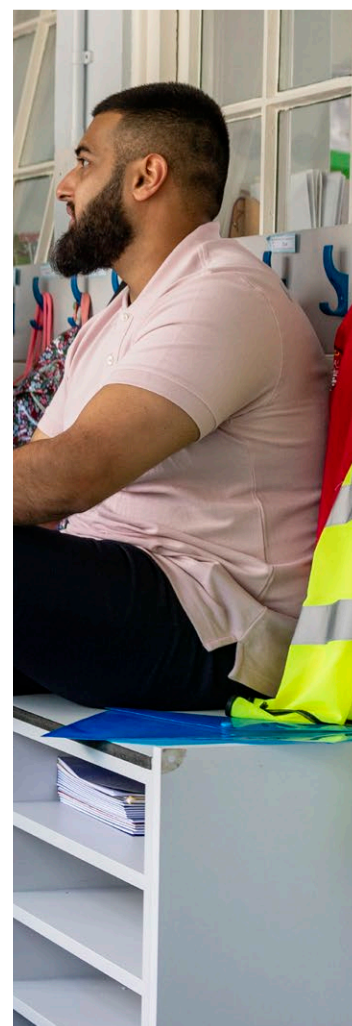
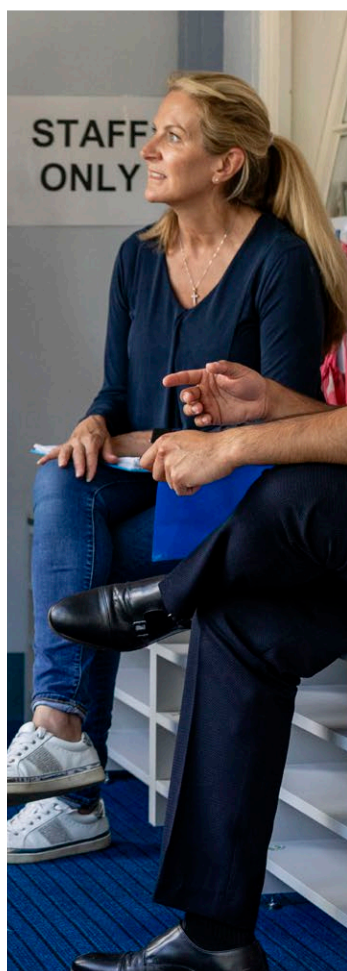
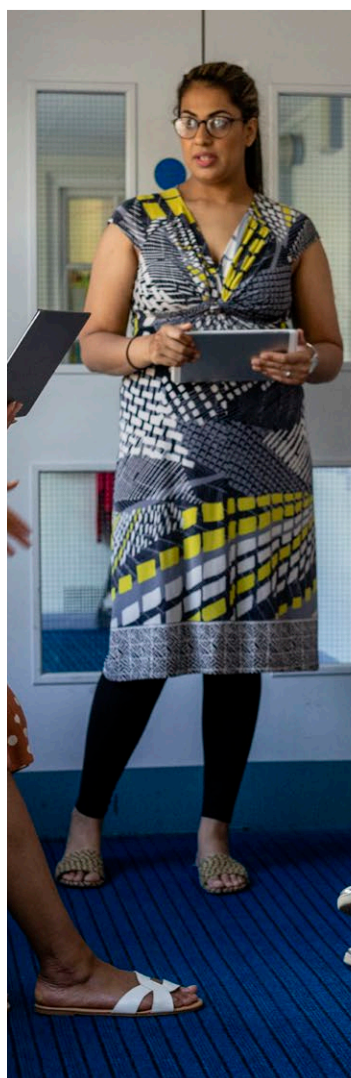


Identifying Requirements and Gaps in French as a Second Language (FSL) Teacher Education

Recommendations and Guidelines



Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

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* Stephanie Arnott was the first author and the project lead; Cam Smith was the second author, with the remaining authors listed alphabetically as joint third authors to reflect their contributions to the project.

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a detailed synthesis of the findings from our analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered as part of a two-year pan-Canadian research project commissioned by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) and funded by Canadian Heritage. Our consortium-based approach included three research teams strategically located across Canada. [Table 1](#) presents the FSL Teacher Education Consortium members and the provinces/territories they were responsible for during data collection.

All facets of this study were theoretically grounded in a sociocultural perspective on education and purposefully informed by key findings in current research on French as a second language (FSL) education and professional learning, as well as initial teacher education (ITE) and second language (L2) education more broadly.

Given the complexity of teacher learning and the dynamic process of developing a teacher identity, we see *teacher education* (vs. *teacher training*) as more than imparting specific skill sets to individuals. Our conceptual framework for this study was rooted in a vision of teachers as active learners involved in developing a wide variety of skills, abilities,

knowledge funds, and professional networks within systems and institutional settings, such as Faculties of Education and K–12 public schools (Abboud, 2015; Burt, 2014; Dunn, 2011; O’Neill, 1986; Tchimou, 2011). We understand FSL teachers as being “shaped in and through their experiences as learners, the cultural practices of teacher education, and the particulars of their teaching context, all embedded within larger sociocultural histories yet appropriated in individual ways” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 4). We also see fostering a culture of collaborative professionalism as being fundamental to supporting FSL teachers’ professional practices (Jacquet & Dagenais, 2010; Kristmanson et al., 2011; Wernicke, 2022) and a key component to lifelong professional learning for teachers of all disciplines (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016).

A significant challenge for foreign and minority language teachers is to maintain and continue to develop their knowledge and use of the languages they teach, as this requires regular engagement in meaningful communication (Borg, 2006). Efforts to help future FSL teachers develop their French expertise as they prepare for the profession have focused almost exclusively on measuring French proficiency for program admission (Salvatori, 2009). Yet, research



continues to show that teachers' investment in their professional practices requires consideration of language development that simultaneously values their pedagogical and instructional experiences (Arnott & Vignola, 2018) and professional identities (Wernicke, 2017). Therefore, this study considers FSL teachers' specific pedagogical and content knowledge, skills, resources, and additional supports to teach French effectively at different stages of their careers (Lapkin et al., 2006; Masson et al., 2019; OPSBA, 2018, 2019; Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009; Wernicke & Bournot-Trites, 2019).

A major research gap in the literature concerns the transition of FSL teacher candidates to the workplace. Mentorship that goes beyond the “associate teacher—teacher candidate” relationship is key to retaining teachers generally (Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Swanson & Mason, 2018; Whalen et al., 2019) as well as L2/FSL teachers specifically (Kastelan-Sikora, 2013; Kutsyuruba, 2012; Muhling, 2016). This includes mentorship during ITE, in coursework and practicum, and into the first years of teaching. Important here is the role that associate and mentor teachers play as supporters and gatekeepers to the profession, evidence of which has received little attention in FSL education.

Together, these issues coalesce into a problematic reality that shapes the recruitment and retention of these teachers. We sought to examine this phenomenon through the perspectives and experiences of various stakeholders and to consider ways to better respond to current needs and future opportunities for the field.

TABLE 1

FSL Teacher Education Consortium

Region	Affiliation	Research team	Provinces/territories
East	University of New Brunswick	Karla Culligan, Joseph Dicks, Josée LeBouthillier, Paula Kristmanson, Lisa Michaud	Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Nunavut
Central	University of Ottawa	Stephanie Arnott, Mimi Masson, Cam Smith, Amanda Battistuzzi	Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan
West	University of British Columbia	Meike Wernicke, Valia Spiliotopoulos, Liza Navarro	Alberta, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

An overarching objective of this research was to make novel contributions to ongoing efforts responding to the longstanding shortage of qualified FSL teachers across Canada. As such, this study aimed to document and describe current practices while validating the perspectives and efforts of new FSL teachers, District representatives, and Faculty of Education (FOE) representatives to optimize FSL education in Canadian K–12 contexts.

Specifically, the findings of this report respond to the following research question:

What do participants identify as **strengths, challenges, and opportunities** regarding FSL ITE, practice, and professional learning in the early years after transitioning to the field?

In the following sections, we outline the methodology of the project and present findings that provide a detailed response to this question. The final section of this report outlines recommendations in the form of questions meant to inform ongoing FSL teacher education and professional support across Canada and guide ongoing efforts to respond to the chronic shortage of FSL teachers across the country. For a glossary of key terms, see [Appendix A](#).

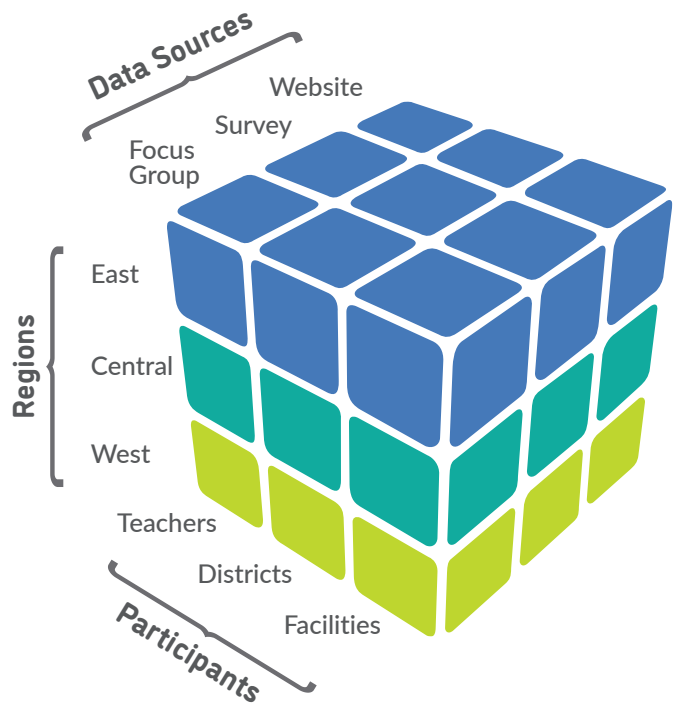
METHODOLOGY

Our methodological approach was anchored within a pragmatic paradigm (Mertens, 2020), meaning that the approach was shaped to respond to the context of the questions and the unfolding project. This inquiry was initially guided by broad questions that kept front of mind the Canadian standards and practices for FSL teacher education (as they relate to FSL ITE programming and certification) and the regional characteristics inherent to ITE and provincial/territorial approaches to education. Findings related to strengths, challenges, and opportunities emerged as being most significant to the focus of this study on specific gaps in FSL ITE and the transition to the field.

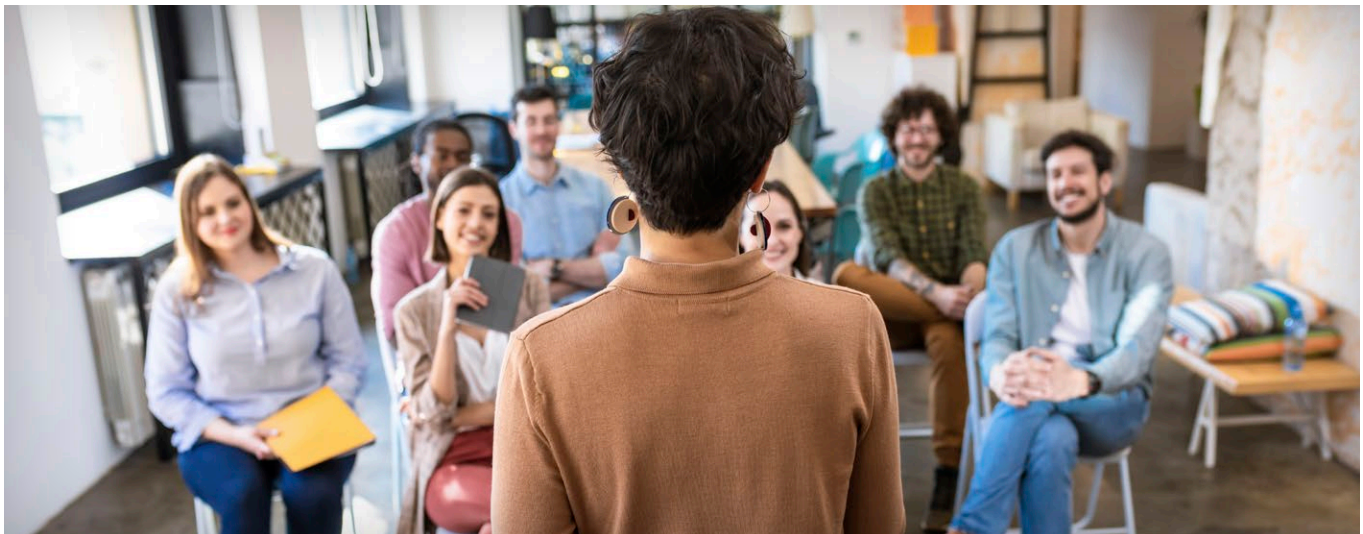
Our methods and analytical tools were developed to gather information comprehensively from participants across Canada for content and thematic analysis. All tools and procedures were negotiated collaboratively within and across the FSL Teacher Education Consortium teams and applied in the same way throughout each region to ensure cohesive and comprehensive data collection and analysis procedures. As per [Figure 1](#), data was collected from three sources: 1) scans of the program websites of all 44 Canadian Faculties of Education that offer FSL, and all provincial/territorial FSL teacher certification websites, 2) an online survey, and 3) focus group interviews. Online survey and focus group data were collected from the three participant groups: new FSL teachers, District representatives, and FOE representatives. Figure 1 offers a three-dimensional representation of the data sources, the participants, and the division of provinces/territories into their regions (i.e., Eastern, Central, and Western).

FIGURE 1

Visualization of the methodology (data sources, regions, and participants).



Note: Each “block” in the cube represents a unique intersection of three categories (e.g., the “bottom leftmost” cube is West-Teachers-Focus Group; the “top rightmost” cube is East-Faculties-Website Scan). In a Rubik’s Cube style, the data segments can be shifted and combined to highlight particular themes, participants, regions, etc.



