CORE FRENCH • EXTENDED FRENCH • FRENCH IMMERSION

2013

A FRAMEWORK FOR FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

KINDERGARTEN
TO GRADE 12

reach every student

Ontario

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Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant : *Cadre stratégique pour l'apprentissage du français langue seconde dans les écoles de l'Ontario de la maternelle à la 12e année, 2013.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education website at www.ontario.ca/education.

Introduction

A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12[1] has been developed to help school boards[2] and schools in Ontario maximize opportunities for students to reach their full potential in French as a second language (FSL). The framework supports the three core priorities for education in Ontario:

- High levels of student achievement
- Reduced gaps in student achievement
- Increased public confidence in publicly funded education

Benefits of Learning French as a Second Language

The Ministry of Education's commitment to improving the effectiveness of FSL education in Ontario is strengthened by an awareness and appreciation of the many proven benefits of learning an additional language. In Canada, where French and English have equal status as official languages, there are significant advantages to being able to communicate in both. Furthermore, the benefits of learning an additional language are now widely acknowledged to extend beyond the obvious rewards associated with bilingualism.

A considerable body of research shows that second-language learning provides significant cognitive and academic benefits. It is known to enhance first-language and overall literacy skills and to provide a foundation for the learning of additional languages (Jedwab, n.d.). There is also evidence that learning another language can help in the development of interpersonal and social skills. According to the 2004–05 report of the Commissioner of Official Languages, research shows that people "who master more than one language increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and are more at ease with others" (Adam, 2005, p. 107).

In an era of increasing globalization, it is critical to heighten students' awareness that English–French bilingualism is an economic and cultural asset both within Canada and beyond. In many countries around the world, as well as in Ontario's multilingual communities, it is taken for granted that students will learn more than one language, and often more than two. As the Internet makes global communication ever more widely available and more businesses become internationalized, it is increasingly important for people to have language skills in more than one language (Genesee, 2008, p. 23).

1. Referred to henceforth as *A Framework for FSL, K–12*.
2. Throughout this document, *school boards* refers to English-language school boards and school authorities, unless otherwise indicated.

"Companies want to hire more bilingual workers and we can't find them."

(*The Hamilton Spectator*, January 24, 2004)

French-language skills are an asset in a wide range of occupations. Whether or not an individual sees opportunities to use French in the immediate future or in the local environment, the benefits present compelling reasons to continue the study of FSL throughout secondary school and beyond.

Influences Shaping FSL in Ontario

The federal government's support to provinces and territories to improve outcomes in FSL has had a tremendous impact on shaping FSL education. The *Canada–Ontario Agreement on Minority Language Education and Second Official Language Instruction* and other provinces' and territories' bilateral agreements established partnerships to enhance FSL and French minority language (FML) across the country. Under these agreements, action plans were developed to guide the implementation of both FSL and FML initiatives in all provinces and territories.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has implemented numerous initiatives to improve outcomes in FSL. The ministry has demonstrated its commitment to FSL by offering three types of FSL programs – Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion[3] – with a specific elementary and secondary curriculum for each, which enable all students to continue to develop their French-language skills whether their first postsecondary destination is apprenticeship, college, university, or the workplace.

Another important influence has been the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). In Ontario, this reference tool is recognized as a valuable asset for informing instruction and assessment practices in FSL education.

The ministry also draws on the findings of research projects from a variety of professional and educational organizations[4] to inform ongoing efforts to improve FSL programming and outcomes for students. The ministry values the expertise and perspectives of all stakeholders and provides opportunities for networking for the purpose of strengthening FSL.

3. See Appendix A, pages 39–40, for further details.
4. These include, but are not limited to, reports from Canadian Parents for French (Hart et al., 2010); the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario (Majhanovich et al., 2010); the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA, 2007); the Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA, 2006); and the Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association (Mollica, Phillips, & Smith, 2005).

Development of the FSL Framework

A Framework for FSL, K–12 denotes a renewed focus on strengthening FSL education in Ontario. It looks beyond the requirements of FSL programming in schools to consider the wider benefits of learning an additional language and the important contributions that need to be made by stakeholders outside as well as inside the school system if these benefits are to be realized.

Several factors contributed to the momentum and interest in FSL education in Ontario that led to the development of *A Framework for FSL, K–12*. These factors included the engagement of FSL stakeholders through a dialogue with the ministry on the development of a shared vision and goals for FSL, the establishment of the ministry's FSL Provincial Working Group in 2010, and the sustained efforts of Ontario school boards to enhance FSL.

Based on discussions with stakeholders and an extensive review of FSL research, it was determined that an FSL framework document aimed at strengthening FSL in Ontario would be beneficial for students. This document would support the core priorities for education in Ontario within the unique context of FSL, identify and align effective practices in FSL to improve student confidence, proficiency, achievement, engagement, participation, and retention, and consolidate key messages from research and ministry documents.

The ministry sought input and feedback from FSL educators in the province's sixty English-language school boards, including teachers, consultants, program coordinators, system principals, and superintendents responsible for FSL. Consultations with the FSL Provincial Working Group and Canadian Parents for French (Ontario) provided valuable input from a variety of perspectives. The ministry gratefully acknowledges the commitment and expertise of all participants in the consultation process.

Alignment with Ministry Policies and Initiatives

FSL is an integral component of education in English-language school boards in Ontario. *A Framework for FSL, K–12* shares in the vision that unites all of the following ministry policies and initiatives:

- *the Aboriginal education strategy*
  www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/
- *the equity and inclusive education strategy*
  www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.html
- *the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy*
  www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/
- *the parent engagement policy*
  www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/policy.html
- *Student Success / Learning to 18*
  www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/learning/

In addition, the principles and suggested actions outlined in this framework are consistent with the principles and goals identified in the following ministry policy and resource documents:

- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, First Edition Covering Grades 1 to 12, 2010*
- *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011*
- *Politique d'aménagement linguistique: A Policy Framework for French-Language Postsecondary Education and Training in Ontario, 2011*
- *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework, 2007*
- *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2011*
- *Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators, Grades 1 to 8*
- *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*
- *K–12 School Effectiveness Framework: A Support for School Improvement and Student Success, 2010*
- *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010*

Organization of the Framework Document

A Framework for FSL, K–12 is organized as follows. Section 1 sets out the ministry's vision and goals for FSL and discusses the principles that should guide school boards in their decision making. Section 2 presents a range of suggested actions that will help boards to work towards the achievement of the goals for FSL. It also outlines the planning and reporting that boards will undertake as part of their FSL plan. Section 3 focuses on the role of parents[5] and communities in supporting FSL and on ways in which boards can strengthen this role and respond to questions and concerns. Section 4 provides an overview of research findings related to FSL to help educators in their decision making.

5. Throughout this document, *parents* is used to refer to parents and guardians. It may also be taken to include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.

1. FSL in Ontario: A Call to Action

A Framework for FSL, K–12 presents a call to action to strengthen FSL programming, promote the benefits of FSL, heighten appreciation of and support for FSL educators, and increase public confidence in FSL education. It articulates the vision, goals, and guiding principles for FSL in Ontario, and suggests actions that school boards can take to improve FSL programming throughout the province. The framework is designed to support boards in building on the current momentum through the engagement of parents, educators, school board administrators, and communities.

Implementation of the framework begins in 2013–14 and extends over a ten-year period to 2022–23. During this time, boards will be required to develop and submit FSL plans that include specific measurable goals and to report on progress made in achieving these goals. (For details, see "Planning and Reporting on Progress in FSL", pages 20–21.)

Stakeholder involvement is a vital part of the process of renewal. In Ontario, it is mandatory for all students in publicly funded English-language schools to receive instruction in FSL beginning in elementary school. There is, however, considerable scope for local initiatives in the FSL programming that school boards offer. To meet local needs, boards may choose from a range of options for delivering FSL education, often providing different program models through which students can meet or surpass the minimum requirements for FSL in Ontario. Within the recognized types of FSL programs – Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion – further choices are available with respect to the grade in which students start learning French and the level of intensity of exposure to the language.[6] Such choices are best made in consultation with stakeholders, taking current research into consideration.

6. See Appendix A, pages 39–40, for further details.

A Vision for FSL

Students in English-language school boards have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives.

The vision for FSL in Ontario encompasses a heightened awareness of the value of learning French and extends beyond the development of French-language skills to include the broader advantages to be gained from learning more than one language. Making this vision a reality requires an ongoing commitment on the part of all stakeholders. Educators must be connected and supported through increased opportunities to participate in professional learning communities. School administrators must demonstrate knowledge, skills, and passion as leaders of their FSL programs. Schools and school boards must find ways of increasing student, parent, and community engagement and confidence in FSL programs. All stakeholders must continue to work together to provide more intensive support for FSL across the province.

