- a.** Expand existing models currently serving French First Language programs (e.g., CAVFLO in Ontario) to include French Second Language learning and teaching across Canada.
- b.** Review existing models currently serving post-secondary (e.g., Contact North/ Contact Nord) to expand to include K-12 language learning and teaching across Canada.

Faculties of Education

6 Review existing pre-service methodology courses:

- a.** Allow a broader range of hybrid-delivery (mix of online and face-to-face) for pre-service teachers to undertake their teacher education courses.
- b.** Include teaching with technology as a component of language methodology courses if not already included.

Virtual Learning Resources and Tools

There is no shortage of tools made to help people of all ages to learn or improve an additional language. These resources help make language learning fun, accessible, and portable. As with all apps, we recommend you explore the limits of the free versions of different tools before you commit. Language-focused apps commonly have paid subscriptions, ad-removal options, or “freemium” content unlocks.



Language Courses

Duolingo, *Babbel*, and *Busuu* are just a few of the apps available for gamified language learning. *Duolingo* also has a ‘For Schools’ setup so teachers can set homework, track progress, and set challenges for students. However, integrating the content of these apps into one’s teaching beyond homework and warm-ups still requires explicit instruction. Differentiated instruction and accessibility modifications are also not always possible or apparent in these tools.



Flashcards

AnkiApp, *Quizlet*, and *Memrise* are popular options for language practice. Beyond electronic cue cards, these tools include multimedia, interactive fill-in-the-blank, typing, and other activities to reinforce grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and even a little listening and speaking.



Language Games

StudyCat, *MindSnacks*, and many other apps are available as educational language games for (mainly) elementary students. While the content is similar to course-based apps like *Duolingo*, the presentation is more focused on games and activities.



Forums, Chat, and Social Apps

HelloTalk, *InterPals*, and *Tandem* are language learning forums and tools that allow users to access multimedia content made by native speakers. Some allow one to communicate with a native speaker who is learning your language for mutual practice ‘pen pal’ style. Please note that these come with a BIG caveat about online safety, despite the built-in safety features, and might be more appropriate for older students to try in their own time (with parental supervision).



Audio, Books, and Culture

Beelinguapp, *Flowlingo*, *500 French Conversations*, and French-language *YouTube* channels are ways to engage with different content from full books to music. Many options exist to explore culture, news, and other topics presented in these tools in addition to language learning.



Practical Resources:

- The *Connecting Families* initiative, in partnership with Internet service providers (ISPs), enables eligible Canadian families to access high-speed Internet service packages for \$10 per month.
- *École branchée... Sur la famille* is a new service aimed at supporting parents in the digital world and facilitating student success focused communication between them and teachers. A new, free, downloadable resource, *Healthy Mind is a Springboard to Learning ... Even at a Distance. A Practical Guide for Parents*.
- *I can speak French! Increasing the oral proficiency of French second-language learners*, published by CMEC, includes guidelines and an accompanying video to inspire FSL teachers to use student-centred online conversations as a means to promote authentic oral communication.
- Media Smarts / Habilo Médias, Canada’s Centre for Digital and Media Literacy shares guides and practical tips for parents on issues from cyberbullying to online privacy, helping navigate parenting in the digital age.
- CANeLEARN, the Canadian ELearning Network is the leading voice for learner success in K-12 online and blended learning. They produce an annual Report on E-learning in Canada, offer an annual symposium and a regular newsletter.

Although not necessarily intended for language learning, many educational sites and tools provide great opportunities for French teaching and learning. Even among these general classroom sites, several have libraries of lessons and activities in different areas, including some *en français*!



Learning Management Systems

Systems such as [Google Classroom](#), [Brightspace](#), and [Moodle](#) can be powerful platforms for planning, discussions, collaboration, and resource sharing. Many third-party tools have add-ons to enhance the capacity of these sites. Of course, these are usually chosen and controlled by school boards.