After receiving ethical clearance from each consortium university-affiliated ethical review board, we proceeded to the study's recruitment, data collection, and analysis phases.

[Table 5](#) (in [Appendix E](#)) delineates the final data points by participant group and region.

Participant Profiles

The participants¹ for the online survey and focus groups were recruited from three groups: Faculty of Education representatives, District representatives, and FSL teachers.

Faculty of Education Representatives

Faculty of Education representatives (FOE reps) were post-secondary part-/full-time educators and staff directly involved in FSL programming in their ITE programs. According to the survey, the majority (57%) held faculty (i.e., professor) positions, while 9% were instructors/lecturers, 10% were seconded/adjunct teachers, 10% were administrators, and 6% were coordinators. The remaining 9% held a combination of or other kinds of roles.

Regarding responsibilities, 30% of participating FOE reps taught courses, 15% were involved in program development, 14% coordinated programs, 14% were engaged in practica, 11% did program recruitment and promotion, 10% were involved in program admission, and 5% noted other responsibilities.²

District Representatives

District representatives (District reps) included specialists or administrators associated with the broader School District. Some reps still held active teaching assignments, while others were hired or on secondment to a District role to support FSL programming. From the survey data, 21% were program coordinators, 20% were instructional coaches, 13% were consultants, 10% were subject coordinators, 4% were learning specialists, and 33% noted other or combinations of titles.

The District reps were most commonly responsible for FSL teacher support and mentoring (31%). Other responsibilities included program administration and coordination (23%), program development (21%), and teacher recruitment and hiring (18%). The remaining 7% also held additional portfolios, which included organizing professional learning and liaising with funders.

FSL Teachers

This category included certified educators employed as FSL teachers (referred to as “FSL teachers” or “new FSL teachers” where applicable³) in any French program offered in their region (e.g., Core French, French Immersion, Intensive French, Extended French). In the survey, 40% taught elementary students, 30% taught intermediate grades, and 30% taught in secondary schools.

In terms of FSL programs, Core French (41%) and French Immersion (41%) emerged equally. A total of 7% taught Intensive French, while 4% taught in francophone schools. The remaining 7% identified other options, including independent schools or programs with unique features or setups that distinguish them from the standard selection. (For additional demographic information, see [Appendix B](#).)

Data Collection and Analysis

In the following sections, we outline the data collection and analysis procedures concerning each method, including a description of the instruments. It is worth noting here that each instrument was designed around our research team's conceptualization of the FSL teacher career timeline, which included the following temporal categories: (pre-)undergraduate and life experiences, admission, ITE, graduation and hiring (when transitioning into the profession), and professional learning (i.e., practising teachers). This enabled us to consider whether certain themes were more or less prevalent at different points in the teachers' career trajectories.

Website Scans

We gathered data on FSL ITE programs and provincial/territorial FSL teacher certification requirements by scanning publicly available information online. First, we collected and compiled a list of Faculties of Education offering FSL specialization programs in Canada and provincial/territorial certification bodies. Then, the team gathered information about each of these FSL ITE programs. [Table 3](#) (in [Appendix C](#)) outlines the information we aimed to locate when scanning the content (i.e., website content, PDF documents shared online) about FSL programming on each Faculty website. The aim was to generate an overview of the shared and unique characteristics of FSL teacher specialization programs across Canada. Compiled information was also member-checked with stakeholders from each respective institution when possible,

1 Reflecting their multiple roles, seven participants completed demographic information for one of the categories but ultimately participated in a focus group under a different category (i.e., someone might work in both an FOE and a District but only submitted data as a District rep). Therefore, the numbers in descriptive statistics will reflect the category from the information they provided, which means that these numbers are not the same as in [Table 5](#).

2 Participants in all groups had varied portfolios and were able to select multiple responsibilities.

3 Initially, we had planned to gather data only from new FSL teachers (0–5 years of experience), but we received inquiries and numerous survey responses from experienced FSL teachers. We therefore expanded the study to allow for greater participation.

although we did not receive responses to our multiple inquiries from every institution.

The program scans were compiled and analyzed for descriptive statistics using SPSS to assess trends and (in)consistencies. Data on different scales (e.g., grade point average [GPA], course credits) were converted to a common unit using institutional conversion charts whenever possible. The team used content and thematic analysis procedures (Saldaña, 2013) to examine qualitative commonalities and differences among programs within their assigned regions. The content analysis involved examining pattern frequencies, while thematic analysis was used to identify what areas of teacher education were included and how the programs were delivered at each institution.

We also considered local contextual factors and insights from the research literature. More information on the website scan data can be found in Smith et al. (2022) and in [Appendix C](#).

We conducted searches on each provincial or territorial government's website, particularly those of Ministries of Education, to gather information related to the following:

- Certification requirements and processes

- Additional language and educational requirements for FSL teaching
- Governmental and professional organizations for teachers

Additional questions and clarifications were sent to stakeholders in different areas as the information provided on these websites was not always comprehensive (see [Appendix D](#)).

Survey

The online survey consisted of closed- and open-ended questions. Participants were offered the choice of completing the survey in English or French. Questions focused on ascertaining participant perspectives and experiences in FSL education relative to the categories listed above: (pre-)undergraduate and life experiences, admission, ITE, graduation and hiring (when transitioning into the profession), and professional learning (i.e., practising teachers).

Closed-ended questions prompted Likert-type (e.g., *Agree-Disagree*) as well as single- and multiple-choice responses to subtheme questions. These subthemes (or components) included admission, practicum, ITE program offerings, hiring, mentorship, and retention. Each subtheme was statistically



validated using a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) in SPSS. The PCA revealed that many of the subthemes were interrelated. For example, the practicum component was strongly correlated with the program offerings in teacher education, hiring, and admission. The program offerings component was moderately correlated with hiring and admission.

Additionally, the hiring component was moderately correlated with the admission component. Finally, retention was weakly correlated with practicum and hiring, while mentorship was also weakly correlated with hiring. Further, multiple ANOVAs were run to explore the relationship among different variables within and across the subthemes. See [Appendix E](#) for all statistically significant calculations.

Open-ended survey questions included prompts for respondents to explain their responses to the closed-ended questions (e.g., *Please explain your answer; Please add any information you feel would be helpful; Do you have anything to add about [theme]?).* Qualitative data analysis of participant responses consisted of iterative coding cycles, debriefing, and updating the codebooks. Again, the teams used thematic analysis procedures (Saldaña, 2013). Using NVivo software, we identified the most prevalent themes.

Focus Group Interviews

Recruitment for focus groups involved inviting survey participants to follow-up focus groups. Additionally, a call for participation in the focus group part of the study was announced on the project website, on social media, and via the research team's professional networks.

The three regional teams collaboratively designed the focus group protocol based on findings from a preliminary analysis of open-ended survey responses. This analysis identified three main dimensions of FSL teacher education and professional learning that were top of mind among survey participants: 1) **language development** and support; 2) **pedagogical knowledge and skills** in ITE and professional learning; and 3) **mentorship** — including workplace transition, building community, learning from others, collaboration, and professional supports/resources. To address these dimensions in more depth, the focus group discussions centred on courses of action (i.e., what individuals or institutions were doing to address these issues, obstacles they were encountering, etc.) and other possible solutions that individuals/institutions were contemplating or struggling to implement.

All focus group interviews were conducted via Zoom. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from one (e.g., due to last-minute cancellations) to seven. Focus group sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes and were conducted in French and/or English. Each session was recorded and

subsequently transcribed in the original language. English data were partially auto-transcribed using a feature in Zoom and subsequently re-transcribed or corrected. French data were manually transcribed. Transcribed files were then anonymized and uploaded to an NVivo R1 file for coding.

Once uploaded to the NVivo software, the focus group subcommittee coded the data using multiple iterations of inductive and deductive analysis (Braun et al., 2019; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). First, data were organized into temporal categories, similar to those used to organize questions in the survey. This structure enabled the team to triangulate participant perspectives on certain themes or issues along each point in the teacher career timeline.

While each regional team was in charge of analyzing their focus group data, the interpretation and discussion of the themes that emerged were shared collaboratively to ensure cohesion across all regions. Themes unique to each region were noted and maintained in the codebook. The subcommittee met at least twice when analyzing each stakeholder data set to discuss themes as they were emerging and to finalize the codebook. As the NVivo software allowed for a means of quantifying the number of times participants mentioned a particular theme, we also paid attention to the most prevalent themes that emerged and (re)organized the codebook accordingly.



FINDINGS

We begin this section by establishing a clear context for the presentation of our findings. While we respond to the research question explicitly in this section of the report, the data demanded that we acknowledge the contextual factors influencing the lived realities of Canadian FSL teachers today (which we consider to be a central finding of this study).

Of prominence is a collective concern about *retention* spanning the teacher career timeline (so, not simply something of concern only shortly after the transition to the field). Specifically, participants expressed concern about the adverse impact of a system-level FSL culture of deficit thinking, siloing, and marginalization on FSL teacher candidates in Faculties of Education and new FSL teachers in Canadian K–12 schools. These findings paint a nuanced picture of the leaky FSL teacher pipeline (Masson, 2018) that, if not attended to in a meaningful way, risks circumventing ongoing efforts to recruit and retain FSL teachers via any/all pathways available. This concept is presented in [Appendix F](#), in which we use the metaphor of a highway to depict the complexities of the FSL teacher career timeline noted in our findings.

With all of this in mind, we have chosen to contextualize our presentation of requirements and gaps by purposefully forefronting the **systemic challenges** identified by participating FSL teachers alongside the perspectives of District and FOE reps. In addition to highlighting the systemic challenges in detail, we will introduce examples of what participating FSL teachers and District and FOE reps are doing and accomplishing as individuals and micro-communities despite these systemic challenges. We do so to position our short-term recommendations as opportunities to reflect on how stakeholders are preparing and supporting new FSL teachers in ways that align with what they report being able to accomplish and benefit from most in the face of these systemic challenges. We also do so to shift the long-term conversation of what to do about systemic challenges from a position of ignorance or helplessness to one of **collective responsibility**. If stakeholders are committed to recruiting and preparing FSL teachers for a field that is committed to valuing and supporting the long-term retention and well-being of FSL teachers, then those who are enacting recommendations and guidelines need to take the power of these systemic challenges seriously and honour the voices of those living this reality “on the ground” via both short- and long-term solutions-based thinking. With this in mind, we propose recommendations that link to the findings via *questions to consider* rather than a checklist of actions to execute. As these findings will show (particularly Gap #5), we believe that

reflection and awareness-raising are required as a first step to set the stage for subsequent action. That action should reflect a shared responsibility approach to optimizing FSL ITE and enacting a meaningful response to the chronic issue of FSL teacher recruitment and retention in Canada.

In the sections that follow, we present data showcasing the lived realities of our three participant groups: (new) FSL teachers as they navigate the individual and system-level dimensions of becoming an FSL teacher, alongside the perspectives and experiences of FOE and District reps whose mandate is to prepare and support them. Quotations are reported in the original language in which participants took part in the study (English or French). We begin by highlighting the **retention** issue, then review **strengths** and meaningful initiatives that emerged from the data, and finally move to framing the subsequent **gaps and challenges** within teacher education and transition to the field (i.e., the “avalanche”).

Retention

Retention emerged as a key dimension of FSL teacher education in the quantitative analysis of findings and concerning how participants framed their experiences, needs, and ongoing obstacles. From the survey data, several ANOVAs were run to explore which factors most influence retention among FSL teachers. These factors can be viewed as either a “push” (i.e., driving teachers to leave FSL/the profession) or a “pull” force (i.e., encouraging teachers to stay). Although only participating teachers who had (thus far) chosen to remain in the profession participated in the study, it is disconcerting that 56% of them were still considering leaving. The significant relationships between teachers’ reported intent to remain often related to prior experience and demographic factors (see [Appendix E](#)).

Regarding “pull” factors, the more reasons a participating teacher identified as encouraging them to choose a career as an FSL teacher, the less likely they were to consider leaving the profession. When looking at their practice, elementary teacher participants were less likely to consider leaving the profession than their middle or high-school colleagues. Further, the more professional organizations participating teachers reported being a part of, the less likely they were to consider leaving. Finally, although based on a small sample, participating FSL teachers who were also Ph.D. graduates were less likely to consider leaving the profession.

Most “push” factors were related to the ITE program: teachers who felt that the number of courses in their FSL ITE program

was insufficient to succeed in the practicum or enter the field were more likely to consider leaving. Moreover, participating teachers who felt unprepared to answer pedagogical questions during the teaching interviews were also more likely to consider leaving. When looking at in-service factors, a lack of accessible professional learning in their schools or local regions also led teachers to consider leaving. When looking at demographics, FSL teachers who identified as growing up bilingual were more likely to consider leaving than those in any other linguistic category.

These “push” and “pull” factors, coupled with additional survey and focus group findings presented below, highlight an overwhelming need to focus on retention before, during, and after ITE. While we can presume possible reasoning for the above trends, these characteristics require further study to better understand the relationships.

Strengths

Overall, what survey and focus group data pointed to as strengths of FSL teacher education were not often system-level strengths; instead, they were local, grassroots initiatives (typically initiated by FSL teachers themselves). We present sample strengths that highlight this trend and represent strengths linked to each of the three dimensions of FSL teacher education and professional learning addressed in this study (i.e., language development and use, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and mentorship). Essentially, findings related to strengths are framed as areas that show potential for expansion and warrant further attention from stakeholders.