Goals of the Framework

The ministry has identified three goals that support the vision for FSL in Ontario as well as the federal objective to promote linguistic duality.[7] By focusing on these goals, educators, students, parents, and communities can work together to support student achievement in FSL and strengthen FSL programming.

"The Government of Canada considers linguistic duality not only as a basis of Canadian identity, but also an essential tool for ensuring Canadians' openness to the world. Through second-language education, the Government offers young Canadians a boost toward wider professional horizons and a key to the international stage."

(Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013)

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7. *Linguistic duality* in Canada refers to the use, knowledge, and appreciation of Canada's two official languages, English and French, as well as an understanding of the historical significance of these two cultures to the development of the Canadian identity.

GOAL 1: Increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL.

Students' achievement in FSL depends not only on their proficiency in the language but also on their confidence in using it. It is critical that students believe in their ability to apply their French-language knowledge and skills. While many students have this confidence, others do not, particularly when using French in authentic situations. To increase the percentage of students who achieve or surpass the provincial standard in FSL, there needs to be a focus both on developing proficiency and on instilling confidence in the ability to communicate in French. Stakeholders in FSL education are urged to keep in mind that confidence, proficiency, and achievement are interrelated.

GOAL 2: Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation.

Learning an additional language is a lifelong journey. Students need to have every opportunity to continue their study of FSL throughout secondary school and beyond. Increasing their confidence in communicating in French will motivate them to continue their FSL learning. Regardless of their anticipated postsecondary destination – apprenticeship, college, university, or the workplace – all students stand to benefit by staying in FSL until graduation, and stakeholders must consider all options to make that possible.

GOAL 3: Increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL.

Stakeholder engagement is a key factor in supporting the continuing success of FSL programs. Engaged students are motivated to learn. Engaged FSL educators inspire their students by sharing their passion for French language and culture. Engaged parents are committed to supporting their children in their learning. Community engagement leads to partnership opportunities that provide authentic French experiences for FSL students both within and beyond the classroom. Student achievement is enhanced when all stakeholders are engaged and place a high value on learning; therefore, increasing awareness of the benefits of learning FSL is critical.

Guiding Principles for FSL

The following principles are enduring, overarching statements that are intended to foster a common understanding of the importance of FSL in Ontario schools and to guide policy makers and educators in their decision making. These guiding principles, which are reflected throughout this document, provide a strong foundation for strengthening FSL in Ontario.

FSL programs are for all students.

Research on brain development affirms the cognitive advantages of acquiring an additional language for learners of all ages. Studies consistently identify quantifiable benefits from learning an additional language (Wachowicz, 2002; Bialystok, n.d.; Cummins, 2007; Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2009; Netten & Germain, 2005). Specifically, benefits can be seen in increased intellectual potential, higher overall academic achievement, higher achievement in first-language competency, a heightened sense of respect for and valuing of cultural diversity, improved career opportunities and greater earnings potential, and better retention of mental acuity in older individuals (Saskatchewan Learning, French Education and Languages Branch, 2005). FSL educators strive to meet the diverse needs of all students through the use of differentiated instruction and by providing accommodations and/or modifying expectations if necessary (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2011a). Participation in FSL programs should reflect the diversity of the student population, including students with special education needs and English language learners.

Teaching and learning French, as one of Canada's two official languages, is recognized and valued as an integral component of Ontario's education system.

Recognizing the inherent benefits of studying languages and the importance for all students to develop proficiency in both official languages of Canada, the ministry values the accomplishments of all students, be they in Core French, Extended French, or French Immersion programs. All students in Ontario's English-language schools study FSL and are made aware of the benefits of studying FSL from elementary to secondary school and beyond. The importance attached to FSL is reflected in the resources and learning experiences available to students as well as in the opportunities provided for professional learning. FSL educators are valued both as experts in second-language learning and teaching and as influential role models for students.

"Linguistic duality is a fundamental Canadian value and an important asset from every perspective."

(Fraser, 2011, p. 6)

FSL education serves as a bridge between languages and cultures.

Intercultural understanding is increasingly important for today's students, and FSL education has a significant role in developing such understanding. Students of FSL not only learn to

communicate and interact with French speakers throughout Canada and the world, they also develop a deeper appreciation and sensitivity for languages and cultures, and establish a foundation for acquiring additional languages. Employers recognize that students of FSL have an aptitude for working with diverse linguistic communities, as they are "more sensitive to the culture" (Jedwab, n.d.). As international mobility and interdependence increase, many students who speak languages other than English and French bring important perspectives into the classroom. FSL education recognizes the link between culture and language, and further engages students to accept diversity.

Learning FSL strengthens literacy skills as well as cognitive and metacognitive development.

Research consistently indicates that students participating in FSL education develop strong English-language literacy skills (Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2009; Netten & Germain, 2005). It is suggested that learning FSL also develops a range of cognitive abilities, from improved memory to greater facility in abstract thinking, and as students progress in their learning, they generally become more flexible and creative thinkers (Lazaruk, 2007). Such competencies serve them well in all academic and cognitive tasks. FSL teachers collaborate with teachers of all subjects to help students make connections between French and English, and when possible, between French and the students' other languages. By making these connections, FSL students can develop a strong understanding of how languages work and which language-learning strategies are most effective for them.

Research informs decision making by all stakeholders.

It is critical that the ministry and stakeholders remain up to date with developments in FSL research so that decision making is informed by research that reflects current thinking and effective practices in FSL education. Although research will be used primarily by educators in the organization, planning, and delivery of programs, it may also be of interest to school and board administrators, guidance counsellors, and teacher advisors, as well as parents and students who wish to make informed choices related to FSL. Educators should be prepared to share their knowledge of research findings with these other stakeholders.

Learning FSL is a lifelong journey.

Students and their families need to be aware of the benefits of continuing on their "FSL journey" throughout elementary and secondary school, and beyond. In learning a language, there are unlimited possibilities for growth and refinement. By continuing their FSL studies, students will be able to consolidate the learning acquired in previous years and reach a level at which they are able to appreciate fully their FSL skills and pursue FSL postsecondary opportunities in education and the workplace. As well, students who study FSL into adulthood provide positive role models for future generations of FSL students. It is important to value the capabilities of FSL learners at *all* stages in their journey, as this provides the motivation for continued study.

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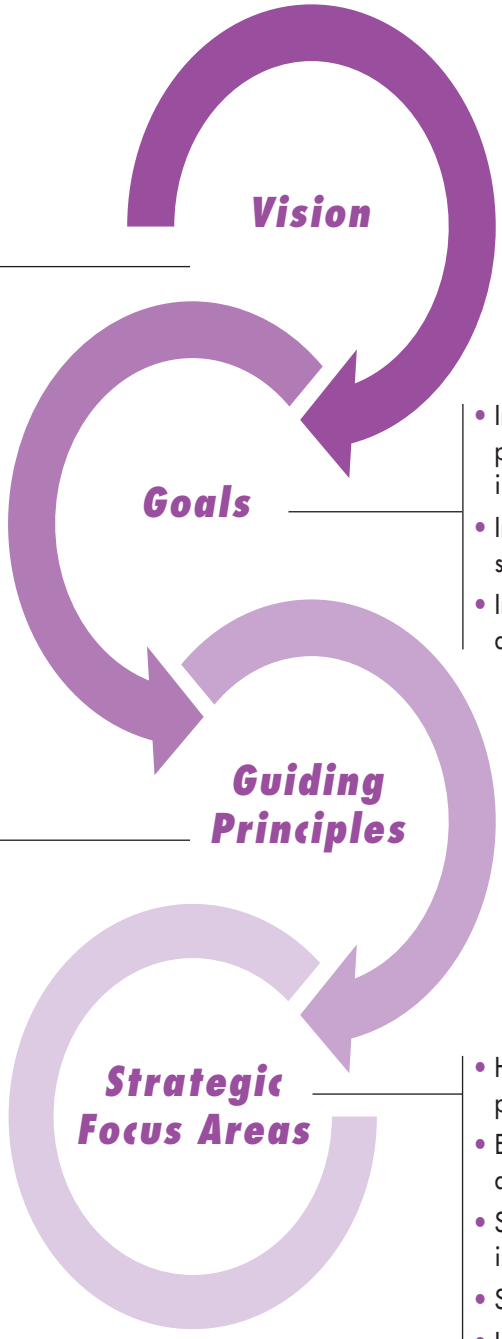

Students in English-language school boards have the confidence and ability to use French effectively in their daily lives.

- Increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL
- Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation
- Increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL

- FSL programs are for all students.
- Teaching and learning French, as one of Canada's two official languages, is recognized and valued as an integral component of Ontario's education system.
- FSL education serves as a bridge between languages and cultures.
- Learning FSL strengthens literacy skills as well as cognitive and metacognitive development.
- Research informs decision making by all stakeholders.
- Learning FSL is a lifelong journey.

- Heightening awareness of FSL programs and benefits
- Enhancing leadership and accountability
- Strengthening programming to improve achievement in FSL
- Supporting all students
- Implementing effective practices in planning, teaching, and assessment
- Expanding student learning opportunities and heightening engagement

2. Responding to the Call to Action

Strategic Focus Areas and Suggested Actions

This section presents strategic focus areas and suggested actions to support the attainment of the goals for FSL in Ontario.

The six focus areas, under which the suggested actions are grouped, identify components of a strong FSL plan that school boards can use to develop and implement their own plans over the ten-year period of the FSL framework:

1. Heightening awareness of FSL programs and benefits
2. Enhancing leadership and accountability
3. Strengthening programming to improve achievement in FSL
4. Supporting all students
5. Implementing effective practices in planning, teaching, and assessment
6. Expanding student learning opportunities and heightening engagement

The suggested actions are not intended to be a checklist of actions to complete; rather, the aim is to spark discussion among and/or between stakeholders. In developing their FSL plans under *A Framework for FSL, K–12*, school boards will have the flexibility to determine specific actions to improve FSL programming according to their local needs and circumstances.

School boards, educators, parents, and FSL organizations in Ontario are invited to explore the suggested actions and to work together in identifying effective ways of contributing to the attainment of the goals for FSL. In addition, the ministry recognizes that it too has a critical role in working towards meeting the goals for FSL, and that only the dynamic, concentrated, and collective efforts of all involved will result in a positive impact on FSL, for the benefit of all Ontario students.

FOCUS AREA 1: Heightening Awareness of FSL Programs and Benefits

Schools and school boards

- Raise awareness of the benefits of FSL with a broad range of stakeholders (i.e., parents, students of all ages, trustees, administrators, educators, and community organizations)
- Collaborate with parent organizations that support FSL
- Expose students at an early age to role models who use French in their work or daily lives
- Engage students and parents in discussions regarding possible future advantages in having French-language knowledge and skills (e.g., career possibilities)
- Hold career days and workshops related to opportunities for employment requiring French-language skills
- Celebrate the accomplishments of students in FSL
- Provide materials to school principals to support them in promoting the learning of FSL
- Make information available to parents about local FSL programs in the multiple languages of the community (e.g., brochures)
- Host information sessions for parents about FSL program choices
- Include an FSL section in school board newsletters (e.g., new initiatives, research, opportunities for student exchanges)
- Include items on FSL in school board and school news (e.g., accounts of student exchanges, success stories)
- Increase the visibility of FSL on board and school websites, including a description of the FSL program(s) offered by the school board
- Explore ways to embed FSL in the school culture and to highlight the diversity of French-language countries and French-language regions across Canada
- Increase the visibility of French within and outside the school (e.g., bilingual or multilingual signage, incorporating French into announcements and other school activities)

Ministry

- Informs the public about FSL programs and resources in Ontario (e.g., by providing information on its website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/FLS.html, and by sharing information about FSL initiatives with stakeholders)
- Promotes and ensures broad distribution of the document *A Framework for FSL, K–12*
- Issues publications in multiple languages that summarize the information in *A Framework for FSL, K–12*

FOCUS AREA 2: Enhancing Leadership and Accountability

Schools and school boards

- Include analysis of FSL data in the needs assessment of the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement
- Where identified as a need, embed FSL in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement

- Include analysis of data and evidence of progress towards Ontario's goals for FSL in the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Promote collaboration between FSL and non-FSL educators (e.g., by ensuring that FSL educators are included in professional learning communities within the school and the board)
- Promote collaboration among FSL leaders province-wide
- Promote collaboration among Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion educators within schools and boards
- Promote collaboration among school boards
- Include FSL leaders in board initiatives to ensure consistent FSL practices within boards
- Provide appropriate support to school and board leaders to enable them to improve their knowledge and skills related to FSL education and programs
- Provide appropriate support to school principals, particularly those who do not speak French, to strengthen their role as instructional leaders of FSL programs
- Provide school leaders with opportunities to discuss effective practices in FSL
- Promote awareness of the FSL framework among parents, educators, and trustees
- Develop policies and procedures that are grounded in the FSL framework's guiding principles and support the achievement of Ontario's goals for FSL
- Develop professional learning models[8] that meet the unique needs of FSL educators
- Consider how future FSL needs may affect the school board's recruitment and hiring process

Ministry

- Collects and analyses FSL data from a variety of sources to inform future provincial initiatives and directions
- Develops support tools to record data, goals, actions, and outcomes
- Shares provincial FSL data with stakeholders to guide decision making
- Engages in conversations with all branches within the ministry whose work involves FSL to ensure the alignment of ministry initiatives and provide cohesive support for school boards, schools, and FSL educators
- Reflects with stakeholders on progress made towards achieving Ontario's goals for FSL
- Updates the electronic version of *A Framework for FSL, K–12* when required
- Engages in ongoing dialogue with school boards regarding the achievement of the goals for FSL
- Analyses long-term trends in FSL as evidenced by local and provincial qualitative and quantitative data
- Follows and analyses current research in FSL
- Introduces initiatives in support of the three provincial goals for FSL

8. As defined in the ministry document *Learning for All, K–12, professional learning* refers to "focused, ongoing learning for every educator 'in context', to link new conceptions of instructional practice with assessment of student learning" (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2011a, p. 7).

FOCUS AREA 3: Strengthening Programming to Improve Achievement in FSL

Schools and school boards

- Explore program delivery options at elementary and secondary schools, as well as entry levels and requirements, to maximize student participation and opportunities to develop proficiency in French
- Explore the use of flexible timetabling and scheduling to provide students with a wider range of options and to avoid conflicts with mandatory courses (e.g., use block scheduling)
- Inform students at all grade levels of the educational opportunities available with continued study of FSL
- Help Grade 8 students and their parents develop a solid understanding of FSL course types
- Facilitate collaboration of educators involved in the transition of FSL students from elementary to secondary school or from one program to another
- Provide opportunities to integrate French-language skills in curricular and extracurricular activities (e.g., volunteer hours)
- Remind students that they may count up to three FSL credits towards the 18 compulsory credits
- Increase possibilities for credit recovery in FSL
- Inform guidance staff about the province's goals for FSL (in view of the important role they play in timetabling and influencing students to pursue FSL)
- Explore the availability of French cooperative education work placements
- Increase course and program offerings (e.g., subjects other than French at the applied level for French Immersion students taking applied courses)

Ministry

- Supports school boards through ongoing dialogue and professional learning opportunities
- Reviews research relevant to FSL in order to inform decision making and enhance support
- Supports school boards in exploring various FSL delivery models by sharing research

FOCUS AREA 4: Supporting All Students

Schools and school boards

- Promote the inclusiveness of FSL programs, recognizing that all students can learn FSL given the appropriate support
- Apply principles of Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction to FSL program planning[9]

9. See *Learning for All, K–12*, pages 11–21.

- Provide required accommodations and modifications as outlined in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Implement the Tiered Approach to prevention and intervention[10]
- Where required for students with special education needs, ensure access to assistive technology as outlined in the student's IEP
- Involve FSL teachers in the planning and implementation of a student's IEP where appropriate
- Include school- and board-level resource teams (e.g., school resource teacher, FSL consultant, senior administration) to support problem solving and decision making
- Support English language learners in transferring literacy skills to strengthen first-language and FSL skills
- Consult with students to determine what would engage them in class and help them learn French
- Engage all students in accepting and respecting the diversity of the school community
- Review practices around substitutions for Core French to support the participation of all students

Ministry

- Collects and analyses data on the participation of English language learners and students with special education needs in FSL
- Integrates ways of supporting all students in professional learning opportunities for FSL educators
- Takes every opportunity for collaboration on FSL among ministry divisions

FOCUS AREA 5: Implementing Effective Practices in Planning, Teaching, and Assessment

