

POSITION #3 – Recognized Proficiency Levels

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

Issue

Parents, students, educators, and employers require a greater understanding of proficiency level information, the CEFR and proficiency testing.

School jurisdictions and Ministries of Education do not consistently provide information about proficiency outcomes. Report card marks and transcripts do not give the answer to 'what can my child do in French?' Too often parents and senior students lack the information necessary to make informed decisions about French as a second language education. Some doubt that bilingualism can be achieved via school programming and do not enroll their children in immersion or transfer them to the English stream in high school. Others enroll their children in core French expecting them to achieve the same proficiency as an early French immersion graduate.

Call to Action

Provide information and validation of French as a second language student progress and program proficiency outcomes using the CEFR and tests such as the DELF

- Improve the ongoing monitoring of student progress in proficiency at the classroom level:
 - to review individual achievement.
 - to identify areas for improvement.
 - to develop student and teacher strategies to enhance proficiency.

- Support every parent with clear information about:
 - CEFR proficiency levels and graduation proficiency goals of French as a second language programs.
 - the importance of supporting their child's achievement in French through extra-curricular opportunities to use French in the community.
 - post-secondary opportunities for students to pursue some or all of their studies in French.
 - French-language courses for parents.

Issue

Lack of national, comparable data on French as a second language student proficiency

Without common national proficiency benchmarks for all French as a second language students and programs, it is difficult for:

- parents to make informed choices of FSL programs for their children.
- students to describe their proficiency in French on an application, on a curriculum vitae or in an interview.
- school jurisdictions to accommodate student mobility.

- post-secondary institutions to determine the second language proficiency of candidates; employers to fully appreciate the language and intercultural skills of applicants.

Call to Action

Implement a standardized evaluation framework to promote the linguistic competencies of French as a second language program graduates

- Establish national goals, based on the *Common European Framework of Reference*, for languages to evaluate provincial/territorial performance in meeting the goals of their *Official Languages in Education* Program action plans, and to enhance student mobility among jurisdictions.
- Implement CEFR Portfolio for all K-12 students to set goals and to track proficiency and for all FSL Teacher Candidates and Teachers as a tool to support professional growth.
- Provide all Grade 12 students free access to French-proficiency testing via the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELFL).
- Encourage faculties of education to enrich their current education programs for French second-language teachers by training teachers to use the *Common European Framework of Reference* portfolio as a tool for professional growth.
- Establish the links between the commonly used term "functional bilingualism", Canadian Language Benchmarks, the Public Service Language requirements and the CEFR and disseminate that information to university/college placement offices and employers. Provide educational staff with training and access to linguistic evaluation tools, pedagogical practices and program options.
- Encourage secondary French as a second language teachers and students to assess individual student performance and to develop appropriate individualized strategies for improvement.

Definitions

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 six global levels of performance.

Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELFL): The official French-language diploma awarded by France's Ministry of National Education to recognize French as a second language proficiency. It is recognized around the world and is valid for life. The DELFL tests the ability of students to use French in real-life situations and uses six reference levels identified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DALFL): The official French-language certification for non-native speakers, composed of two independent diplomas corresponding to the top two levels, C1 & C2, of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

European Language Portfolio: An assessment tool incorporating three components (a language passport, a language biography and a dossier) used to track and document language learner progress according to the six reference levels identified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).