In terms of language development, ITE programs and School Boards that make efforts to reinforce language development as an ongoing, lifelong endeavour present the strongest potential for improving recruitment and retention. However, when teachers reported positive initiatives, they seemed to be accomplished primarily by ambitious, generous, and kind personnel — often fellow teachers or District reps. For instance, French immersion teachers who reported having opportunities to speak French with colleagues felt more supported as an FSL teacher. Facilitated resource sharing was another strength identified by FSL teachers working together in schools or a local District. The drawback of these types of strengths is that they are difficult to mandate at a system level.

Participants noted that FSL teachers speaking in French in the staff room helped build linguistic competence and confidence and presented opportunities for sharing pedagogical knowledge between the FSL teachers. However, District reps cautioned that if FSL teachers were mandated to have formal French conversations or share their resources, it

risked becoming perceived as a burden. To us, this indicates a greater need for systemic *support* and changes to professional culture — and not necessarily system *mandates* — for these kinds of bottom-up efforts, such that FSL teachers can mobilize and respond to their immediate needs and create safe and pleasant workplaces to thrive in. Additional systemic changes to normalize such support must then follow.

Similar to language development, when mentorship is part of an FSL teacher’s education and ongoing professional learning, it provides much-needed support. Mentorship is conceptualized in various ways within the data; however, it is recognized as a great need for FSL teachers. Various mentorship programs for new FSL teachers or beginning teachers exist across many regions of the country. Funding allows these formalized, top-down mentorship programs to function. Some participants, especially District reps, expressed excitement surrounding newly funded collaborative initiatives for linguistic and pedagogical mentorship. These formalized opportunities often comprise both components, which can address multiple issues simultaneously.

Practicum, another formalized, top-down experiential learning requirement, was consistently acknowledged as an influential and important site of learning and mentorship. Findings show that practicum can be a strength when the in-service/pre-service teacher pairing is a “good match.” When the practicum teacher is motivated, skilled, and willing, and a solid relationship is built with the pre-service teacher, practicum placements can have lasting impacts on helping prepare and retain FSL teachers.

Whereas District and FOE participants focused on the strengths of more formalized mentorship initiatives they had in place or were creating, participating FSL teachers identified informal mentorships as most successful in their experience. The most strength-oriented data related to instances where experienced teachers provided what they called “wrap-around support” for their beginning FSL colleagues (e.g., speaking French, sharing resources, partnerships, answering questions). Participating FSL teachers most often mentioned finding opportunities through collegial mentorship. This kind of mentorship, with experienced colleagues or fellow beginning teachers, was viewed as a “relationship” rather than a top-down, mandated dynamic. Informal relationships with colleagues — having access to these colleagues, especially for the daily, logistical, practical advice (i.e., just having someone listen) — was viewed as a strength. These kinds of informal mentorships and communities of practice often provided beginning FSL teachers with both linguistic and pedagogical mentorship.

Moreover, informal mentorship emerged from the data as being a clear way for beginning FSL teachers to build a strong

sense of community. When an active FSL community of practice was present, it provided many supports that may contribute to retention (e.g., social, resource sharing) that are part of and perhaps go beyond mentorship, at least in the top-down, formalized sense. The data from beginning FSL teachers suggest that having a strong community of practice fostered a sense of belonging and purpose as FSL professionals whose professional practice is often misunderstood (e.g., within their school or more broadly).

From the point of view of participating District reps, key strengths surrounding mentorship related to the formal (funded) initiatives offered to beginning FSL teachers. Faculties of Education participants did not discuss mentorship strengths beyond the practicum at length (it was not top of mind in the survey or focus group data); however, they did cite practicum as a potential avenue for cultivating a culture of mentorship and community in FSL teacher education.

Despite the strengths and opportunities that emerged in relation to the three dimensions of FSL teacher education (language development, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and mentorship), participants identified several key challenges. Indeed, for every strength, a challenge often emerged concurrently or as a result. Interestingly, FOE and District reps across all regions expressed concern about addressing such challenges; however, findings showed that what they rated as the highest priority in this regard was vastly different from what participating FSL teachers said they needed. With this in mind, we now move to reporting the challenges and opportunities in the form of specific gaps in FSL teacher education.

Contextualizing Challenges, Opportunities, and Gaps: The “Avalanche”

During the focus group analysis phase, members of the research team were struck by the recurrent reporting of system-level challenges that participants claimed were continually plaguing their ability to develop and support FSL teaching during the ITE experience and beyond. Such challenges included chronic marginalization, isolation, and institutional apathy toward FSL. To capture this phenomenon, the research team proposed that the systemic challenges FSL teachers reported facing resembled an unrelenting “avalanche” (see [Appendix G](#)). We adopt the basic tenets of this metaphor to foreground the context of our reporting of salient gaps and to capture the chronic manifestation of systemic challenges in the lived realities of FSL teachers as they prepare and transition to the field, as seen through the eyes of the participants. Findings suggest that we can no longer see this avalanche as something happening on the sidelines but as a defining feature of the context of FSL education. This inundation plagues FSL teacher education and

progress toward resolving the perpetual attrition and shortage of FSL teachers in Canada. The issues FSL teachers face are not unique to one region or program. Indeed, there was no statistically significant difference in geographic areas, urban/rural settings, linguistic diversity, gender, or teaching programs in any of the data — teachers answered similarly despite demographic and geographic differences.

Keeping this front of mind, we now move to presenting relevant data from the website scans, survey, and focus groups to identify salient gaps that juxtapose identified requirements and gaps in FSL teacher education and transition to the field. Wherever relevant, we distinguish between challenges and opportunities to offer a snapshot of what participants value and initiate to enhance the experience of new FSL teachers, address identified gaps, and optimize their odds of staying in the field. Specifically, we provide a snapshot of **five gaps** embedded across the three interrelated dimensions of FSL education and professional learning — i.e., language development, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and mentorship. These three dimensions emerged as interconnected; for example, language development was a frequent topic within professional learning, and mentorship and collaboration were commonly referenced means to support professional growth and investment among teachers. Thus, while we initially positioned them as discrete themes, we recognize their intersectionalities as much as possible in our reporting of key findings.

Gap #1: Deficit vs. Development Perspectives

Some of the new FSL teachers have superior French language, but others do not have sufficient skills, language, nor experience. (District–Central)

A lot of the time the francophones don't necessarily have the [second language] pedagogy... Then you might talk to someone who's really insecure about their linguistic proficiency but they're a rock star of a teacher. [It's about] just finding people with gaps and helping them stretch and grow. (District–Western)

All participant groups (including new FSL teachers) positioned French language proficiency and L2 pedagogical knowledge and skills as something FSL teachers commonly lack before, during, and after their ITE preparation. A fixation on what FSL teachers cannot do has established a largely deficit-oriented perspective. An Eastern District rep offered a deficit view, observing that most new FSL teachers emerged from the ITE program “*pas cuite*” (not fully cooked).

This deficit orientation is further complicated by the context of the avalanche described in the introduction of the present section. As literature over the past 20 years has repeatedly

attested, participants in this study felt that FSL as a subject, and FSL teaching as a practice, were grossly undervalued and misunderstood by the larger educational system:

There would be more FSL teachers if they were treated like they mattered. I asked for support from admin and, you know, just French isn't important. They were focusing on the math or the science classes, which I understand... (Teacher–Central)

Not all School Boards see French Immersion as a program, instead [they see it as] a subject area. (District–Central)

Our Board forgets about our FSL teachers when it comes to building new schools. We keep having to ask for a place to keep our resources, to keep our cart and a desk where we can plan without running all around the school. I often feel undermined as an FSL teacher. (Teacher–Central)

Interestingly, while this sentiment has been extensively cited among new FSL teachers and District reps, the feeling of marginalization was also salient among the FOE reps:

Il est très difficile de pouvoir se faire entendre si le doyen de la faculté n'est pas sensibilisé aux problématiques de l'enseignement du FLS. (FOE–Eastern)

Manque de volonté et d'implication de la direction de programme, mauvaise compréhension des enjeux par la direction départementale — méconnaissance des expertises des profs, choix stratégiques peu conscients des enjeux de l'enseignement du FLS, méconnaissance de la nature et des apports de la didactique des langues, etc. (FOE–Central)

Les coordinateurs des cours n'ont pas de formation en FLS et ne comprennent pas forcément l'importance de trouver des ressources en français et d'enseigner en français. (FOE–Western)

It is evident from these findings that teachers therefore encounter these issues of marginalization and depreciation in FSL long before entering the workforce. As the following sections will show, this trend of high expectations paired with a passive approach to developing language and pedagogical skill sets is glaringly insufficient in the face of the ongoing FSL teacher shortage, where FSL candidates move from ITE to the classroom at a much faster rate than their colleagues in other disciplines. Participants identified few opportunities that *developed* both language and pedagogical competencies — whether in ITE or the field. Rather than focusing on how structures and processes can better prepare and develop these teachers from ITE through their careers, the system seems to be waiting for those who are already “set” to appear:

teacher education programs want “nearly ready” candidates, and Districts are looking for “polished” graduates.

Language Proficiency

Soyez flexible quant aux compétences linguistiques lors de l'admission, mais renforcez-les une fois admis dans le programme. Des cours d'appui et de perfectionnement seraient souhaitables. (Teacher–Eastern)

[We're] unable to offer PD in French; additional funding is required for the lifelong development of French proficiency for teachers. (District–Central)

Participants' conceptions of language proficiency were deeply rooted in deficit-based perspectives that focus on a native speaker (francophone) standard in FSL education. One Central FOE rep noted, “*In our context, graduating very proficient FI teachers is a requirement — as demanded by schools and parents.*” These pressures were referenced by multiple participants in discussions of the importance of “*la langue maternelle*” (District–Central), being “*anglophone/francophone by birth*” (Teacher–Western) or having “*les mêmes compétences que quelqu'un qui a le français langue première*” (FOE–Central). This level pertains to teacher education admission criteria and hiring expectations, framed in terms of how teachers fail to meet “the gold standard” of sounding like a native French speaker.

Many Districts use the CEFR's global language levels to “systematize” incoming teachers' language proficiency. Yet, findings showed that this scale was commonly operationalized at ITE admission and District hiring to highlight what candidates *cannot* do: focusing on monolingual competence, maintaining distance from English (e.g., through French-only interactions with colleagues), and prioritizing the skills required in immersive francophone settings. For example, teachers without a high level of confidence were assumed to be lacking in language proficiency, which is seen as a necessary feature of more immersive FSL programs.

A “culture of testing” has also become established at admission and hiring to ensure appropriate language proficiency. While there was consensus that a certain level of proficiency was expected for professional functioning, what this level should be and what kinds of tests (if any) should be used varied across participant groups and institutions (e.g., Districts and FOEs). For some teachers, the standards were too demanding and unreasonable, particularly if their results seemed incongruent with their perceived capacity: “*The test that students need to take to get into the French module is not realistic. I am fluent in French ... and I'm [now] an Elementary French Immersion teacher. When I took this test, I had to pay to repeat it and ended up scoring no higher than [Core] FSL for*

secondary” (Teacher–Western). For some teachers, concerns that the specialization in FSL was “too hard” or “too intense” prompted them to choose other pathways, or to opt out of FSL-specific components of their program. Others found the tests justified: *“Although the test was quite stressful, I believe it really gave me a benchmark in terms of my language skills”* (Teacher–Central). The differing views on the content, quality, and necessity of these tests require further examination.

This testing culture showed the potential for creating linguistic insecurity among francophone and non-francophone FSL teachers. Francophone teachers expressed linguistic insecurity in terms of a need for testing to help them remain *“vigilante pour garder une certaine qualité de langue”* (Teacher–Central). Non-francophone candidates questioned whether language-support initiatives were additional assessment measures and felt intimidated to speak in front of francophone colleagues. Coupled with the pervasive testing culture, this appears to reinforce lower confidence and concerns around language proficiency, as opposed to opportunities for ongoing language development. Participants reported these concerns producing “imposter syndrome,” feelings of “shame,” and a fear of parents finding out *“that you’re not a ‘superior’ speaker”* (Teacher–Eastern).

Participants speculated that the language testing culture, coupled with a lack of language development opportunities before, during, and after ITE, is a key factor in perpetuating the FSL teacher shortage. As one Central District rep stated, *“We currently have a standard of DELF certification in place for our Board. A target success percentage has been identified for the oral competency in their exam. It has become difficult in recent years to hire based on these criteria”* (District–Central). Participants recognized the benefit of extending a development-oriented approach across sectors when discussing alternative paths forward. For example, looking beyond teacher education, an FOE rep suggested that *“[language] support would be greatly amplified if it could continue at the District level once they are hired”* (FOE–Western).

Concurrently, and seemingly on the opposite end of this challenge, was an overt disregard for language proficiency testing and a development orientation. Participants in the Central and Western regions noted several variations in this phenomenon. For example, 13 ITE programs (10 Central, 3 Western) did not report any language proficiency requirements during admission, relying instead on grades from prior French courses: *“My B.Ed. program did not have any language requirements, which I thought was ridiculous. When I asked why not, they said that the GPA in French courses from undergrad sufficed and yet there were teachers in my B.Ed. program who could read and write in French but could hardly [speak] it”* (Teacher–Central). Again, this issue was often coupled with a lack of formal and informal opportunities to

speak French and develop language proficiency throughout the program: *“Some courses that were supposed to be offered in French were offered in English. Even the methodologies class was offered mostly in English”* (Teacher–Eastern). These challenges were particularly prominent in Anglo-dominant areas.

In this vein, Districts were criticized for failing to attend to language proficiency testing and development. Teachers might be hired without a language assessment: *“When I got hired in the secondary teaching [panel] in 2019, there was no French test whatsoever. As long as you have your FSL part one, you are qualified for Core to Immersion”* (Teacher–Central). These Districts, therefore, rely on the quality of graduates, as *“we’re in a situation where we have to hire. We have classrooms of children that need a teacher, so we really had to hire whoever”* (District–Western). Concurrently, like ITE, few or no professional learning opportunities seemed to be available for ongoing language development and support: *“We are not able to provide many French PD opportunities. Because they are not able to meet on a regular basis, when they do, it is rather artificial as they don’t know one another”* (District–Western). This lack of access to French is explored further in Gap #2.