Schools and school boards

- Ensure that high expectations for student achievement in FSL are maintained
- Facilitate the sharing of effective practices in planning, teaching, and assessment in FSL by providing FSL-specific professional learning opportunities and engaging FSL educators in collaborative inquiry
- Promote reflection on pedagogical practices, with reference to current research related to FSL
- Ensure FSL educators are included in professional discussions and initiatives that strengthen student achievement
- Ensure FSL educators are aware of other resources that support effective practices (e.g., Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat resources, which are available online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/publications.html)
- Create opportunities for FSL educators to collaborate with English-language colleagues
- Provide FSL educators with opportunities to set specific targets for each student and plan focused instruction to support student success

10. See *Learning for All, K–12*, pages 22–24.

- Provide opportunities for moderated marking of oral and written student work in FSL
- Monitor student proficiency and confidence in FSL
- Establish that French is the language of communication in FSL classes and that students are expected to interact with each other in French
- Provide learning opportunities for students to use and reuse language in meaningful activities
- Focus on what students *can* do
- Foster learner autonomy through the explicit teaching of self-assessment and goal setting, and the use of student portfolios to help students track their progress and record tangible evidence to monitor growth (e.g., video clips of students engaged in authentic, spontaneous interaction)
- Implement the action-oriented approach, which builds on previous approaches, to plan authentic, meaningful, interactive, and relevant tasks; emphasize the functional use of language; create a purpose for learning FSL
- Implement the gradual release of responsibility for learning and provide sufficient scaffolding
- Plan tasks that foster the development of higher-order and critical thinking skills as well as the ability to apply French-language skills spontaneously in interactive activities
- Teach new material so that development of oral proficiency provides a foundation on which to build skills in reading and writing, with oral language infused throughout the learning process
- Facilitate a review of the content and format of final exams at the secondary school level (e.g., Is there a focus on functional French, with opportunities to assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing?)
- Promote networking and sharing of resources electronically (e.g., through the Ontario Educational Resource Bank)
- Model lifelong learning of French in the classroom and take an active role in increasing language proficiency (e.g., by researching vocabulary relevant to student interests and participating in immersion programs for educators)

Ministry

- Liaises with the federal government, as appropriate
- Liaises with universities, faculties of education, and providers of FSL Additional Qualifications courses (e.g., to share information on provincial FSL initiatives)
- Supports school boards in deepening understanding of the CEFR to inform instructional and assessment practices
- Develops resources to support effective teaching and learning strategies

FOCUS AREA 6: Expanding Student Learning Opportunities and Heightening Engagement

Schools and school boards

- Capitalize on student interest in technology: use tools to facilitate conversations with French-language speakers; use websites to find authentic resources and software to enhance students' use and understanding of oral French; use videos to enable students to hear and develop an understanding of accents from around the world

- Explore ways to optimize the use of e-Learning resources
- Liaise with francophone communities and promote student participation in French cultural activities, immersion opportunities, and the use of technology and social digital media to connect with French communities
- Foster awareness of community organizations that promote French language and culture or that offer services in French
- Build a sense of community to create a positive and inclusive environment where students feel motivated to improve their French-language skills
- Promote awareness of French resources available through classroom, school, and public libraries
- Provide opportunities for students to have a voice in shaping learning experiences
- Host a Language Assistant through the Odyssey program, where possible[11]
- Provide information for students and parents about opportunities for bursaries to learn French, such as the five-week intensive language–immersion course[12]
- Invite parents of FSL students to learn about how French is taught in the classroom
- Explore partnerships with parents and community organizations and within the global community to increase opportunities for students to use and/or be exposed to French

Ministry

- Seeks input and feedback on provincial initiatives from the FSL Provincial Working Group
- Meets regularly with major stakeholder groups, provincially and nationally, to cultivate FSL networks for the benefit of students
- Explores ways in which FSL educators can be immersed in a French-language environment while sharing effective strategies for integrating French culture into their teaching

11. For more information, visit the website www.myodyssey.ca/en/page/?plo_supervisors or contact the local supervisor or the provincial coordinator at odyssey.program@ontario.ca.
12. For more information, visit www.myexplore.ca/.

Planning and Reporting on Progress in FSL

Over the ten-year timeframe of *A Framework for FSL, K–12*, at the beginning of Years 1, 5, and 8, school boards will create and submit to the ministry a concise three-year FSL plan that supports the three provincial goals for FSL. This plan, which encompasses both the elementary and secondary levels, is to include at least one measurable goal, based on district needs, for each of the province's three goals for FSL.

The FSL plan, while aligning with other board plans, would assist boards in thinking strategically about FSL and planning with precision in order to support the attainment of the provincial goals for FSL. It should be noted that FSL can be embedded in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) if it has been identified as a need; however, doing so would not be a substitute for creating the FSL plan.

Boards will also submit a short progress report in Years 4, 7, and 10. Annually, school board staff responsible for FSL will share their progress with ministry staff.

Since research supports the benefits of consulting with stakeholders throughout the planning process, school boards may wish to consider ways of including stakeholders in their FSL planning.

Observing developments in FSL over a decade of focused collaborative effort, from 2013-14 to 2022-23, will enable the ministry to support continuity and alignment in the use of effective instructional practices in FSL programs across the province and to monitor trends in FSL education over time.

A vital component in the planning process is the establishment of baseline data[13] that can be used to prioritize needs and provide a basis for measuring progress over time. In Year 1 (2013–14) of the plan, school boards will collect and analyse baseline data related to FSL and use their findings to set specific goals to be achieved during the first three-year plan. Boards will monitor progress by comparing data collected over the course of the plan with the baseline data.

The following table presents a summary of milestones over the ten-year period of the FSL plan.

13. See Appendix B, pages 41–42, for suggested questions to facilitate FSL data collection.

FSL PLAN: SUMMARY OF MILESTONES, 2013–14 TO 2022–23					
School boards will:					
YEAR 1 2013–14	**YEARS 2, 3, 4 2014–15 TO 2016–17**	**START OF YEAR 5 2017–18**	**YEARS 5, 6, 7 2017–18 TO 2019–20**	**START OF YEAR 8 2020–21**	**YEARS 8, 9, 10 2020–21 TO 2022–23**
Establish baseline data	Implement FSL plan, collect data, and monitor progress	Analyse data and compare with baseline data	Implement FSL plan, collect data, and monitor progress	Analyse data and compare with baseline data	Implement FSL plan, collect data, and monitor progress
Create and submit a concise 3-year plan for 2014–15 to 2016–17 and begin implementation	Review plan annually and adjust as required	Create and submit the 2nd 3-year plan for 2017–18 to 2019–20	Review plan annually and adjust as required	Create and submit the 3rd 3-year plan for 2020–21 to 2022–23	Review plan annually and adjust as required
	Submit progress report to the ministry at the end of **YEAR 4** (2016–17)		Submit progress report to the ministry at the end of **YEAR 7** (2019–20)		Submit progress report to the ministry at the end of **YEAR 10** (2022–23)
ANNUALLY: Reflect and engage in focused dialogue on progress with ministry staff					

3. Parents and Communities as Partners in FSL

Increased parental and community engagement is a critical component of the FSL goals. High levels of engagement in FSL by adult role models in the school, home, and community highlight for students the value that is placed on learning additional languages, especially French, in Ontario.

Parents

Parent involvement leads to student success

Parent engagement matters. Study after study has shown us that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's education, and that good schools become even better schools when parents are involved. . . .

Students are more likely to be motivated, to earn higher grades, to have better behaviour and social skills, and to continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school.

Ministry of Education, "Parent Engagement"
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/

Parents and schools share responsibility for children's education throughout elementary and secondary school, and working together increases the effectiveness of the support that each provides. Influential in shaping attitudes and values, parents help their children set goals and look to the future. Parental interest and encouragement can be a significant factor in motivating students to engage fully in learning FSL and to continue their FSL studies throughout secondary school and beyond. FSL educators reach out to parents to build strong relationships and open the lines of communication between home and school. Grounded in mutual understanding, respect, and trust, these relationships provide the foundation upon which positive experiences in FSL are developed and long-lasting impressions formed.

Some parents may think that they have little to contribute to their children's FSL education because they do not speak or read French. This perception is groundless. Parents do not need to possess French-language skills themselves in order to support children in learning FSL.

It is important for parents to understand that skills developed in learning one language are transferable to the learning of others. Parents can support their children in this learning by providing a language-rich environment in the home. Having meaningful conversations and reading with children daily in their home language, as well as surrounding them with books and magazines on a variety of topics, are among the most effective ways for parents to support children's developing skills in any language(s) they may be learning.

Parents can also support their children's FSL learning by exposing them to French through television, movies, and cultural events. Children can be highly motivated to study FSL when they see that French is the language used by many people in their daily lives. Moreover, such experiences help nurture an enduring appreciation of French culture in Ontario, throughout Canada, and around the world.