Gamified Quizzes

Becoming a staple in many FSL teachers' toolkits, [Kahoot](#) is just one example of the quiz games available for assessments and practice. [Kahoot](#), [Quizzizz](#), and [Socrative](#) allow you to embed multimedia to switch up question formats, and some allow you to link to lessons, flashcards, and tasks for students to complete.



Interactive Presentations

Sites like [Narpod](#), [Pear Deck](#), and [Mentimeter](#) bring new life to presenting online, enhancing your existing slideshows with tools for videos, quizzes, polls, and other real-time activities. Whiteboard apps like [Explain Everything](#) can also be used by students to submit multimedia assignments easily, and [Edpuzzle](#) lets you annotate and add interactive elements to [YouTube](#), [Crash Course](#), and other videos.



IMessage Boards

[FlipGrid](#), [VoiceThread](#), and [Padlet](#) are digital discussion spaces and bulletin boards for students to submit text, voice, video, images, and more in response to different topics (and each other!). For older students, [Hypothes.is](#) lets students annotate and discuss imported texts.



MAURIL

A new platform is now available to learn English and French at no cost, using a wide range of stimulating and entertaining content from CBC/Radio Canada. Financed and endorsed by the Government of Canada, this new tool to develop oral comprehension is deployed by CBC/Radio Canada, in collaboration with a committee of pedagogical experts.

The Mauril app can be downloaded onto your phone. It is an ad free window into news, current affairs, documentaries, variety, comedy and more, offering 1 to 22 minute clips of tv shows, web series and podcasts. It is accompanied by comprehension-assessment questions helping users discover a diverse vocabulary with regional flavours from coast to coast. Participants can work through a video game inspired journey, evolving from one level to another and embark on missions to integrate their language knowledge into everyday life. The approach is based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). It is aimed not only at adults who wish to learn the other official language but also want to better understand the rich diversity and countless nuances within the cultural tapestry of this vast country. To access: mauril.ca.

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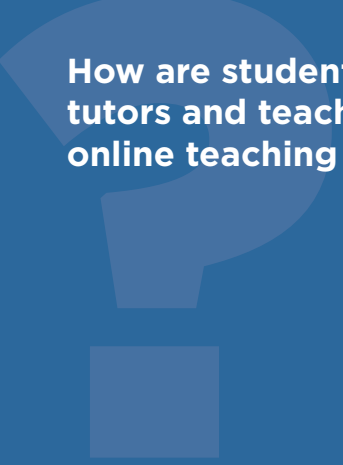
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How are students, parents, volunteer tutors and teachers experiencing online teaching and learning?

Although it can in no way replace the magic that comes from in-person interactions, teaching French online has really inspired me to focus on the essentials. My online learners have been thriving with the options to present their learning in multiple ways as well.

Online learning presents many challenges. First, parents must ensure their child has access to the tools, including a computer/laptop and reliable internet services. Second, a list of reputable, engaging, age/grade level appropriate resources ... partnerships are needed with teachers, non-profits, and entertainers to ensure that, once the tools are in place, content is available.

Je préfère l'école de vive voix parce que c'est plus facile à apprendre. Chez nous, on est facilement distrait. Quand je suis retourné à l'école en novembre, je pense que j'ai oublié beaucoup de mon français.

J'aime mieux être en classe. Il y a trop de distractions à la maison. C'est mieux depuis que nous alternons chaque semaine en ligne et en classe. Quand c'était deux semaines à la maison, le travail s'accumulait sans que je m'en rende compte. J'ai besoin de rappels.

As for my experiences this year, it was quite difficult because it was online. Moreover, I feel like I haven't learned as much because there was no in-person interaction at all. However, one thing I liked learning about was the communicative approach.



It has been very challenging this year, doing transitional learning for the French immersion students who are at home. We find that we are not able to be as authentic, responsive or emergent or able to check for understanding during the webinars. We don't know any of our students' strengths or stretches and, therefore, are not able to differentiate accordingly. Developing receptive and expressive language has proven to be the most challenging aspect of transitional learning.



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