Pedagogical Skills in FSL

I wish the FSL pedagogy component [of ITE] was more explicit. Outlining specific teaching strategies, content creation strategies, curriculum interpretation strategies, would have been helpful. (Teacher–Central)

I would have appreciated more hands-on courses beyond one curricular course. It would have been great to have an opportunity to build lessons and try teaching a language further than what was offered. (Teacher–Western)

The course offerings for FSL teacher candidates is quite limited compared to what their counterparts are offered in the English stream. (FOE–Central)

As described above, a threshold level of French language proficiency is expected to have been attained and maintained before ITE admission and hiring. On the other hand, findings show a general acceptance of a development-orientation to L2 pedagogical knowledge and skills over the trajectory of a new FSL teacher’s preparation and transition to the field. ITE coursework and practica were consistently identified as spaces where fundamental development of these skills should occur. However, website scan findings showed that ITE programs with an FSL specialization commonly offer only one to two courses related to FSL pedagogy. In many institutions, additional coursework is required to have an FSL (FI, in particular) specialization at the elementary level.

This trend highlights issues related to the content and language of the delivery of the learning experience. Many new FSL teachers expressed an overall desire to have more L2 methodology courses focused on practice (versus theory) – and more courses generally offered *en français* – as part of their ITE experience. Very few English-medium institutions offer courses on how to teach specific content areas (e.g., math, social sciences, arts) in French, which is an issue for future French Immersion teachers who have stated that they need support in developing the vocabulary and pedagogy for these classes. Beyond the general preference many teacher candidates have for “hands-on” pedagogical experiences, participating teachers were specifically interested in pedagogical content focused on the courses they will be teaching in the language they will be teaching.

Taking this dearth into account, one might expect that L2 pedagogical skills would then be further explored through professional learning opportunities offered to FSL teachers at the start of their careers, particularly since FSL candidates typically move from ITE to the classroom at a much faster rate than their colleagues in other disciplines. However, despite the expectation of ongoing development, findings show there are limited opportunities for FSL teachers to engage with FSL-specific learning and content delivered in French (see Gap #2).

Gap #2: Time and Access

Being a French teacher is my only access to the language... (Teacher–Central)

Quelques enseignant.e.s ont besoin de perfectionner leur français oral et écrit. Comment faire quand, déjà, les enseignants sont surchargés? (District–Eastern)

It is difficult to find enough “space” in our programs to offer the courses in French that we need. (FOE–Central)

Preparing future FSL teachers and developing practising educators with comprehensive knowledge and skills and a motivation to engage in ongoing professional learning echoed throughout the study. This emphasis spanned the timeline of FSL teacher development but was particularly prevalent when discussing ITE programming (coursework specifically) and the post-graduation transition to the field.

As described in Gap #1, despite the deficit-focused perspective, most stakeholders reported few (if any) opportunities for addressing the identified issues related to language proficiency and pedagogical skills development. Yet, calls for “more” are not without complications: having access to opportunities is a necessity, yet so too is the time and support required to develop, organize, and attend such initiatives. This is a central feature of the “avalanche”

contextualizing this report – like all new teachers, new FSL teachers deserve access to opportunities to develop their skill sets before these challenges engulf them; however, with FSL being as marginalized as it is, a common reason for nothing being offered is a lack of time – which no one person can provide “more” of. Here, we report further on the confounding gap that emerged from the data related to time and access issues, comparing how this gap materializes in relation to language proficiency and professional learning, both during and after ITE programming.

Professional Learning During ITE

Findings show that limited opportunities for professional learning begin in teacher education, with most teacher participants reporting no opportunities for informal learning for FSL in their ITE programs. For new FSL teachers, in particular, access to FSL-focused professional learning beyond their FSL methods course was commonly in short supply:

My teacher education program did not offer anything geared toward FSL teacher candidates except for the FSL course that was offered in one term. This really limited the amount of training I received for teaching in a French classroom, as they would not offer French placements. (Teacher–Western)

The website scans showed that, most commonly, ITE programs offer one to two courses related to FSL pedagogy. In many institutions, additional coursework is required in their program to have an FSL specialization at the elementary level. In a few cases, this specialization is an add-on at the end of or after the program. This contrasts with those in middle or high school level streams, where these FSL courses are included as part of the teachable subject workload. Secondary streams were also more likely to receive two or three courses. This may help explain why secondary teachers were significantly more likely to agree that they were prepared for the language and pedagogical requirements in their interviews than elementary teachers.

FOE participants reported that there was “not enough time” to do everything they wanted during ITE programs. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of support, personnel, and spaces to provide programming, particularly in shorter ITE programs:

We need more instructors and resources to be able to offer sections of general education courses in French: e.g., equity & education, philosophy of education, subject-specific methods. (FOE–Central)

Time is a considerable factor. My institution's program does not always allow for adequate time in the short 2 and 3 credit courses. (FOE–Western)

Motivated FOE reps were then required to run activities outside of class time to address important topics. Therefore, it is unsurprising that teachers consistently noted minimal co-curricular professional learning opportunities during ITE; 68% of survey respondents could not identify any co-curricular opportunities in their program. Teachers are also not always able to attend professional learning offered beyond the FOE; 64% of teachers reported that no funding was available to attend local professional conferences and/or professional learning sessions on FSL education.

However, a reassuring trend was found in the quantitative data. When reflecting on their professional learning in ITE, new teachers (i.e., those with less than five years in the field) were significantly more likely to agree that their FSL courses and specialization were grounded in current research and taught them how to critically reflect on practice and question taken-for-granted assumptions about language learning than their more experienced colleagues.

Professional Learning After ITE

This lack of time to develop skills and competencies related to FSL is complicated by the swift onboarding and transition that these teachers experience. In light of the shortage, induction into the field is much faster for FSL teachers, who often bypass supply teaching and are hired into their own classrooms. While teachers often appreciated being in-demand and the employment security that results, findings suggest these teachers may need more intensive or focused support during their early years.

I wish that there was a more comprehensive mentorship program for beginning teachers. I did not spend any time substituting, and I don't really know whether substitute work would have prepared me for a full-time classroom. Definitely a practicum does not fully prepare one for an entire classroom. (Teacher–Eastern)

Whereas with an FSL background you kind of go to the contract route much faster, which is certainly a benefit. But because of that there's a little bit less time to get your feet wet straight out of the gate, you're kind of thrown right into it and expected to run with it and then with that there's been little support surrounding those things. (Teacher–Central)

Inevitably, the issues with access to professional learning and resources after ITE point to the issue of lack of time. Contrary to the previous section where lack of time was linked to the demanding ITE program, lack of time after ITE is directly linked to busy, individual FSL teachers, their workloads (e.g., translating their materials), and the struggle to find time for professional learning that is only provided outside of working hours:

Budget cuts and a lack of substitute teachers led to the withdrawal of those supports to teachers, who now need to make the commitment to acquiring FSL skills on their own time, along with many other professional growth requirements. (District–Central)

In the face of limited supply teachers, there was a concerning trend of expecting FSL teachers to engage with relevant professional learning on their own time — evenings, weekends, and during the summer. The onus is on them to find and participate in these initiatives in addition to their workload. Regardless of the availability of professional learning options, this trend appears to result in FSL teacher disengagement from professional learning, with one expressing it simply: “I do not feel like I have any time or energy for PL [professional learning]” (Teacher–Central). Therefore, only those who felt they were able to take on the additional responsibility of professional learning pursued those opportunities:

I know in my area there are some retired teachers that are hired by the District to give French courses to teachers, but it's really hard for some people to get to. I don't have kids. I was pretty flexible and could go to these things, but there are no incentives outside of me just improving my French. (Teacher–Eastern)

Another issue was that the professional learning offered to FSL teachers was not L2/French-specific. For instance, Districts reported a lot was happening concerning inclusion (e.g., English Language Learner Coach) and specifically within anti-racist education (e.g., workshops for all employees, Black Coaches, Indigenous Coaches); however, they admitted that it was not FSL-specific and most of it was only offered in English, meaning only English-language resources were made available. However, participants in the Eastern region did report some formal professional learning sessions were targeted to FSL teachers and offered in French (e.g., neurolinguistic approach, the new French immersion curriculum). An additional question was raised in focus group discussions from the Eastern region about how graduate studies (i.e., Master of Education programs) could fit into or be recognized as ongoing professional learning for FSL teachers.

Districts also reported starting to offer FSL literacy workshops (e.g., phonological/phonemic awareness). However, one District rep noticed that professional learning from FSL-specific pedagogical workshops was not being applied in the classroom (e.g., Roy Lyster's work in corrective feedback), and they needed to add coaching/follow-up for it to be realized in practice. Participants also reported that funding for initiatives (e.g., attending conferences, delivering professional learning, community initiatives) is sometimes available, but when it is

difficult or cumbersome to apply for it, teachers simply do not engage.

In terms of the systemic operationalization of professional learning offered in Boards, much of the quality and amount of FSL coaching and professional learning happening in French seems to depend on ambitious or generous individuals in those positions. No system-based solutions were reported. In addition, participating FSL teachers noted that not all leaders (e.g., principals and administrators) speak French and that many are unaware of the challenges they face: “[We must] make sure principals are offered PL on supporting their FSL teachers” (Teacher–Eastern). This sentiment was evident in the data from non-teacher participants, who felt that FSL teachers do not necessarily need unique supports: “All PD supports and initiatives are designed to reach every staff member, regardless of grade level or subject” (District–Central). However, one area of discussion that heavily implicated the professional learning of FSL teachers was language development, which we explore below.

Language Development During ITE

While teacher candidates in French-medium institutions (e.g., Université Sainte Anne, Glendon College, Campus Saint Jean) typically receive 100% of their ITE courses in French, most English-medium ITE programs face challenges offering content in French. Website scan findings show that English-medium institutions offer around 10% of courses in French during the program. No English-only institutions offer 100% of FSL teacher preparation in French. Most English universities offer one to two courses in French; in many cases, only the FSL methods or L2 theory courses discussed above are in French. A few do not guarantee any courses taught in French, although they try to do so, while others try to provide up to 80% of their content in French. Our findings revealed common barriers related to access (e.g., capacity, funding, location) and time.

Capacity relates to finding French-speaking instructors who can deliver ITE content in French or integrate course components or individual assignments in French. Contact with the French language during coursework and practicum immensely impacted teacher candidates’ language development. Participants reported these opportunities as providing consistent exposure to and use of the language in everyday professional and personal life. At the same time, it goes beyond simply engaging with the language as a language learner would. FSL teachers “need to engage with the language of the discipline in French in order to be able to teach it” (Teacher–Central).

Funding is not readily available to support French language and FSL methodology courses, pointing to the lack of overall valorization of French within programs: “Nothing en français.

So our education courses, we focused a lot on curriculum”

(Teacher–Central). Findings also showed that French-specific modules or coursework are often delegated to limited-term or contract instructors, positions that are not sustained over the long-term and may also be dependent on annual government funding. While instructors can bring professional experience into these courses, it can also restrict program cohesion and consistency and limit the overall integration of courses into the larger ITE program.

In terms of location, a francophone ITE setting was seen by participants as supporting a more engaged and higher quantity of French language exposure and use and the ability to live in French. If an ITE university has a notable francophone presence or nearby community, there may be more accessible opportunities to engage teacher candidates in the language; however, questions remained as to how FOEs were utilizing or encouraging contact with local French communities during the ITE program:

Our students can take courses at [a francophone institution]. They can study abroad in France. We have a small but vibrant francophone community, and there are events and a little French quarter around the campus. But you really have to make an effort to seek those things out. And so, some of our students do, but I suspect most of them could be doing a lot more of that. (FOE–Western)

Finally, time within the program emerged as an obstacle in itself, given the packed schedules of ITE programs, which do not leave space or energy for providing supplementary coursework or informal support for language development. Nevertheless, findings revealed some types of language-focused learning happening during ITE, as outlined below.

Types of Language-Focused Learning During ITE

Language-focused content is offered in various forms, including elective courses and extracurricular activities such as *café conversations* or one-on-one tutoring support. While exposure to the language is the fundamental motivation, teacher educators increasingly recognize the need to centre language courses on aspects of instruction, with topics attending to pedagogical content and professional language use.

Remedial language development most often took the form of a course, in some cases a non-credit course or pre-program component. As discussed in Gap #1, this orientation to language development is perceived by teacher participants as conveying a strong sense of surveillance in terms of who has access to and is seen to succeed as a French teacher. It is typically described as centring on “*les erreurs communes, les anglicismes*” or explicitly targeting “weaknesses.” As one

participant noted, these programs are sometimes rationalized to avoid conflict with other FSL teachers:

You know, and I had some — I'm just gonna say it — francophone mentors who would terrorize the [teacher candidates] because of their French. It had nothing to do with their pedagogy; it was all about the mistakes they made in their French. (FOE–Western)

Some (typically optional) initiatives aimed at developing teacher candidates' professional identity as French-language speakers and educators. Language support was discussed as situated within a larger educational trajectory. Offerings aligned with the school's focus on communicating rather than *"les corriger tout le temps"* (FOE–Central). Similarly, other participants spoke of ongoing language supports offered throughout their ITE programs, often grouping teacher candidates according to language level to create a comfortable zone of peer interaction. Examples included cultural and social events, cohorts, and workshops.