The offering of FSL programs may differ in school boards across Ontario; therefore, it is essential that parents have access to detailed information about the programs their board offers so that they are aware of their options and are able to make well-informed decisions regarding their children's FSL education.

Communities

While learning FSL may begin in the classroom, research suggests that there are considerable benefits in making it come alive through authentic French-language experiences beyond the school (Mady & Arnott, 2010). In communities that are primarily English speaking, opportunities to provide such experiences may not be readily available. Yet these are the communities in which students most need to be exposed to French in real-life contexts; therefore, they should be encouraged to seek opportunities to make connections with French-language communities across the province and the country as well as internationally.

"Of course, the quality of second-language courses and programs and strengthening of these programs through opportunities for social interaction, cultural activities and exchanges are key factors for attracting and retaining young students."

(Fraser, 2008, p. 14)

Ways in which students could be exposed to authentic French-language experiences include the following:

- Provide opportunities for secondary school students to develop their FSL skills through cooperative education work placements and volunteer community involvement.
  - Cooperative education work placements could be offered in businesses, libraries, and other organizations in which French is used.
  - Volunteer placements could include reading in French to younger children at the local library or helping provide French services in local communities.

- Provide opportunities for community members and students to share their interest in French language and culture.
- Arrange travel and exchange programs between communities.
- Add a French component to camps and after-school programs.
- Offer French films at local theatres.

FSL Programs in Ontario

It is important that parents and community partners have a clear understanding of the characteristics of each of the three recognized FSL programs – Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion – and the options available in their local school board. This will help them make effective contributions and will support their continuing engagement with FSL education. Information and details regarding high school diploma requirements can be found in Section 6 of *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements*, posted on the ministry's website, at **www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/index.html**.

Parents and community partners should be aware that the curriculum documents for the three recognized FSL programs, as well as information about FSL in Ontario, are available on the ministry website, at **www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/FLS.html**. School boards provide further details about their local FSL programs on their websites, which can be accessed at **www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/sbinfo/boardList.html**.

Boards can provide information about FSL programs in several ways – for example, by holding information sessions with parents and community partners or by including a summary chart in a board newsletter. The summary of FSL programs presented in Appendix A is intended to assist boards and educators in raising awareness of the types of FSL programs offered.

FSL in Ontario: Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers are intended as a guide for FSL educators, as well as other board and school staff, in responding to parental concerns.

How will my child benefit by studying French as a second language?

In Ontario and throughout Canada, many jobs require skills in both French and English, and even when it is not a mandatory requirement, French can be a valuable asset in work that involves interacting with the public. Students gain significant advantages when they speak more than one language. Besides creating more work options and the potential to earn a higher income, learning FSL helps strengthen first-language skills and establishes a solid foundation for learning additional languages. Studies have shown that learning more

than one language has a positive effect on the development of problem-solving and creative-thinking abilities. Additional personal benefits include a heightened appreciation for French culture in Canada and around the world, a broadening of global perspectives, and increased opportunities for international travel and study as well as a general understanding and acceptance of diversity.

How can I prepare my child for learning French as a second language?

Children are not expected to know any French prior to beginning Core French, Extended French, or French Immersion. Even if they do not know French themselves, parents can encourage their children to take an interest in French in various ways. Children might enjoy noticing and examining how French is used in their environment – for example, on packaging of food and household items. Some children might also enjoy listening to French children's songs and rhymes, watching French children's programming, videos, or movies, counting in French, or singing the alphabet in French. A positive outlook, a commitment to supporting your child's education, and a belief in your child's ability to learn provide a strong foundation for a positive experience in FSL.

How can I help my child succeed in learning French as a second language?

Being a positive role model can have a powerful influence on children. Showing your child that you value the learning of French is one of the most important ways to nurture your child's motivation to do well. You can do this by periodically listening to French audio books with your child, watching French television or movies together, and talking about the many communities in Ontario, throughout Canada, and around the world in which French is spoken. Another way of showing that you value French is by learning along with your child. You may also find it useful to take part in social activities for learners of French or to join a parent group that supports FSL education. Such experiences can increase your confidence in contexts where French is used, and thus enhance your ability to support your child's FSL learning.

Because literacy skills acquired in one language will transfer to another, seeing their parents reading in English or their first language can motivate children to read on their own, thus developing literacy skills in the languages they are learning. Taking children to the library, reading together, and encouraging them to read in French as well as English are further ways for parents to support the development of their children's literacy skills.

Some children may be eager to share at home what they have learned in French at school, while others may feel uncomfortable if called upon to "perform". Asking children to say something in French will not likely result in a demonstration of what they know, whereas encouraging children to read books and magazines in French, their own French compositions, or French labels on packaging shows that you value their French-language skills. You could also look out for opportunities for your child to take part in French activities beyond the classroom, such as school trips, camps, or visits and exchanges. It is always beneficial for children to see that French is the language used by many people in their daily lives.

Learning another language involves skills such as attentive listening, recalling information, inferring, and making predictions. These skills can be developed in any language, often through activities children enjoy such as oral word association and rhyming games; learning song lyrics, poetry, and riddles; playing board, computer, and card games; and doing puzzles of all types. Part of the benefit of these games is the time spent interacting with adults and friends, learning about the world, and seeing how others learn and communicate.

Open communication with the FSL teacher is invaluable in establishing a strong partnership to support your child's success. This may be accomplished by attending curriculum information sessions and parent–teacher interviews. It is important for parents to communicate with the FSL teacher if there are aspects of the children's FSL learning that need particular attention.

I don't speak French. How can I help my child with FSL homework?

Parents of FSL students are not expected to know French. Although French is the language of the FSL class, communication between school and home is in English. Parents may use opportunities such as orientation to school, meet-the-staff night, and parent–teacher conferences to find out about the FSL program, homework expectations, and how to support children's success. Homework completion can be monitored by checking home–school communications.

Parents can help by providing a regular time and place for children to complete work at home. Making homework a routine part of after-school activity will help ensure that children do their homework assignments. Parents can also help to make homework a pleasurable experience by applauding their children's efforts – for example, when they listen to their children read or practise oral French.

Resources designed to assist parents may be available in libraries and on the Internet, and parents are encouraged to access them. One example of an online resource is *The FSL Toolbox* (www.fslhomeworktoolbox.ca/), which has a wealth of information for parents and offers practical tools for learning French, including videos and audio files. As well, the ministry (at www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/) provides tips in several languages on a variety of ways to support children's learning at home.

How can I be involved in FSL at my child's school if I don't speak French?

There are many ways in which parents can become involved in FSL, such as assisting on class trips or with special events in the class or school, helping find out where French is spoken or used in the community, organizing French social activities, information nights, or summer programs, and networking with community groups. Many elementary schools and classes look for volunteers to listen to children read in French. Even if your French-language skills are limited, your attentive listening would be appreciated by young students. FSL students are sometimes involved in French drama or music presentations and may be grateful to receive artistic, musical, or technological assistance.

How can I help my child understand the benefits of continuing to learn French until secondary school graduation and beyond?

Children should understand that it takes time to develop French-language skills. Like a novice athlete or musician, an FSL learner cannot be expected to master the required skills without instruction and practice over an extended period. Drawing attention to bilingual role models can motivate children to continue their FSL studies so that they become proficient in French.

It is important to discuss the benefits of having French-language skills with children when they are thinking about secondary school course options, or even earlier than that, so they can make decisions that do not close doors and limit their opportunities in the future. If children find it hard to see how French-language skills will have a positive impact on their chosen field of interest, parents can point out that there are institutions and jobs, both in Canada and around the world, that require French-language skills. Having a high level of proficiency in French can open up a wider range of career opportunities.

What can I do if my child encounters difficulties in FSL?

If you are concerned that your child is experiencing difficulties, you should let the FSL teacher know so that together you can discuss what can be done to help your child's learning. Most children encounter challenges from time to time, but if your child is worried, frustrated, or expresses a concern about learning French, it could be the sign of an underlying problem that should be resolved as soon as possible. Children progress at different rates and learn in different ways, so teachers plan instruction and assessment taking into consideration the students' interests, learning styles, and previously acquired knowledge and skills.

Will my child be able to speak French as well as read, write, and understand it?

All students learning FSL are expected to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The Core French program is intended to help students develop a usable command of the language, while Extended French and French Immersion, which offer more hours of instruction in French, provide opportunities for students to develop greater fluency. As in any other subject, the level of achievement will differ depending on the child.

There are many factors that influence the level of proficiency attained, but students normally progress from being able to use very simple language about themselves and familiar situations to being able to communicate about a broader range of topics, using and understanding increasingly complex language structures. Generally, the more FSL courses taken, the higher the degree of fluency and accuracy attained.

