



Making Our Voice Heard

Canadian Parents for French

The State of French Second Language Education in Canada Report 2019 - Focus on FSL Programs



HOW TO USE THIS RESEARCH REPORT

This report reviews research published since 2000 that focused on French as a second language programs, identifies current research trends and makes recommendations for further study and action. The report can be used in your Branch and Chapter FSL advocacy work to:

- optimize our credibility as a research-informed organization, ensuring CPF advocates speak with an accurate and unified voice,
- respond to CPF National, Branch and Chapter information needs by sharing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing FSL programs, and
- influence the FSL research agenda with factual information ...

You can....

- **Issue** a media release announcing the report, highlighting key points that resonate in your jurisdiction.
- **Distribute** the report electronically to your Minister of Education, Ministry staff, Superintendents, School Trustees, FSL Coordinators, and our stakeholder partners.
- **Highlight** that the research report reinforces the need for access to official language proficiency assessment opportunities in order to measure attainment of program/competency outcomes.
- **Reinforce** how the report identifies the importance of inclusive, literacy-based second-language teaching and learning in order to maximize student engagement, participation and success in various FSL program options.
- **Promote** the report as a “must read” to understand why there is a need to support FSL teacher education and professional learning to meet the growing demand for quality FSL programs.
- **Learn** about some of the history and particular features of key FSL programs, how they can inform each other, and how recommended enhancements in timing and pedagogy can make a difference in student outcomes.
- **Deliver** the report to school principals and start a conversation highlighting suggestions offered in this tool.
- **Shine** a positive light on all FSL programs, emphasizing that attainment of bilingualism is possible via multiple program pathways.
- **Use** the report as a tool to promote French Language teaching as a valued and sought-after career.

CPF NETWORK POSITION STATEMENTS

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) furthers bilingualism by promoting and creating opportunities for students to learn and to use French. The CPF Network position statements state the organization's position on issues related to French as a second language education practice, policy, and/or professional development for which there are controversial or critical opinions.

Canadian Parents for French stands for: Universal Access:

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

How are these quotes on these identified needs reflected in your community?

p 5 "There remains a strong synergy across CF and FI in terms of teachers' positive beliefs about the inclusion of ELLs and students with learning exceptionalities in FSL, and the need for more professional development in this regard." (Arnett & Mady, 2017; Mady, 2012, Mady & Arnett, 2015).

p 5 "Through case studies, Arnett (2003, 2010) identified how CF teachers approach working with students with learning exceptionalities. In particular, she described teachers using a generative approach to inclusion, meaning that they are "interested in creating and nurturing a classroom environment and a teaching approach in which as many needs as possible would be met from the start" (2010, p. 566). The various strategies identified include 1) classroom management techniques (e.g., changing the room layout, developing organizational and note-taking skills, minimizing audio distractions), 2) content delivery (e.g., using visual, auditory, tactile and gestural practices), and 3) language support (e.g., strategic use of French and English, repeating written and/or oral prompts, using large script simultaneously with oral prompts).

p 5 "Pellerin (2013) ... showed the potential for FI teachers to implement inclusive pedagogy in early FI through the use of digital technologies and a universal design for learning (UDL) approach to inclusion."

Effective Programs:

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

How are these quotes on best practices reflected in your community?

p 4 "FI teachers who participated in a bilingual book project and read different chapters of the same book across the French and English Language Arts classes appreciated the close collaboration and observed benefits to students' overall engagement and literacy skill development in both languages (Ballinger, 2013; Lyster, Quiroga, & Ballinger, 2013)."

p 6 "Rovers found that using arts-based instructional practices enhanced the students' self-esteem, pride and willingness to speak French."

p 6 "....one FI study found that students significantly improved their writing composition and cultural knowledge of French after participating in a drama-based intervention (Bournot-Trites, Belliveau, Spiliotopoulos, & Séror, 2007). Given that all of the arts-based instruction studies mentioned here reported increased student enjoyment, motivation to learn/speak French, and improved writing ability and cultural knowledge, additional investigations using cross-disciplinary art-based instruction could translate well across all programs."