Language Development After ITE

Access to language development after graduation and/or hiring included optional and, to a lesser extent, mandatory programs and discussion of FSL-specific professional learning. Findings showed that professional learning centred on French language development for teachers in the workplace usually pertains to optional summer or weekend programming in the form of institutes or workshops and camps. It also includes programs like *Explore* or other study abroad or immersive experiences set in a francophone region in Canada or abroad. These opportunities are funded through various federal and provincial/territorial funding programs and offer a mix of language immersion and cultural and pedagogical learning activities. An important feature of these language-learning initiatives is that they are often sought out by teachers, especially those in rural areas where little language learning is offered.

Another noteworthy type of professional language support is collaborative mentorship, which connects teachers with colleagues or creates a French-speaking support network. These opportunities may involve conversation groups formed to connect only second-language speakers of French to avoid feelings of intimidation. Many participating teachers expressed the need to connect as “adult speakers,” given that many spend all day interacting in French with children. These networks are also motivated by the need to valorize the FSL teacher community, *“donner l'opportunité de se rencontrer, et parler en français... de découvrir les ressources que les autres profs utilisent”* (Teacher–Central).

A key finding related to language development after ITE focused on participant emphasis on the value of collaboration and community in FSL education as being useful for more than the promotion of pedagogical knowledge development or drawing FSL teachers out of isolation. Rather, collaboration and communication emerged as crucial to providing the opportunity for FSL teachers to use and function in French, i.e., engaging with French-speaking colleagues. We will speak more about this in Gap #4.

Aside from these optional programs, a few participants mentioned mandated District- or Ministry-implemented initiatives aimed at improving the French language competency of teachers with lower levels of French. These formal surveillance-based language programs seem to involve a contractual commitment from the teacher and may constitute a condition of ongoing employment (e.g., Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program [NTIP]). Access to these programs was not described in great detail, with mentions focusing mainly on the application process being difficult to navigate. Some participants mentioned a lessening concern with maintaining *“personal proficiency,”* citing a lack of incentives or having landed a permanent contract.

Compounding the challenge of accessing professional learning focused on FSL specifically, participants noted that when such professional learning was accessible, it was rarely offered in French. The same comments were made about access to resources, most of which are presented in English even when geared to French immersion teachers and students (albeit in some cases, this may have been because teachers had a low level of confidence with their French, further indicating how issues with language proficiency become compounded across different aspects of teachers' careers). While many lamented the work involved in having to translate documentation and instructional materials, some noted that even when French resources are available, there is often a lack of interest or ability to integrate these into Anglo-dominant spaces:

Il y a très peu de vie sociale qui se passe en français dans notre région : candidats n'ont pas l'occasion de pratiquer la langue dans le contexte social. (District–Eastern)

An additional challenge — participants reported that when professional learning is offered in French, the language can be an obstacle to teachers with lower proficiency. Linguistic insecurity among FSL teachers prevents them from wanting to partake in leading or even participating in professional learning workshops. Teacher participants emphasized the importance of time and how they wished they had more time to partake in more professional learning days and activities that would allow them to connect with other French language teachers. Still, the conundrum of optimizing the time on offer

in a more formal manner, and seeing results, remained at the heart of this issue:

Many of our teachers express insecurity about their linguistic proficiency and often feel that formal language courses require a disproportionate amount of time invested for the language proficiency gained. (District–Western)

This gap highlights how time and access issues emerge throughout FSL teacher preparation. Language and pedagogy issues echo before and after ITE, and present notable barriers for all stakeholders. Considering how resources are implicated in this challenge is the focus of Gap #3.

Gap #3: Resources — Material and Human

I kind of felt lost about what to teach and there were not a lot of resources readily available. (Teacher–Eastern)

Because our class had so many different types of language teachers, I didn't feel that I got a lot of resources or practical stuff to take to the classroom. Most of my materials I have had to find by myself, purchase myself, or make. (Teacher–Western)

A lack of resources — e.g., funding, supplies, lesson plans, books, reference materials — is a frequent issue in the research literature. Findings from all participants added a novel nuance to this systemic challenge — the distinction between “material” and “human” resources. Findings show a clear and chronic shortage of human resources in the field of FSL education across Canada, both at the ITE and School District levels. This has clear implications for the Human Resource Departments that organize the workforce in each context and highlights the scarcity of overall human capital (i.e., knowledge and skills) for FSL teacher preparation and professional learning. Overall, resources emerged in our findings as a central feature of the “avalanche,” with the constant onus put on FSL teachers to adapt material resources for language and content (additional labour that often goes unnoticed), paired with a chronic lack of human resources at each stage along the FSL teacher preparation highway.

Material Resources

Finding and accessing adequate resources is a well-known challenge for FSL teachers. This trend still held true for our participants, with teachers most frequently selecting “completely disagree” when asked if they were provided with sufficient pedagogical materials during ITE. Features of this gap noted by participants in this study included the following:

1. Resources that are interesting and at the appropriate level for students of varying grades and linguistic competencies

2. Materials that are adapted for students with special needs
3. Materials that reflect diversity and promote inclusivity
4. Subject-specific material (i.e., science content for immersive programs)
5. Lesson, unit, and assessment design ideas
6. Materials that reflect current pedagogical approaches (e.g., neurolinguistic, action-oriented)
7. Knowing where to look for these resources (i.e., social media [Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest])

The obligation to adapt resources is constant, as one teacher described:

You might find an amazing resource in French, but it's way too hard for the kids that you're using it with, who are in French Immersion or Core French. So you're constantly tweaking things in order for the understanding to be there. (Teacher–Central)

Participants described the consistent need to adapt existing resources at two levels — language and content. While teachers of all disciplines must adapt resources to their students, FSL teachers must also consider the linguistic features of the resources. Participating FSL teachers identified a common frustration of having to translate resources from English to French. When suitable options are unavailable, translation becomes an essential strategy for making lessons work. Teachers reported that translation requires a substantial amount of time and that this extra labour is often unnoticed or overlooked. Other teachers or administrators may also ask FSL teachers to translate emails, announcements, and other texts for the school:

[It's] unpaid time to get the work done, to translate documents... I have absolutely no background in science whatsoever, but there was just no one else, right? ... French is my second language as well, so now I'm doing a subject that I'm already unfamiliar with where all the resources are in English. (Teacher–Central)

There are so many good ideas and activities and things to promote learning, but it's all in English. [The District] are piloting a new [English] platform... The French teachers are having a hard time because that's twice the amount of work, first to translate it and then communicate it to students, whereas the English teachers are loving the resource. (Teacher–Eastern)

I'd say another frustrating bit is that, at least in my school, the English teachers receive significantly more prep time in

a day than the French teachers. The English teachers don't really seem to understand the amount of preparation and work that it would take in order to just translate something that's given to us. I feel like if the relationship with prep time were reversed, [our work would] be more achievable. (Teacher–Eastern)

The realities of limited resources, translating materials, and finding solutions on their own often began in ITE:

From a resource perspective, all of the resources provided were in English, which is good for context but does not facilitate implementation into an FSL class. (Teacher–Central)

The [ITE] program could have done more to prepare us with resources and pedagogical methodologies that we could use to teach language and culture. (Teacher–Central)

Just overall, I had a vague idea of what effective FSL teaching looked like but no resources to truly help me. (Teacher–Western)

Findings showed that, despite this constant obligation and pressure, FSL teachers were seeking out collaborative and community-based resource sharing as a way to ease the burden:

Using shared resources and having shared assessment practices has been essential to my career introduction. (Teacher–Central)

We have a French Language Resource centre which supports all of the School Districts in our area. The mentorship, PD, resources, and support that I have received from them have helped develop my practice tremendously. (Teacher–Western)

Participants were thankful for dedicated spaces for FSL teachers to collaborate and share resources. These opportunities were often provided by external groups (e.g., IDÉLLO). However, some Districts or schools were also creating their own databases: *"I keep up the database of resources, ask people what they need, and endeavour to provide it either locally, outside the division or through purchased resources"* (District–Central).

Nonetheless, sharing among teachers is not always straightforward. Participants critiqued the way these potentially disconnected lessons and activities are used in classrooms:

Ils prennent leurs idées de [réseaux sociaux], mais, ils n'ont pas de but. Et puis ils ne savent pas quoi évaluer. Ça tient

[les étudiants] occupés, certainement. Mais, c'est pas comme ça qu'ils vont apprendre à communiquer de façon logique et critique, et avec le vocabulaire... (District–Central)

A point of contention was also raised around inequitable sharing — some teachers felt they contributed to resource pools, while others only took from the groups. These are just two examples that complicate the "simple" solution of material resource databases and collaborations.

Human Resources

Support in the form of human resources emerged as a key factor that was lacking at each stage of the FSL teacher preparation highway. Being able to find and retain French-speaking staff was identified by all participant groups as a consistent stumbling block to optimizing FSL teacher preparation and responding to the unique needs of new FSL teachers.

In terms of ITE, many FOE reps reported limited qualified instructors to teach ITE courses in French and/or infuse FSL themes into other courses in the program (*"Finding enough French-speaking instructors is difficult"* [FOE–Western]). Without this knowledge base and a point person to coordinate, the opportunities for FSL teacher preparation in FOEs are limited.

For Districts, hiring FSL teachers was described as a complicated process in the context of the teacher shortage. Many District reps reported having to hire unqualified individuals for FSL positions. This included hiring those with any amount of French-language competency or, as a Central District rep described, sometimes any *"adults with a pulse."* Some District participants felt they had "lost control" of the situation, as too many teachers in FSL positions require substantial support that the District ultimately cannot provide.

These human resource challenges are complicated by a lack of French-speaking staff and administrators who understand FSL:

We often have to hire based on strong pedagogy and the perceived ability to speak French. We currently do not have French-speaking staff in the Human Resources Department, so the hiring process is difficult and not always consistent. (District–Western)

[We must] implicate HR into this conversation. Because they're not coming through a pedagogy lens, they're not coming through an FSL lens, they're coming through fill rates, and just wanting to have teachers in classes. (Teacher–Central)

For FSL teachers, the lack of human resources, centred on the absence of a community with which to share or co-create curriculum resources, is seen as a major detractor from their work:

The reality for me is that very little of the PD in our School Board is geared toward FSL teachers, and what is has very limited availability. I am the only FSL teacher in my building. I often feel completely alone and like it's on me entirely to figure it out because there are very few supports in place. (Teacher-Central)

"Going it alone" was commonly described as resulting in FSL teachers feeling the strain of (re)creating resources for their classrooms. Findings showed that this situation is compounded by the lack of qualified FSL supply teachers available to help "free up" full-time teachers for professional learning opportunities. Participants noted that this often meant that FSL teachers could not receive release time for any opportunities during work hours. As a result, a lot of PD happens on teachers' personal, unpaid time.

When FSL teachers are provided with a supply teacher (for example, when they are sick), findings shed light on the rarity of such human resource support being provided in French:

The other challenge... we have a shortage of French substitutes... So, when we offered PL [professional learning] sessions, we had to be really careful around numbers because... if a teacher is out for professional learning, that means they might have an English teacher in the classroom. (District-Eastern)

We do not have one single substitute [teacher] in the entire division that can cover for French. So, when any of us are sick, it's English. It's been very difficult to find people to do a practicum in [our District]. (District-Western)

As a consequence of not receiving a qualified supply teacher to take over their classroom, participating FSL teachers reported feeling additional pressure and frustration about having to prepare a class for their replacement when the supply teacher does not speak French.

Looking beyond the classroom, a lack of FSL coaches, specialists, resource teachers, and Educational Assistants (EAs) was another gap in human resources. Budget cuts meant some of these coaching and specialist positions were reassigned or removed, while a lack of in-classroom support for students with special needs was seen as a longstanding issue for FSL:

EAs who help students with needs are instructed to take their break during French, so the French teacher is left with no support. (Cross-appointed District/Teacher-Central)

I have to be the French resource teacher in my area because I'm the only French teacher. (Teacher-Central)

The lack of human resources — reachable colleagues, dedicated support staff, and understanding leadership — reinforces an image of FSL as a solitary endeavour. Without collaborative efforts to address the material and human resources, FSL teachers feel that they are struggling through the avalanche alone. We discuss this framing of FSL as individualist versus community-oriented in Gap #4.

Gap #4: Teaching as an Individual vs. Relational Process

As discussed in the previous gaps, FSL teachers are often left to pursue language development and professional learning opportunities alone and on their own time. A metaphor offered by several teacher participants was to equate FSL teaching to being on "an island." Generally speaking, beginning FSL teachers pointed out that "nobody is providing feedback" once they are in the classroom their first few years. Consequently, new FSL teachers feel even more alone and isolated:

I believe we can retain more FSL teachers if they enter a community that embraces them and supports them so they do not feel like they are struggling and working in isolation. (District-Central)

FSL is isolating. Many schools only have one FSL teacher, which can be stressful and overwhelming. (Teacher-Central)

A central feature of the avalanche contextualizing these findings is that the onus is largely on individual teachers to find colleagues, mentors, and collaborators. As a result, discussions of mentorship and collaboration were frequent and impassioned throughout the data. Specifically, findings showed that new FSL teachers significantly value the relational dimensions of the profession to deal with the isolation they reported experiencing. By viewing and realizing FSL teaching as a relational process and profession, participants expressed hope that numerous issues in the field could be alleviated. Here we explore the potential, benefits, and challenges associated with supporting community-oriented approaches to FSL teaching.