How do I enrol my child in French Immersion or Extended French?

Not all schools offer Extended French and/or French Immersion. School boards have the option of offering Extended French and French Immersion programs based on local demands and resources, and the decision to establish these programs is made by the local board. In addition, boards have the flexibility to decide in which grade Extended French and French Immersion will begin. It is recommended that parents of pre-schoolers check with their

school board to find out about the FSL programs offered, their beginning grade level, and the enrolment options and process. Boards often offer an information session in winter or spring for parents interested in registering their children.

How might French Immersion programs differ at the elementary level?

There are many models of French Immersion programs in elementary schools since school boards have the flexibility to design programs to meet local needs. For example, boards decide the grade at which immersion programs begin as well as which subjects will be taught in French and in which grade courses in English language arts will begin.

"In early immersion programs, students gain fluency and literacy in French at no apparent cost to their English academic skills. Within a year of the introduction of formal English language arts students catch up in most aspects of English standardized test performance."

(Cummins, 1998, p. 34)

What should my child consider when choosing FSL courses at secondary school?

Grade 8 students should reflect on their strengths, interests, and goals as they consider the course descriptions and expectations contained in the Ontario curriculum documents (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl.html). Students may also find it helpful to discuss their choices with their current elementary FSL teacher and where possible a secondary FSL teacher.

Where can my child find out about postsecondary opportunities to study in French?

Students can search for French courses and programs on the websites of postsecondary institutions. The following links provide contacts for all Ontario colleges and universities:
www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/schoolsprograms/college/
www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/schoolsprograms/university/

French programs might be listed under various headings, so students should check terms such as Modern Languages, Humanities, French as a Second Language, French Immersion, or Français. In addition to finding out about the courses and programs offered, FSL students may be interested in seeing if postsecondary institutions provide opportunities to complete a portion of the FSL program in a French community.

Where can I find out more about FSL programs in Ontario?

The ministry provides information about FSL programs in Ontario on its website, at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/FLS.html.

School boards provide details about their local FSL programs on their websites. A complete list of all school boards in Ontario is available online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/sbinfo/boardList.html.

Elementary curriculum documents are available online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl.html.

Secondary curriculum documents are available online at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl.html.

The following link provides information on French-language and bilingual postsecondary institutions: www.ontario.ca/education-and-training/french-language-institutions.

4. A Review of the Research

This section presents highlights from research that educators may find useful to inform and support their decision making related to FSL and their communications with other FSL stakeholders. There are numerous aspects to second-language education and acquisition. The research included in this review focuses on FSL programs, and is by no means exhaustive. The section presents an overview of teaching approaches, emphasizes that FSL is for all learners, and suggests research-based actions to improve opportunities for all students to succeed in FSL programs.

The Evolution of FSL Pedagogy

There are many practical, cognitive, and psychological benefits to learning languages. For example, research has documented that individuals who can converse in more than one language enjoy increased employment opportunities and demonstrate enhanced problem-solving skills and confidence in social situations. Recognizing such benefits, researchers have studied the various methods for teaching languages in order to evaluate which are most effective in developing strong second-language capabilities in young learners. Not surprisingly, outcomes differ depending on the strategy.

Second-language teaching approaches have evolved over time to meet the changing needs of society and to reflect new insights from ongoing research. Knowledge of the expectations and experiences of past generations with respect to second-language teaching and learning assists educators and other stakeholders to make informed choices about how to support and strengthen second-language learning for today's and tomorrow's students. The following paragraphs summarize some of the more prominent approaches to second-language pedagogy.

Each approach builds on and includes components of all preceding approaches.

The Grammar Translation Approach

As the motivations for learning languages have evolved with increasing global interconnectivity, so, too, have the approaches to and means of teaching languages. Whereas the focus of language instruction in today's classrooms is on the ability to communicate, traditional methodology in the early twentieth century focused on the ability to translate foreign words into the first-language equivalent (Puren, 2006). This methodology, often referred to as the "grammar translation approach", had its origins in the teaching of classical languages (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). The primary objective of this approach was to enable students to read literature in the target language; a typical classroom activity required students to read text in the second language and translate it into their first language. A common teaching strategy was to present vocabulary lists alongside their translation equivalents, supplemented by explicit teaching of related grammar rules (p. 138). Through the study of foreign words and the grammatical forms of the language, students acquired competencies in reading and writing but not necessarily in oral communication skills.

Audiolingual Instruction

Arising in part as a reaction to the limitations of the grammar translation approach, a subsequent phase in second-language teaching, described by some as "audiolingual instruction", placed a greater emphasis on oral elements. Rather than focusing on the reading of foreign texts, audiolingual teaching provided students with opportunities to listen to and speak the target language. Despite the greater attention given to oral language, however, students taught by this method were still limited in their ability to use the language to communicate. Since free or spontaneous speech might lead to errors that could become entrenched over time as "bad habits", instruction emphasized the repetition of learned expressions rather than impromptu speech. A typical classroom activity would have students memorize and act out a short conversation, without necessarily understanding the context or what they were saying (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 139).

Studies of the use of audiolingual and grammar-based approaches in the classroom have found little evidence to suggest that they lead to second-language comprehension, fluency, or communicative competence. As Lightbown and Spada (2006) explain, "Learners receiving audiolingual or grammar-translation instruction are often unable to communicate their messages and intentions effectively in a second language. Experience has also shown that primarily or exclusively structure-based approaches to teaching do not guarantee that learners develop high levels of accuracy and linguistic knowledge" (p. 143).

The Communicative Approach

Evidence that both grammar translation and audiolingual methods were often ineffective in producing fluent, accurate speakers of the target language led to the development of the "communicative approach". In this approach, instruction focused on providing learners with opportunities to use the language in a meaningful way. Supporters of this approach hold that errors are a natural part of the language-learning process and that communication of meaning should be central, with less emphasis on language form (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In short, fluency rather than accuracy is the priority. Classroom activities are often organized around such communicative activities as asking for information, expressing likes and dislikes,

describing, inviting, promising, or apologizing – functions that a learner would need to know to get by in a foreign language. Contextual cues, props, and gestures are used to support communication of meaning. Grammar rules are learnt in the context of how they help to express meaning appropriately (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 2).

The notion that language is acquired most effectively when it is learned for and through communication has been widely accepted and supported through research (see Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Genesee, 1994). In a 2005 study documenting the relationship between teaching strategies and student learning outcomes, authors Netten and Germain define *highly effective teaching* as "the use of strategies which focus on language use (modelling, using and correcting) in spontaneous communication throughout the lesson, without previous practice of vocabulary or forms" (p. 198).

Teaching strategies are an important factor in the achievement of communicative abilities in a second language. Educators who employ *highly effective teaching* methods have been found to be more successful in developing students' skills in spontaneous communication.

The Action-oriented Approach

Although the communicative approach highlights the value of listening to and producing language as a way to develop oral proficiency, some argue that it does not fully meet the diverse needs of language learners (Puren, 2006). The communicative approach is often associated with the use of themes or literature to organize units of study that may or may not be relevant to students. Recent research has proposed a view of language learning as occurring through "social action". The "action-oriented approach" focuses on learning functional language related to accomplishing real-life tasks. This approach views students as "social agents" who use "acts of speech" to interact with others in order to complete tasks that involve a "purposeful action … to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved" (CEFR, 2001, p. 10). Students create and process oral and written texts using general and linguistic competences and a variety of "reception, production, interaction or mediation" strategies (p. 15).

Teachers adopting an action-oriented approach may present language activities to students that closely mimic tasks they might face in everyday life. The tasks are therefore open-ended and require the use of a variety of skills and knowledge, often requiring oral and/or written interaction between two or more students. Grammar is viewed as a tool to enhance oral and written communication skills, and as such is taught in a relevant context. Activities engage learners in meaningful communication that is clearly related to their personal needs and interests and to life beyond the classroom.

Using a Combination of Approaches to Meet Diverse Needs

Each of the approaches to language instruction discussed above provides educators with a set of theoretical principles from which to derive their instructional strategies; however, basing classroom activities exclusively on one approach has limitations. Given the diversity of students' strengths and needs, readiness to learn, interests, and learning styles, teachers may find that no single set of prescribed procedures is adequate to meet the needs of all students

(Alberta Education, 2008). Teachers generally find it more appropriate to use a combination of approaches in order to meet the needs of their students. Teachers who do so may be said to favour an eclectic approach.