p 10 *“For CF, it is clear that continued innovation in instructional approaches is needed across all FSL programs such that project-based, action-oriented strategies can be implemented to improve student learning. Still, manipulating the length of instructional periods in CF to optimize the impact of these approaches is key.”*

p 11 *“The combination of time and intensity is widely known to be effective in accelerating language learning.”*

p 12 *“Effective core French programs feature a communicative or action-oriented approach where learners interact frequently about meaningful topics, i.e., learning content that matters in French.”*

p 14 *“A reactive approach includes scaffolding techniques, such as follow-up questions and corrective feedback in response to students’ language production, that support student participation while ensuring that oral interaction is a key source of learning. A proactive approach entails pre-planned instruction that enables students to link form with meaning in contexts that are content-driven and thus motivating, while honing their metalinguistic awareness and engaging in purposeful use of the target language, ranging from contextualized practice to more autonomous use. Together, reactive and proactive approaches are what I call counterbalanced instruction, which gives content and language objectives complementary status while shifting students’ attention between language and content (Lyster, 2007, 2016).”*

p 14 *“... Genesee (1991) identified three lessons from immersion”: namely, that L2 instruction in any setting can increase its effectiveness by: 1) integrating content other than only language itself, 2) incorporating ample opportunities for interaction in classroom activities, 3) planning systematically for language development.”*

p 14 *“... core French programs that incorporate content from other areas in the students’ curriculum typically yield higher levels of student engagement and proficiency than those in which language alone is the focus.”*

Recognized Proficiency Levels:

The proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and French-language proficiency testing (ex., DELF) should be recognized in Canada such that language learners, parents, educators, post-secondary institutions and employers have a common understanding of each learner’s French-language skills and the expected outcomes of each respective FSL program.

How are these quotes on these identified needs reflected in your community?

p 6 *“In a study comparing the written proficiency of students who graduated from both CF and FI, Lappin-Fortin (2014) found few statistical differences linked to their program of FSL study (rather, immersive experience in a francophone community emerged as a factor impacting students’ written proficiency).”*

p 9 *“Lapkin, Harley and Hart (1995) found that two experimental compact classes outperformed a comparison (40-minute) Grade 7 class on several components of a multi-skills French test administered at the end of their French course.”*

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.

How are the following quotes on these identified needs reflected in your community?

p 6 *“Ultimately, this analysis shows how stakeholders need not isolate their research-based knowledge of FSL instruction to studies situated in one specific program - there is clear potential for many findings to transfer directly across programs.”*

1. Universal Access

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see, hear and feel on your walk?

Why makes it like this?

p 9 “This introduction of short classes to the elementary grades has been cemented into many/all provincial and territorial scheduling routines, in spite of convincing research (Burstall, 1975; Munoz, 2006) showing that starting second language instruction in this format makes no difference in the level of proficiency reached by the end of elementary school, regardless of when it is introduced (e.g., in primary years.)”

p 13 “As Lightbown (2014) summed it up: “After decades of research on language acquisition in content-based language teaching in a variety of educational and social contexts, it is clear that language acquisition does not ‘take care of itself” (p 129)

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH BELIEVES

- Every Canadian who wishes to learn the other official language should be able to do so.
- Bilingualism and bilingual Canadians provide us with a major economic advantage, making a difference for the Canadian economy in global markets.
- Linguistic duality and our two official languages are an integral part of the Canadian identity and a fundamental value of our country.

2. Effective Programs

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see, hear and feel on your walk?

Why makes it like this?

3. Recognized Proficiency Levels

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see, hear and feel on your walk?

Why makes it like this?

4. Leadership Accountability

Write a few key words or phrases. What does this mean to you?

Go on a virtual walk of your school. What did you see, hear and feel on your walk?

Why makes it like this?

CANADIAN PARENTS FOR FRENCH

Canadian Parents for French represents 25,000 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.