Informal Mentorship

Informal mentorship refers to (mostly) self-organized, organic, teacher-directed collaborations and communities

of support. These communities could have been small, such as one-on-one relationships with an experienced teacher, or larger groups of beginning teachers supporting one another. Many of these beginning teachers used the word “lucky” to describe how they felt about finding these types of mentors. For example, some FSL teacher participants shared similar experiences of a positive, informal relationship with an experienced teacher:

I had the most wonderful mentor that I could have asked for. My colleague has been teaching for close to 20 years... we were the two Grade 1 classrooms, and she teamed up with me... she shared literally everything with me, and I was really open to receiving feedback and advice from her and it worked really well... If it hadn't been for our personalities matching up and her willingness to help, I wouldn't have had that opportunity. I mean, I had a really successful first year and I attribute a lot of that to the support that she gave me. (Teacher–Eastern)

Larger communities of support also served as a network to uplift and encourage their members, including new FSL teachers. Groups of experienced colleagues at a school, connections with other FSL teachers in the District, and online networks were common examples:

I have quite a few amazing staff at the school where I'm working at currently that are really pushing me to improve my French. They won't speak to me in English at all because they know that I'm trying to improve my French... so it's nice to have co-workers that kind of push you. (Teacher–Eastern)

Fifty of my Facebook friends are former students. So, if I need to send a message out, I send it to all of them, and they come running and they support each other, and I invite them to speak to my current classes... but I think it's a real effort to build a mentorship network like that. (FOE–Western)

Some FOE reps viewed the ITE program as a venue for forming professional communities of support and hoped that this kind of support would encourage teachers to form these connections as they begin their careers. Though FOEs seemed primarily concerned with the formal mentoring that takes place during the practicum, others reported the benefits of less structured, community-oriented mentorship:

Parfois des invités deviennent des mentors lorsque — tu sais, des profs qui sont très forts, dynamiques en général et puis souvent les candidats les — ils ont accès à leur courriel, par exemple, ils sont d'accord, ils commencent une conversation puis ça devient une relation professionnelle. (FOE–Central)

So, we originally thought if only we can give them the language to function in their classes, then everything would be peachy keen. And then slowly we realized that the first obstacle before tackling that was giving them a sense of belonging, a sense of community. (FOE–Western)

Particularly in ITE programs organized around cohort-models, mentorship was something that “naturally” emerged:

Mais, le mentorat pour nous, dans le programme, je dirais le fait d'être regroupé par cohortes, puis il y a quelqu'un qui dirige la cohorte, déjà il y a un genre de mentorat parce que il y a une dynamique quand-même un peu informelle, je pense que ça doit les aider à avoir comme un point d'encrage. (FOE–Central)

District reps also talked extensively about mentorship. However, their perspective as those who recruit and attempt to retain FSL teachers was unique. Although this group did not prioritize informal communities of support, many spoke to the acute need for beginning teacher mentorship and the opportunities that Districts and Ministries currently offer for new teachers in general. This group of participants most often voiced the more formalized approach to mentorship. This top-down approach to mentorship is explored below.

Formal Mentorship

Formal, top-down mentorship was often linked to District- and Ministry-level initiatives, such as teacher induction programs and the work of coaches, in the form of mentor-mentee relationships or compulsory professional learning sessions for new FSL teachers. Part of the role of many District reps was organizing or directly mentoring new FSL teachers. There were usually one of two goals for formal mentorship: linguistic mentorship, for using and developing language competence, and general pedagogical mentorship:

C'est un programme de perfectionnement linguistique. Donc, tout nouvel enseignant peut bénéficier d'un support, d'un mentor linguistique... On paye un mentor linguistique à l'enseignant jusqu'à une heure et demi par semaine... on a essayé dans le passé toutes sortes de choses... On voit qu'il y a des beaux progrès à l'intérieur d'une année d'avoir des mentors linguistiques... Je pense que nos enseignants trouvent ça plus flexible; ils peuvent parler à leur mentor à l'heure du midi, après l'école, en soirée... (District–Eastern)

My NTIP mentor is a French consultant for the Board. So, she gave me a lot of quality advice about structuring a French program, and yeah so I was very lucky there. (Teacher–Central)

I think that I was lucky in my practicum to have both of my associate teachers who were teaching within French, so I had resource people to go to immediately to ask questions and kind of understand that context. I know that a couple of my colleagues didn't necessarily have that. At the Faculty, I also felt that there were lots of people that I could go speak with, so that was really nice. (Teacher-Central)

Various challenges were reported related to these mentorship initiatives. For Districts, challenges included leads/mentors/coaches being spread too thin (i.e., human resources). One District rep from the Central region described how coaches could provide both pedagogical and linguistic support for FSL teachers, but that there are not enough personnel to cover the number of schools (and, therefore, FSL teachers) in the region. Participants also sometimes grappled with the distinctions between the various "job titles" — for example, "mentor" versus "coach" versus "lead." The "coach" described by some participants is seen as a much more structured, specific, paid position (e.g., "It is their work") versus a "mentor" in a community of practice, which is often more informal.

This act of defining, conceptualizing, and enacting what should happen in these formal mentoring relationships requires further exploration. Part of this conceptualization of mentorship related directly to the notions of formal versus informal (and paid versus unpaid) and involved an explicit explanation by the participants of the various job titles within the realm of mentorship.

In FOEs, formalized mentorship opportunities during the ITE program were viewed mostly from the point of view of the practicum:

En stage, d'après ce que j'entends aussi, la plupart établissent une relation justement de mentorat avec l'enseignant accompagnateur. Donc je pense que, pendant leur programme ils se sentent accompagnés par différentes personnes, puis à un moment donné, bien, ils doivent choisir une plus que l'autre que sa personnalité ou quoi que ce soit. (FOE-Central)

For most cases, unless it was a bad match to begin with, I'm finding that that partner teacher becomes a friend for life of the stagiaire. So, they remain together, they, you know, connect, they share resources... (FOE-Western)

Ensuring good practicum teacher-teacher candidate matches was voiced as both a priority and a concern during FSL teacher preparation. The relational aspect of practicum emerged as being central to optimizing its benefits:

I've heard from teacher candidates this term about power struggles and power dynamics and that they are afraid of their advisor... It's beyond me to hear that... so the first step in mentoring, you need trust and relationships... I go to the mentoring [provincial] meetings, and the three basic concepts are support, challenge, and offering a professional vision. Right? You're not just giving them the recipe book, but you're having learning-focused conversations and that the answer is within them, and your job is to bring it out. (FOE-Western)

In the case of FSL, the quality of practicum matches is influenced by pedagogical factors and linguistic considerations (in addition to matches being influenced by a host of other factors like personality and compatibility). Some participants spoke about their perceptions of the challenges pre-service FSL teachers face during their placement, including linguistic criticism on the part of the mentor teacher (as seen in an earlier FOE quote) as well as general sentiments of inferiority felt by Anglophone FSL teacher candidates in particular, as this District quote shows:

The new FSL teachers feel inferior when they compare themselves to their Francophone peers. Often, these mentorships are not successful: Francophone teacher + Anglophone teacher candidate who learned French. (District-Central)

Even with a desire from some FOEs to move the practicum away from a top-down, surveillance-oriented approach toward a more supportive and collaborative approach, another potential barrier was finding mentors. One Central participant described this as the search for a "unicorn" mentor teacher:

In terms of mentoring novice teachers, we don't really have anything... All the things mentioned, like not enough time, not enough money, not enough energy, not enough value put on French. When you do find a good mentor, they are spread too thin, it truly is a unicorn to find. (FOE-Central)

FOE reps also discussed the need to develop FSL mentorship initiatives with partners in the field (e.g., Districts and Ministries). Again, speaking to the complexities of the context, these initiatives were sometimes met with challenges, despite solid planning and funding. In the Central and Western regions, concerns were expressed regarding a reluctance to provide FSL-specific mentorship programs, with the view that these programs should be aimed more at beginning teachers. Thus, despite funding and structures in place, there is an acknowledgement that supports are not always available for FSL teachers.

While FSL teacher participants mostly shared positive experiences related to informal mentorship groups and relationships, talk of formalized mentorship programs centred on concerns regarding the lack of such programs or an inability to access them and unsuccessful matches (where such programs did exist). Many struggled with the absence of a robust relational network despite formalized, top-down efforts:

Il n'y avait pas vraiment un réseau, pour aller et vérifier ce qu'une personne fait, ce que l'autre personne fait. Il y avait des programmes qui étaient suggérés par mon mentor, mais, peut-être les conseils ont dit, « Oh, non, on ne veut pas utiliser ça, là » alors, il y avait quand-même beaucoup de défis. (Teacher–Central)

I've often wished that there was some sort of program for teachers between, you know, zero and three years of experience where routine check-ins are mandatory from a mentor... I wound up being just self-sufficient in being confused. I think that's something that would just guide step-by-step through an entire year, and not necessarily somebody who's fully responsible for one person, but maybe as a literacy leader coach or something like that could be responsible for a swath of teachers and perform routine check-ins and guidance and sort of help to make sure that things like a long-term plan gets done. (Teacher–Eastern)

Mentorship priorities (linguistic, pedagogical, or otherwise) were typically set depending on goals at certain points in time or depending on the participant's perspective. For example, linguistic mentorship was a priority for FOE reps. While they viewed their primary role as equipping teacher candidates in terms of pedagogical knowledge, they also saw the necessity of providing future FSL teachers with a collaborative environment for language support. Meanwhile, new FSL teacher participants recall being less concerned about receiving language mentoring during their ITE preparation and were more focused on mentorship related to their immediate needs, such as using curriculum, finding French resources, classroom management, and other beginning teacher priorities. Once FSL teachers had obtained a position, their attention remained honed on the need for mentorship connected to pedagogy, curriculum, and professional wellness (and not language mentorship).

It is understandable within the current structure that responsibility for these programs is seen as shifting from one group to another over time. However, in the absence of regional and national dialogue, each participant group attempts to address immediate needs that may or may not align with the goals of other stakeholders. We therefore provide a discussion of responsibility in Gap #5.

Gap #5: Taking Responsibility — From Individual to Shared

Divisions need to apply pressure where it is needed in order to accomplish these changes [toward systematic reform]. I need to keep bringing this up with each new administration, consistently emphasizing the importance of these steps in our quest to improve our division's situation. (District–Central)

We need to work together with Districts to support both in-service and pre-service [teachers and provide] linguistic and pedagogical development because there is a shortage. (FOE–Eastern)

I have spent many years mentoring teachers provincially, nationally, and internationally — face-to-face and online — in response to the need for collaboration and support. I will continue in this [voluntary] role, with or without support from my School Board. (Teacher–Central)

It is clear from Gaps #1–4 that much of the onus falls on FSL teachers to develop and maintain their language proficiency, pedagogical skills, and a collaborative culture. Findings also show that new FSL teachers learn about this obligation while preparing for the field; developing and maintaining these skill sets emerges as a challenge from the beginning of their ITE programming. Consequently, teachers are represented as the “end of the line” when resolving issues in FSL and are largely left to find their own ways to survive the impending avalanche. This reality continues despite the reported calls to “do more” in this regard.

A noteworthy dynamic linked to “responsibility” emerged from our data, which we feel warrants inclusion in this report as the final gap, particularly as stakeholders (including CASLT) consider how they will respond to the issues and recommendations linked to the other gaps. Participant reports on FSL teacher preparation and the transition to the field were laden with a continuum of emotional reactions to the avalanche and specific challenges mentioned in Gaps #1–4. While the consensus was that the state of FSL education throughout the highway is far from ideal, talk among each participant group about finding a way toward reparation and prevention of the avalanche was commonly met with feelings of everything from a desire to take action, to despair, to learned helplessness, and, finally, acceptance that this is “just the way it is.” As the following sections show, the extent and division of responsibility among individuals and groups remain unclear — and must be considered if impactful change is going to be made over the long-term.

Individual Responsibility

Stakeholders were understandably focused on their own responsibilities linked to the timeline and process of preparing FSL teachers — e.g., FOE reps provide training within the confines of ITE, District reps oversee ongoing professional learning in the field, etc. FSL teachers also acknowledged bearing an individual responsibility for developing their skill sets and engaging in initiatives put forth by District and FOE reps. However, as the reported findings up to this point have demonstrated, individual responsibility is enacted in the context of the avalanche, which jeopardizes its effectiveness over the short- and long-term (particularly for new FSL teachers).

What has emerged is an accepted practice of dividing responsibility for FSL teacher preparation into discrete aspects that are either neatly within or outside of the purview of each particular group.

This partitioning appears to result in a lack of connection, critical dialogue, and continuity with what comes before and after these siloed responsibilities. Emerging from this confusion is a tendency for participants to “point fingers” and assign responsibility elsewhere for solutions to identified challenges related to the preparation of FSL teachers. For example, some FOE reps pointed to the pre-ITE phase as needing to bear responsibility for addressing issues around the language proficiency of applicants to their program:

Ayant dit cela, les élèves qui s’inscrivent à l’université, c’est un peu hors du contrôle des universités. Alors, je dirais que... ça tombe un peu sur mes épaules comme chargé de cours [à gérer]. (FOE–Central)

As it is, the majority of our candidates present with bare minimum requirements... Teaching experience in French is not a substitute for demonstrated [language] proficiency... our hope is to increase the level of proficiency of [applicants]. (FOE–Western)

Some District reps also pointed to other participant groups as being responsible for the shortcomings of ITE graduates and the lack of uptake of professional learning opportunities:

I don’t think it’s enough... I think [FOEs should be] doing more to improve language development. (District–Eastern)

Recruitment by Faculties of Education needs to start early — recruiting in high schools to promote French teaching opportunities in Ontario schools. Faculties of Ed need a strong pool of faculty [members] who are able to teach FSL teachers. (District–Central)

Les possibilités sont là, mais les enseignants y ont peu recours pour améliorer leurs habiletés langagières ou leur pédagogie en FLS. C’est peut-être parce qu’ils signent des contrats permanents dès leur arrivée ici. (District–Western)

Important to discussions related to system-level challenges and the avalanche was the finding that almost all stakeholders highlighted the responsibility that Ministries of Education must bear to assist them in fulfilling their individual responsibilities:

The government really can set the tone and set the stage; they can bring teacher candidates pouring into programs — it requires a will, but it also requires money. (FOE–Western)

[We must] persuade governments and universities to make meaningful changes that will have a major impact on [the District’s] ability to attract fully qualified personnel to teach French at all levels. (District–Central)

It’s clear what I think we should change... [but] that all starts at the government level. (Teacher–Central)

In most of the data linked to this gap, the pointing of fingers came with a certain level of hypocrisy. Participants acknowledged how the avalanche affected their ability to optimize their individual responsibilities; however, a similar level of acknowledgement for how the same avalanche might be affecting the ability of others to fulfill theirs was lacking. Stakeholders seemed to be expecting others to do more — asking, “*Why can’t they just...*” or “*If only they would...*” — without considering the complexities and limitations that other stakeholders face. This externalization is evident in the following quote from a District rep:

I have spoken about this with the government at provincial meetings — as we have difficulty finding teachers at all times, never mind teachers with French — in the hope that the government will apply pressure on universities to change their requirements of potential teachers. I have also spoken to at least one university representative about my feeling that no one should be allowed to enter the Faculty of Ed without possessing the necessary French language skills to be able to deliver French courses in the target language at any level from K–8, and that no one should be allowed to graduate from an elementary stream in the Faculty of Education without an FSL methodology course. There are not enough graduates with any French skills at all to meet our needs. There are barely enough teachers willing to come to a rural area to teach for any length of time. (District–Central)

Other examples of looking elsewhere for solutions to the avalanche and FSL teacher shortage included data where participants spoke about the transition from ITE to hiring, highlighting a “passing of the torch” from FOEs to District reps in terms of perceived responsibility for support. Yet, as findings from Gaps #1–4 show, this transition time is fraught with inconsistencies, gaps, and challenges for all stakeholders because the support is far from seamless. The remuneration of partner teachers is also fraught with relaying of responsibility. In some regions, stakeholders rely on each other to provide adequate incentives for mentors and practicum teachers, as they cannot provide any support in this area. As a result of the unique challenges they face, District reps often noted that these teachers receive no remuneration or compensation for their supervision.