Implicit Linguistic Competence versus Explicit Linguistic Knowledge

There has been considerable debate about the impact of explicit knowledge on the development of proficiency in a second language. Explicit knowledge, in this regard, refers to the conscious awareness and practice of the grammatical rules that govern a language. In this model, knowledge of a language is acquired first through explicit teaching, perhaps through the memorization of vocabulary and verb forms, and then develops into what is often referred to as "implicit competence", or the internal grammar that facilitates spontaneous oral communication (Netten & Germain, 2005). Through time and practice, it is reasoned, explicit knowledge of language rules will eventually become internalized knowledge that enables language learners to communicate with ease in the second language (Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education, 2011).

Neurological research on this topic, however, indicates that the path to implicit competence through explicit knowledge is not so direct. Michel Paradis, for example, has argued that conscious knowledge and implicit knowledge require two different types of memory, which are located in different regions of the brain. The conscious knowledge of rules and grammar is stored in declarative memory, whereas the implicit or intuitive knowledge used when speaking spontaneously requires procedural memory. Studies of patients with Alzheimer's disease confirm that these two types of memory are located in different parts of the brain and are not directly connected. In his *Neurolinguistic Theory of Bilingualism*, Paradis therefore concludes that explicit knowledge cannot be transformed into implicit competence. While implicit competence is required for spontaneous oral production, explicit knowledge is not (Netten & Germain, 2005).

Canadian studies have supported Paradis' findings that an explicit emphasis on grammatical forms and rules does not necessarily translate into the spontaneous oral production of language. In a 2005 study conducted by Netten and Germain, two classes of Grade 6 students were given the same number of hours of instruction in French over a five-month period. Students in classroom A spent considerable time developing explicit knowledge of language with a focus on spelling, pronunciation, and error correction. In classroom B, the teacher's strategy was much more focused on fluency, with an emphasis on student-to-student interaction, open-ended questions, and personalization.[14] Despite the lack of emphasis on language form, the students in classroom B were found to be able to communicate orally with considerable spontaneity and accuracy, while their peers in classroom A were less able to do so.

14. As defined in the ministry document *Learning for All, K–12, personalization* refers to "education that puts the learner at the centre, providing assessment and instruction that are tailored to students' particular learning and motivational needs" (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2011a, p. 7).

The Role of Explicit Instruction

Though a focus on grammar and language form may not be the single most effective strategy for learning a second language, the role of explicit instruction in language acquisition should not be discounted entirely. As explained by Netten and Germain (2005), "The role of explicit instruction is not to facilitate acquisition as such but to assist in increasing the degree of accuracy of the language that is being or has been acquired" (p. 195) . It has been proposed that explicit instruction can be beneficial to students by drawing attention to errors and allowing students the opportunity to self-correct. Research seems to favour a combination of the implicit and explicit approaches to second-language instruction. That is, teaching methods that include correction and attention to form in meaningful and communicative tasks may be effective in capitalizing on the learning benefits of both explicit and implicit strategies (Dagenais, 2008).

FSL and the Development of First-Language Skills

A common barrier to enrolment in FSL programs is the belief that learning French as a second language, especially at a young age, can interfere with or delay the development of proficiency in English. This is of particular concern to parents who are considering enrolling their child in French Immersion or Extended French programs, but also to parents who may feel that time spent during Core French could be better spent on developing English literacy skills.

Standing in direct opposition to these fears, however, is the concept of *additive bilingualism*. The belief that learning an additional language does not interfere with the development of the first language is a central tenet of all second-language immersion programs. While some argue that strong first-language skills facilitate the learning of a second language, research also shows that second-language learning enhances first-language and overall literacy skills. Mastery of the first language is not a prerequisite for learning a second language. Rather, students can develop fluency and proficiency in a second language while continuing to learn their first, as is the case with students in French Immersion programs.

Some studies have pointed to a limited period of time during which students in immersion programs do not perform as strongly as same-age peers who have received instruction in their first language. Students in immersion programs have been found to test lower on some early literacy skills, including word knowledge, spelling, and punctuation. However, this delay has been shown to disappear within one or two years after the immersion student begins receiving instruction in the first language (Fortune & Menke, 2010; Lapkin, Hart, & Turnbull, 2003). Students are able to "catch up", likely by transferring critical skills, including literacy skills, from French to English and vice versa (Dagenais, 2008).

FSL for All Learners

Despite the many benefits and rewards that learning languages presents, some students have been discouraged from participating in FSL programs. The following section addresses the misconceptions that FSL programs are unsuitable for English language learners and for students with special education needs.

English Language Learners in FSL

The belief that FSL programs are not suitable for English language learners (ELLs)[15] may be based on the assumption that learning an additional language will disadvantage or unfairly burden students who are still working to attain proficiency in English. Requiring students to learn an additional language, it is reasoned, places undue stress on students' capacity to learn and may even interfere with English language acquisition.

There is no evidence to support this claim. In fact, research indicates that exposing English language learners to FSL may have a positive influence on their English acquisition (Lapkin, Mady, & Arnott, 2008, p. 11). In a study conducted by Bild and Swain (1989), Grade 8 students in an Ontario English–French bilingual program were given oral and written tests to measure their French proficiency. Students were selected for the study based on their first language – English, Italian, or a non-Romance language. Bilingual students, or those who were literate in English *and* Italian or another language, performed significantly better than their unilingual English counterparts on almost all measures. Other studies have also concluded that knowing a second language facilitates the learning of a third language (Hoti et al., 2011; Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2011, p. 29). Bilingual students are therefore considered to be excellent candidates for French Immersion programs.

A recent survey of English language learners who completed FSL programs indicates that these students can achieve great success in FSL. Of those surveyed, 87 per cent felt that their French was good, or adequate enough to continue FSL at a higher level. Roughly two-thirds felt their French proficiency was good enough to cope with social situations, to understand mass media in French, and to apply for jobs requiring the language. Ninety-five per cent of immigrant parents who enrolled their ELL children in French Immersion reported being satisfied with their decision and with the program (CPF, 2010, p. 8).

There is ample reason to encourage English language learners to participate in FSL programs. In addition to facilitating English proficiency, trilingualism has many other benefits. The ability to communicate in several languages can enhance understanding and appreciation of global diversity. Multilingual individuals also experience practical rewards such as increased career and educational opportunities (Archibald et al., 2006). Recognizing these benefits and students' vast capacity to learn, some regions in Europe have already established trilingual education programs with the expressed aim of establishing trilingualism more widely among students (Ytsma, 2001; Cummins, 2007).

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15. As defined in the ministry document *Many Roots, Many Voices*, English language learners are students in English-language schools whose first language is other than English or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the variety used in Ontario's schools, and who may initially require educational interventions to assist them in attaining English language proficiency (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 48; www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/manyroots.pdf).

Students with Special Education Needs in FSL

Parents and educators work to provide appropriate support when a student experiences challenges in any subject. With respect to learning FSL, a number of academic researchers state that, under the right circumstances, all children are able to learn two languages.

As explained by Archibald and colleagues (2006), "Students with special needs can learn second languages. As with other subjects, they need accommodation, but there is nothing inherent in the learning of a second language that precludes special needs students" (p. 2). For these reasons, some academics have suggested that attention should be paid to creating learning environments where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas in a second language (Gersten & Woodward, 1994). Other language experts have focused on the need for differentiated instruction.

Differentiated instruction is a teaching practice that acknowledges the varied learning needs of all students – including struggling learners, students who are excelling, and all students in between. In order to adapt instruction to learners' needs, teachers become familiar with students' learning styles and preferences, interests, readiness, and current level of ability, as well as the factors that motivate their learning. This knowledge enables teachers to be flexible in tailoring the content of instruction and their teaching approaches to the needs and interests of students.

Fortune & Menke (2010, p.10) offer a number of principles to guide practice in additional language education, which include the following:

- Consider the student as a unique individual.
- Put student needs first.
- Hold high expectations for your learners.
- Trust the universal human capacity for language learning.

Motivation and Exposure to French Language and Culture Beyond the Classroom

Educators and parents see that students are motivated to learn a subject when the students express interest in the subject, actively participate in class, and/or devote leisure time to learning in the field. In the context of second-language learning, a great deal of research has been carried out on the relationship between the student's attitude towards the language of study and his or her success in language learning. It is difficult to determine whether a positive attitude contributes to successful learning or whether success in learning a language creates a positive attitude towards the language. While there are no conclusive findings to prove that motivation causes success in second-language learning, there is evidence to suggest that motivation is associated with the willingness to continue learning (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Motivation in second-language learning has been described as occurring in two non-exclusive forms – *instrumental motivation* and *integrative motivation*. Students who are motivated to learn languages for practical purposes, including the ability to use a second language to widen

professional opportunities, may be described as being instrumentally motivated. Integrative motivation, in contrast, is illustrated when a student is learning for personal growth or cultural enrichment. The motivation to speak another language may occur as a consequence of, or arise from the desire for, interaction with speakers of the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Exposure to French outside the classroom – through exchange programs or extended visits, for example – has been demonstrated to increase motivation to learn the language. In a survey of English-speaking and French-speaking fourteen- to sixteen-year-olds who took part in a two-week volunteer exchange program, participation in the program was found to have had a positive impact on motivation to learn the second language (Mady & Arnott, 2010). Students in this program volunteered at two cultural festivals – one in their home community and the other where their second language was the dominant language. Students were therefore required to use both official languages to function and communicate in a real non-school setting.