Participants also reported frustration and resistance to the fact that the current FSL teacher shortage was shifting tasks and responsibilities that they viewed as residing outside of their purview onto their “plate.” For example, in the case of Districts reps, language proficiency development and maintenance were positioned as topics that some would prefer not to attend to (versus pedagogical knowledge and skill development, which was their responsibility to foster):

The teachers who have graduated... if THAT’S their exposure to French, sometimes they don’t pass our test to get in... [Our focus should] be teaching content through language, and not teaching [teachers] the language. (District–Central)

I’m wondering what’s affecting the quality and the proficiency of teachers graduating... [we should] only be talking about developing knowledge and teaching practice. (District–Western)

Similarly, for FOEs, in-depth learning related to language proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and mentorship was generally seen as unachievable in their program structure. This was particularly prominent in programs that are one year or shorter in length. However, as the quotes above show, Districts have expectations and priorities for graduating teachers (particularly related to language proficiency development), which they believe are the responsibility of FOEs. In contrast, participating FOE reps indicated feeling responsible for setting up foundations of knowledge and that the Districts were responsible for ongoing development:

In terms of mentoring of novice teachers, we don’t really have anything... that’s the responsibility of the School Board. [If we could] take away some of the [remediation] that we have to do, we can focus on some of the other [development areas]. (FOE–Central)

[Teachers] must all take the methods course because that way... at least they have a solid foundation: they have the pedagogy, the theory, the philosophies, the curriculum, the assessment. Then they can hopefully keep building and growing their language skills [after they graduate]. But they have — you know — a base [level of] French. (FOE–Western)

Regarding responsibility for addressing the avalanche, including the marginalized status of FSL, a concerning trend of learned helplessness emerged from all participant groups across all regions. A dynamic of despair and acceptance was evident — perhaps part of their own survival in the field. Participants viewed these issues and the context of the avalanche as aspects of teacher preparation (and FSL education) they could not control or change:

That’s just the reputation that FSL has. (Teacher–Central)

Je trouve que qu’est ce qu’on devrait faire — ça fait 25 ans que je le demande — c’est d’avoir plus de cours en français. Les étudiants sont formés en anglais pour enseigner le français, sauf qu’ils ont deux cours de méthodologie sur deux ans, donc c’est sûr que pour moi c’est une des solutions, mais en ce moment, on l’a pas. (FOE–Central)

[The FSL support positions] have been cut into so many pieces, I feel lost. (District–Central)

Alors, que puis-je faire pour les aider, pour développer les compétences chez eux, pour qu’ils se sentent compétents ? Donc, moi, j’ai une responsabilité. [Mais] je ne sais pas comment [le faire]... (FOE–Central)

These quotes reflect a general finding that all participant groups struggle to fulfill their perceived responsibilities due to this dynamic of acceptance and learned helplessness. Working within this context has resulted in a culture of survival and normalization of concerning practices to meet minimum expectations. For example, teachers and District reps described the practice of contracting teachers to remain in FSL — sometimes accompanied by requirements for language development — and even denying them opportunities to take on other positions:

Alors, en signant leur contrat, ils signent aussi une lettre qu’ils vont travailler à perfectionner leur français. C’est une condition de travail. (District–Central)

My French isn’t strong enough to be an FSL teacher, yet I’m not permitted to apply to any English positions. (Teacher–Central)

My District does not allow French-qualified teachers to change to the English stream. (Teacher–Central)

While this practice might be an understandable short-term solution to the FSL teacher shortage, participating FSL teachers understood it as “punishing” those with FSL qualifications instead of rewarding those staying in the field.

Overall, we consider the participant voices regarding this gap to be a clear warning shot aimed at all FSL stakeholders. If responsibility for optimizing FSL teacher preparation continues to be delegated to individuals (particularly teachers) and the systemic avalanche is accepted and allowed to continue, FSL education will perpetuate a survival-based approach that will fuel attrition.

However, some respondents suggested that sharing responsibility and oversight might open new pathways to ease the issues in FSL. As the next section shows, some key findings point to opportunities for change in the form of shared responsibility and purposeful communication between stakeholders that focus as much on retention as recruitment to make sustainable, long-term improvements to the FSL teacher preparation highway.

Shared Responsibility

Findings show that participants saw a need to shift the conversation about the persistence and resolution of systemic challenges to a shared responsibility for all FSL stakeholders. Enacting shared responsibility was proposed to encompass communication and investment in more coordinated efforts.

A lack of communication and mutual understanding — perhaps even some mistrust — was noted among participants. For example, most District reps noted that they do not discuss hiring criteria, processes, or needs with their local FOE(s), and vice versa. To remedy this situation, some participants suggested the following:

We've got to get something in place nationally where Faculties of Education and Ministries of Education work together on this transition from the end of [the ITE program] to beginning teacher... So that it's not like we hand [teachers] off to the school [and] we never talk again. (FOE–Western)

[Coordonner] la chance de réfléchir ensemble à ces questions et d'imaginer un programme idéal, spécialisé dans la formation FLS. (FOE–Central)

Participants also emphasized that communication should focus on normalizing more positive ideologies related to FSL teacher preparation. For example, linked to Gap #1, communication aimed at normalizing a development-oriented approach to FSL teacher preparation would be a welcome and refreshing conversation that could orient shared responsibility toward retention:

Some applicants to the program achieve the admissions threshold but may nonetheless have proficiency gaps (e.g., in one area: writing, speaking...) that require ongoing development. Normalizing this development need, just as pedagogically based PD is normalized, would contribute to increasing teacher competence and confidence and, hopefully, reducing burnout and the departure of FSL teachers from the French teaching stream. (FOE–Western)

In terms of coordinated efforts, participants described initiatives underway that aimed to help FSL teachers survive (and hopefully thrive). These included the following:

1. Shared access to online resources
2. Synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities
3. Coordinated hiring and interview preparation
4. Cohorts of District teachers being supported to take a particular certificate or degree program at an FOE, with additional supports or tailored content
5. Rural Districts offering remuneration and stipends to attract practicum students, while the FOE provides tuition credits for teachers in that District

However, many notable initiatives were run by one stakeholder group without systematic and long-term planning and could end up in a state of perennial “pilot testing.” Coordinated efforts and investment could help sustain these programs and break down barriers within FSL stakeholder groups and between the field of FSL and general education groups across both ITE and District contexts. These are key underpinnings to systemic change in FSL.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It was a privilege for us to listen to participants describe their worlds as they are now and how they would like them to be. This report shows that FSL teacher education must be oriented as much — if not more — towards retention versus merely being an avenue to recruit more teachers into the field. The retention of FSL teachers begins in FSL ITE programs, possibly even before; responding to this reality implicates stakeholders in and beyond ITE.

Findings demonstrate that what we have termed the “avalanche” (i.e., the systemic marginalization, isolation, and institutional apathy toward FSL) continues to hinder progress in responding to the FSL teacher shortage. This avalanche and the five gaps identified are not necessarily new to the field of FSL education. They have repeatedly been identified over decades of research inquiries and program evaluations. These findings show that little has changed regarding their strength and perseverance in the field; however, our data point to how these issues are also embedded in FSL teacher education. Simply put — the challenges are a prominent fixture along the

FSL teacher career timeline. As a result, these findings show how new FSL teachers risk being prepared and positioned to endure the systemic challenges associated with FSL in our K–12 schools. Contrary to what we might hope, teachers are not thriving. Therefore, instead of positioning these issues as afterthoughts or confounding variables, we have highlighted them in our report to accentuate their permeation across all data sets and regions.

Considered collectively, these five gaps and other insights shine a blinding light on how FSL ITE programs and professional learning opportunities are organized and delivered in ways that risk perpetuating a **survival-based approach to FSL teacher education** — from ITE, through transition to the profession, and ultimately to retention. We hope that by taking this risk seriously and assuming a shared responsibility approach to responding to the findings, we can make more concerted and genuine progress toward a version of FSL education that represents how our participants described what they would like it to be.



The FSL Teacher Education consortium members encourage stakeholders in FSL education — and general education — to read the findings of this study as being a call to reflect *and* act. Explicit consideration must be given to what stakeholders can do in the **short-term** to respond to the identified gaps given the realities and constraints of how the avalanche manifests in their current contexts. Certainly, connecting directly with regional FSL teachers (both new and experienced) and District and FOE representatives to ascertain what they are currently doing to survive and innovate is worth supporting at minimum in the short-term.

However, there remains the question of **longer-term** recommendations for systemic change. Here, a collective response to these findings is imperative — one that we believe can only begin with serious engagement with the findings using the central points from Gap #5 (i.e., *Taking Responsibility — From Individual to Shared*) as the point of departure. In this vein, it would risk hypocrisy for us/ CASLT to simply suggest a menu of recommended actions in response to Gaps #1–4. Instead, we feel these findings call for a recommended first move of individual and collective awareness-raising via **questions to consider**. Such an approach resembles analytic practices of “wonder” (e.g., MacLure, 2013), where engagement with research findings prioritizes drawing attention to curiosities, biases, connections, and preoccupations — rather than seeking out simple answers or singular actions to solve a complex problem.

[Table 2](#) presents possible questions to consider that are linked to each of the five gaps identified in this report. Within Gaps #1–4, sample questions are organized so that the reader progresses through a purposeful sequence of reflection related to the following points:

1. **Self:** What are my individual beliefs, biases, and experiences related to this gap?
2. **System:** How do my beliefs link to system-level values and practices in my context of work (and beyond)?
3. **Uniqueness of FSL:** How is the uniqueness of FSL reflected (or not) relative to how this gap plays out in my context of work?
4. **Shared Responsibility:** What can I reflect on more in order to enact a shared responsibility approach to addressing the gap?

Questions to consider for Gap #5 focus more purposefully on those related to establishing a shared responsibility approach to respond to these findings, and to the avalanche more broadly.

It is our intention to provoke reflection before action. We encourage readers to answer each sequence of questions on their own, with colleagues in their context of work, and with CASLT and other organizations committed to facilitating large group discussions in relation to these findings. In line with Gap #5, it is through this kind of wondering that we hope to work toward establishing a **shared vision** (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) in response to this report and the unrelenting challenges facing FSL teachers in the field.



TABLE 2

Recommendations: Questions to Consider⁴

Gap	Questions to Consider
GAP #1 Deficit vs. Development Perspectives	<p><i>Self</i></p> <p>How do I understand the idea of “being proficient” in French?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is “being proficient” in a language something you are? Something one works on? Is it stable over time? Is it linked to a test score? The number of errors/mistakes? Speaking with confidence? Achieving a benchmark? etc. <p>How do I position my own skills and expertise in FSL (related to language proficiency and other skill sets)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do I consider to be my own development trajectory and areas for growth?
	<p><i>System</i></p> <p>How is my understanding of French proficiency reflected (or not) in my context of work?</p> <p>To what extent is a “development orientation” to FSL teacher language proficiency present in my context of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways does my context of work expect FSL teacher language proficiency to be “complete” prior to hiring/admission? Are these standards realistic in the current climate? Does my context of work provide space for linguistic risk-taking? Confidence building? Validating what FSL teachers “can do” vs. what they “cannot do”?
	<p><i>Uniqueness of FSL</i></p> <p>How is the subject and linguistic expertise of FSL teachers similar/different from teachers of other disciplines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I see/value the unique skill sets involved in being an FSL teacher? (i.e., teaching language and content at the same time; sometimes being a learner of the subject you’re teaching, etc.) What opportunities are there for FSL teachers to develop their subject and linguistic expertise? How is this uniqueness (not) understood and accounted for by leaders and structures in the system?
	<p><i>Shared responsibility</i></p> <p>In my current role and context of work in FSL...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I foster FSL teachers’ confidence and security in their language proficiency? Have I asked FSL teachers what they need from me regarding their language proficiency development? If so, what do they say? If not, why not? What barriers do I face in empowering FSL teachers to maintain and develop their language proficiency and pedagogical skill sets? Do others in my context also face such barriers? If so, how can we work together to address them? If not, what barriers might they face that I am unaware of? What opportunities for partnership and collaboration might exist with stakeholders from other contexts? <p>How/with whom could I advocate for change to help fill this gap?</p>

⁴ In this table, “FSL teachers” refers to FSL teacher candidates, new FSL teachers, and experienced FSL teachers alike. “Professional learning” refers to contexts of pre-service FSL teacher preparation and in-service professional development.