Exchanges between English-speaking and French-speaking students have also been found to have other positive effects on language learning. In a case study of Grade 6 immersion classes in Quebec and Ontario, students who participated in the program reported feeling more confident about themselves and their second-language skills after the exchange experience. The author of the study concludes that even brief contact with native speakers – through authentic interaction opportunities for students and exposure to peer models – can enhance classroom-based learning (MacFarlane, 2001). While no explicit links were drawn to either instrumental or integrative motivation in this study, it could be argued that an exchange program or a connection to French speakers through the use of technology, would likely tap into both forms of motivation: positive exposure to the second-language community would increase positive personal associations while allowing students to experience some of the many opportunities available to those who are able to converse confidently in a second language.

Looking to the Future

A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 was developed to strengthen FSL education in Ontario by supporting English-language school boards in maximizing opportunities for students to reach their full potential in FSL.

What will the impact of this framework be for Ontario students, from those who are just beginning elementary school to those who are entering the workforce or embarking on postsecondary studies?

As a result of clearly articulated goals for FSL and in response to the call to action communicated through this framework, it is realistic to foresee cohesive efforts to strengthen FSL education evolving across the province. The collection of data will have allowed stakeholders to analyse the effectiveness of short- and long-term initiatives and actions taken in supporting these ambitious goals.

In a rapidly changing society in which the importance of languages is becoming increasingly evident, it is possible to envision FSL education in Ontario ten years in the future. Learning French will be widely recognized as a valuable component of every child's education. Students of FSL programs will be equipped with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to communicate with confidence in French. Parents, educators, and communities will support students as lifelong learners, and seek opportunities for continued enhancement of FSL education.

A decade from now, stakeholders in FSL will no doubt have different questions and challenges as well as new and exciting opportunities. It is critical that this document be viewed not only as a ten-year initiative, but as a vehicle to carry the current momentum in FSL into the future for the benefit of Ontario's students.

Appendix A: A Summary of FSL Programs in Ontario's English-Language School Boards

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL
CORE FRENCH	• The Core French program must provide a minimum of 600 hours of French by the end of Grade 8. • The Ontario curriculum document provides grade-specific expectations for Grades 4 to 8. • All students from Grades 4 to 8 take Core French* unless they are enrolled in Extended French or French Immersion.	• One FSL credit (110 hours) is compulsory for high school graduation. • The Ontario curriculum documents provide grade-specific expectations for applied and academic Core French in Grades 9 and 10, which lead to open and university preparation courses in Grades 11 and 12. • In order to meet the needs of their student community, school boards must offer both academic and applied courses in Grades 9 and 10 French as a second language. • Schools must offer at least Core French programs from Grade 9 to the end of Grade 12.

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL
EXTENDED FRENCH	• The Extended French program must provide a minimum of 1260 hours of French by the end of Grade 8. • A minimum of 25 per cent of all instruction is provided in French. • The Ontario curriculum document provides grade-specific expectations for Grades 4 to 8. School boards have the flexibility to offer Extended French earlier than Grade 4. • Students are taught French as a subject and French serves as the language of instruction in at least one other subject. • Boards have the flexibility to decide which subject(s) will be taught in French and in which grade English instruction will begin. • Students follow the same curriculum for the other subject(s) taught in French as their peers in English-language programs.	• To complete the program, students accumulate a minimum of seven credits in French: four Extended French language courses (one per grade) and three other subjects in which French is the language of instruction. • The Ontario curriculum document provides grade-specific expectations for Extended French language courses from Grades 9 to 12. • School boards have the flexibility to decide which subjects will be taught in French. • Students follow the same curriculum for the other subjects taught in French as their peers in English-language programs.

* Recognizing the importance of the languages and cultures of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, the ministry provides a Grade 1–12 Native languages curriculum. Students enrolled in a Native language program may be exempt from learning French as a second language (Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 27).

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL
FRENCH IMMERSION	• The French Immersion program must provide a minimum of 3800 hours of French by the end of Grade 8. • A minimum of 50 per cent of all instruction is provided in French. • As research indicates that a student's level of proficiency in French increases with the number of accumulated hours of instruction in French, many French Immersion programs exceed the minimum requirement. • The Ontario curriculum document provides grade-specific expectations for Grades 1 to 8. • School boards have the flexibility to start French Immersion in the primary years or later. • Students are taught French as a subject and French serves as the language of instruction in two or more other subjects. • An immersion program starting in Grade 1 generally provides instruction in French in all subjects (i.e., for 100 per cent of total instructional time) until Grade 3 or 4. • Boards have the flexibility to decide which subjects will be taught in French and in which grade English instruction will begin. • Students follow the same curriculum for the other subjects taught in French as their peers in English-language programs. • Students who start their study of English in Grade 3 or 4 will be expected to achieve the curriculum expectations outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2006* between Grade 3 or 4 and Grade 8. • Students who have completed a French Immersion program in elementary school may proceed to either an Extended French or a French Immersion program at the secondary level. Where only a Core French program is offered in secondary schools, students who have studied French in extended or immersion programs at the elementary level should be considered for advanced placement in the Core French program.	• To complete the program, students accumulate a minimum of ten credits in French: four French Immersion language courses (one per grade) and at least six other subjects in which French is the language of instruction. • The Ontario curriculum document provides grade-specific expectations for French Immersion language courses from Grades 9 to 12. • School boards have the flexibility to decide which subjects will be taught in French. • Students follow the same curriculum for the other subjects taught in French as their peers in English-language programs.

Appendix B: Data Collection and Analysis to Support Goals for FSL

The following suggestions are provided to assist in the collection and analysis of data to support the three goals for FSL that are outlined in this document (page 9).

General
• What percentage of elementary FSL students achieves level 3 or 4 – at each grade in each program? • What percentage of secondary FSL students achieves level 3 or 4 – at each grade in each program? • What do the results of diagnostic assessments indicate about student achievement in FSL? • What is the percentage of students moving up in their achievement level in FSL? • Are any students substituting another course for FSL? If so, what course and in what grade? For what reason? • What percentage of secondary students drops an FSL course after starting? • Are secondary school FSL courses ever cancelled? If so, for what reasons? • Do students have access to e-learning or alternative program delivery methods? • What opportunities are there for students to increase their exposure to French or to experience French culture? • What opportunities do students have to provide input and feedback relevant to strengthening FSL programs? • What percentage of FSL students participates in extracurricular FSL activities (French public speaking, etc.)?
Core French
• What Core French courses are offered in each secondary school? • What percentage of Grade 9 Core French students continues to Grade 10? Grade 11? Grade 12? • What percentage of Core French students pursues postsecondary studies in French? • To what degree is Core French included in the school effectiveness reviews?
French Immersion (FI) and Extended French (EF)
• What percentage of the school board's student population is enrolled in FI/in EF? • What percentage of students leaves the program at each grade level? Why? • How many courses are offered in each secondary school FI/EF program? • What factors contribute to enrolling/not enrolling in FI or EF programs? *(continued)*

Educators
• How much FSL-specific professional learning is offered? • Are FSL educators supported by central staff who have expertise in French? • Do teachers have access to e-learning or alternative program delivery methods? • What percentage of FSL teachers seeks to transfer out of FSL or leave teaching?
Parent Engagement and Involvement
• Is there a local organization for parents of FSL students? • Is there a local FSL working group with parent and community representatives? • Do school councils have representation from an FSL parent perspective? • Have Parent Reaching Out grants been requested and/or provided for FSL initiatives? • What opportunities exist to inform newcomers about FSL? • What opportunities exist to inform parents of pre-school children about FSL?
Possible Survey Topics
• How confident do students feel about their French-language skills at the end of Grade 6, 8, 9, 12? • What are elementary and secondary students' attitudes towards learning FSL? • What reasons do students cite for taking/not taking Core French in Grades 10, 11, 12? • What reason do students and/or parents cite for leaving a French Immersion or Extended French program?

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