Gap	Questions to Consider
GAP #2 Time and Access	<p><i>Self</i></p> <p>How important is it for FSL teachers to access FSL-related (development) opportunities?</p> <p>In my role, how important is it for me to access/provide FSL-related (development) opportunities?</p> <p>What are my preferences regarding professional learning offerings for me/FSL teachers? (e.g., formal, informal, online, in-person, linguistic, pedagogical, methodology courses, practica, additional qualifications, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the rationale behind my preferences?
	<p><i>System</i></p> <p>What do I currently dedicate the most time to in support of FSL teacher professional learning? (e.g., formal, informal, online, in-person, linguistic, pedagogical, methodology courses, practica, additional qualifications, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this match my preferences? • What dictates this prioritization of time? <p>What FSL resources/professional learning are currently accessible in my context of work? Does this match my preferences/needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I be involved in matching what is accessible to my preferences? If so, how? If not, why not? • Am I ever encouraged to “try something new” regarding accessing/providing FSL-related (development) opportunities? <p>What supports (my/teachers’) engagement with FSL development opportunities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What barriers do I/others face when trying to access them? • Have I ever tried to overcome these barriers? What would it take to reduce/remove them?
	<p><i>Uniqueness of FSL</i></p> <p>In what way(s) is FSL treated differently than other disciplines in my context of work with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time provided for professional learning? • Access to different professional learning opportunities during school hours? Outside of school hours? • Community valuing of the discipline (i.e., FSL)? • New teacher induction? (Due to the shortage, FSL teacher candidates obtain permanent positions at a higher rate than other disciplines. How is this reality supported in my context of work?) <p>How are issues of time and access in FSL teaching unique in comparison to teachers of other disciplines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this uniqueness (not) understood and accounted for by leaders and structures in the system? • Is organization/prioritization of time something I can experiment with in my context of work? If so, have I tried to do things differently? • What flexibility do I have in my role to address and/or change these issues?
	<p><i>Shared responsibility</i></p> <p>In my current role and context of work in FSL...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I asked FSL teachers what they need from me regarding the time/access I have at my disposal? If so, what do they say? If not, why not?

Gap	Questions to Consider
GAP #3 Resources: Material and Human	<p><i>Self</i></p> <p>In my role, what material resources do I find most useful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these accessible to me? • Do I know where to find them? • Do I have to purchase them? If so, how do I feel about that? • How do I share material resources and participate with peers? • What do I want more/less of regarding material resources to facilitate (my) FSL professional learning? <p>In my role, what human resources do I find most useful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these accessible to me? • Do I know where to find them? • What do I want more/less of regarding human resources to facilitate (my) FSL professional learning? <p>In my context, what do I think are the most pressing resource gaps (material and/or human) in FSL?</p>
	<p><i>System</i></p> <p>In what way(s) are my material resource needs met/not met in my context of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I be involved in matching what is accessible to my preferences? If so, how? If not, why not? • Am I ever encouraged to “try something new” regarding material resources? <p>In what way(s) are my human resource needs met/not met in my context of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I be involved in matching what is accessible to my preferences? If so, how? If not, why not? • Am I ever encouraged to “try someone new” regarding human resources? <p>What material/human resources for FSL professional learning are promoted in my context of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I shown where to locate them? How to use them? Why might they be useful?
	<p><i>Uniqueness of FSL</i></p> <p>In what way(s) is FSL treated differently than other disciplines in my context regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material resource allocation? • Human resource allocation? <p>Findings show that membership in FSL professional associations like CASLT can positively impact teacher retention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are FSL teachers in my context supported to become members of these associations? Why/why not? • How do I draw upon material and human resources and supports from professional organizations?
	<p><i>Shared responsibility</i></p> <p>In my current role and context of work in FSL...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I reduce/remove barriers to accessing material and human resources (e.g., time, awareness, funding, application processes)? What barriers do I face in doing so? • Have I asked FSL teachers what they need from me regarding material/human resources? If so, what do they say? If not, why not? • What opportunities for partnership and collaboration might exist with stakeholders from other contexts? <p>How/with whom could I advocate for change to help fill this gap?</p>

Gap	Questions to Consider
GAP #4 Teaching as an Individual vs. Relational Process	<p><i>Self</i></p> <p>In what ways do I see FSL teaching and learning as being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual process? • A relational process (i.e., learning from/working with others)? <p>What are my preferences related to working alone vs. with others?</p> <p>Is mentorship something that mainly happens between a “novice” and an “expert”? Or does expertise flow both ways?</p> <p>Do I feel isolated in my work related to FSL?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, in what way(s)? • If not, what helps with this? <p>How do I position my own collaboration skills and expertise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I consider to be my own development trajectory and areas for growth in this area? <p>How do I position my own mentorship skills and expertise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I consider to be my own development trajectory and areas for growth in this area?
	<p><i>System</i></p> <p>In what way(s) is collaboration and community building promoted in my context of work in FSL?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does what is promoted match my beliefs? • Does what is promoted/supported match what really happens in my context of work? If not, why not? <p>To what extent is a community-based orientation to FSL teacher professional learning present in my context of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities for collaboration are established for FSL teachers? • What opportunities for mentorship are established for FSL teachers? • To what extent do FSL teachers take up these opportunities? Do I know why they do/do not? • Is feedback provided to FSL teachers in my context? How often? By whom? What skills does the feedback target (e.g., linguistic? pedagogical?) • Does the mentor pairing process privilege an expert–novice approach? In-school pairings? How are FSL teachers supported in mentoring each other?
	<p><i>Uniqueness of FSL</i></p> <p>How are FSL teachers mentored similarly/differently than teachers of other disciplines?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the needs of FSL teachers be unique/different? (i.e., FSL teachers are subject experts and literacy teachers; linguistic mentorship — collaboration and mentorship taking place <i>en français</i> and in other languages; etc.) • How is this uniqueness (not) understood and accounted for by leaders and structures in the system in which I work?
	<p><i>Shared responsibility</i></p> <p>In my current role and context of work in FSL...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I provide FSL teachers the time needed to engage in meaningful informal and formal mentorship building activities? • Have I asked FSL teachers what they need from me regarding collaboration/mentorship? If so, what do they say? If not, why not? • What barriers do I face in fostering a community-based orientation to FSL teacher professional learning in my context of work? How do I reduce/remove these barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Do others in my context also face such barriers? If so, how can we work together to address them? If not, what barriers might they face that I am unaware of? • What opportunities for partnership and collaboration might exist with stakeholders from other contexts? <p>How/with whom could I advocate for change to help fill this gap?</p>

Gap	Questions to Consider
GAP #5 Taking Responsibility — From Individual to Shared	<p>In my context of work, what do I believe I am responsible for promoting and/or supporting regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSL teacher language development? • FSL teacher professional learning? • Recruitment of FSL teachers? • Retention of FSL teachers? <p>Could my responsibilities extend beyond my context of work? If so, in what way(s)? If not, why not?</p> <p>To what extent do I feel comfortable with furthering the status quo in FSL (i.e., seeing the issues described in this report as being a “fixed reality” for FSL: “that’s the way FSL has always been done”)?</p> <p>Who do I believe is responsible for filling the gaps described in this report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals? Including me? • Systems? • Am I aware of the barriers others face regarding filling these gaps? If so, how do I help? If not, why not? • How/with whom could I advocate for change to fill these gaps within and beyond my context? <p>Who do I believe is responsible for addressing the avalanche described in this report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals? Including me? • Systems? • Am I aware of the barriers others face regarding addressing the avalanche? If so, how do I help? If not, why not? • How/with whom could I advocate for change to address the avalanche within and beyond my context? <p>How open am I to participating in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, honest conversation about the avalanche, its existence, and our shared responsibility for its persistent reproduction in our respective contexts? • Collaborative examination of how each gap described in this report manifests itself in different stakeholder contexts, including my own work? • Opportunities for partnership and collaboration that might exist with stakeholders from other contexts?

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APPENDICES

(FSL) Teacher Career Timeline	While the term “teacher education” has clear connections to post-secondary qualification programs (see below), we look across the (pre)admission, graduation, hiring, professional learning, and early professional practice of these teachers. Thus, when we refer to the “teacher career timeline,” we see a continuum that represents the career trajectory of teachers before, during, and after teacher education programs.
Post-Secondary Programs	
Concurrent Program	Concurrent teacher education programs are designed for students who aim to complete an undergraduate degree and B.Ed. simultaneously. These programs may provide additional courses, mentoring, or service-learning opportunities in education that are spread throughout the undergraduate degree program. Students who meet the undergraduate degree requirements are automatically enrolled in the B.Ed. degree rather than having to apply afterwards (as in the Consecutive Program). These programs are typically 4–6 years in length.
Consecutive Program	Consecutive teacher education programs are designed for students who have already completed an undergraduate degree and wish to become certified teachers. These programs are typically 1–2 years in length. They are also known as “after-degree” programs.
Credit Hours	A credit hour measures how much credit a student receives for attending a course or courses. This number usually corresponds to the hours (per week) spent in that course. Not all programs in this study referred to course hours and might instead refer to a fraction (e.g., 0.25, 0.5, or 1.0) of a credit to signify the length and frequency of the course.
Direct Entry Program	We use the term “direct entry” program to refer to B.Ed. programs that allow students to apply from high school (as in concurrent models) but neither require nor provide an additional undergraduate degree. These programs are typically four years in length and are presently offered in Alberta and Saskatchewan.
Grade Point Average (GPA)	A GPA is a score used to evaluate student performance in and across courses. GPAs are usually delineated on a 4.0 scale, but multiple variations exist across the country.
Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	ITE refers to post-secondary degree programs that prepare applicants for teaching careers. These often lead to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and a recommendation for certification with the provincial/territorial education authority. We use this term to differentiate it from ongoing professional learning that teachers undertake after graduating from the ITE program. We refer to “teacher preparation” as synonymous with the ITE period.
French Language Programs	
Core French	Core French is a second language program intended to help students develop foundational communication skills in French. In some provinces, Core French may also be known as Basic French or simply FSL. Core French is distinguished from more content-based French programs as French is not used as the language of instruction for any other subjects. The amount of instructional time, the grade at which students begin Core French, and whether the program is compulsory may vary within and across provinces.
Extended French	The term Extended French is used inconsistently across the country; it can refer to (a) an optional, immersion-style program beginning in the middle school years (i.e., Grades 5–8) with fewer subjects taught in French or (b) the continuity of French Immersion programs into high school.

French Immersion (FI)	FI is a content-based language program that uses French as the language of instruction to develop functionally bilingual students. Students may study some or all subjects in French. Immersion programs vary in intensity of time spent in French. They are sometimes divided into Early Immersion (usually beginning by Grade 4), Middle Immersion (usually beginning by Grade 5 or 6), and Late Immersion (usually beginning around Grade 7).
Intensive French	Intensive French programs involve a period of concentrated exposure to French over a certain period of time (typically in Grade 5). These programs focus on authentic communication and literacy-based practices to support second language literacy development.
Roles and Responsibilities	
In-service teacher	We use in-service teacher, practising teacher, and certified teacher to distinguish educators who have graduated from an ITE program and are now working in schools.
Partner teacher	Sometimes called the associate, sponsor, or mentor teacher, this educator supervises the teacher candidate during the ITE program practicum experience.
Pre-service teacher	We use this term (and equivalents such as teacher candidate) to refer to students enrolled in an ITE program.
School District	School District, or simply “District,” refers to the administrative personnel and the jurisdiction that oversees schools in a certain region. These are referred to differently throughout the country, but other common terms include school board, division, and authority.



	Faculty Survey (n = 34) %	Faculty FG (n = 23) %	District Survey (n = 68) %	District FG (n = 22) %	Teacher Survey (n = 148) %	Teacher FG (n = 43) %
Province/Territory						
AB	13	7	16	27	16	29
BC	24	26	26	23	16	12
MB	—	7	6	9	2	7
NB	13	17	10	—	5	5
NL	3	4	—	4	8	8
NS	—	—	1	—	1	5
NT	3	—	—	—	1	—
NU	11	4	3	—	2	12
ON	21	7	32	32	45	49
PE	3	—	1	4	1	2
QC	8	7	—	—	—	—
SK	3	4	1	—	2	2
YK	—	—	1	—	1	—
Area						
Urban	97	91	57	50	76	60
Rural	—	—	29	27	18	33
Combination/ Other	3	9	13	23	6	7
Employment						
Full-time	—	—	—	—	85	84
Part-time	—	—	—	—	15	16
Experience						
<1 year	3	4	9	9	8	5
1–2 years	5	9	25	27	18	14
3–5 years	18	26	32	36	30	23
5–10 years	30	17	10	9	44*	56*
*5+ years for teachers						
10+ years	45	44	24	18	—	—

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

	Faculty Survey (n = 34) %	Faculty FG (n = 23) %	District Survey (n = 68) %	District FG (n = 22) %	Teacher Survey (n = 148) %	Teacher FG (n = 43) %
Acquired French Language as....						
First language	24	2	21	18	8	3
Bi/multilingual	19	5	17	6	10	9
Core French	24	48	28	27	37	23
French Immersion	11	4	17	12	26	26
French-speaking region in Canada	14	4	5	6	7	7
Outside Canada	3	4	3	3	7	6
Other	5	4	8	28	5	26
Degrees						
Bachelor's degree	21	22	17	18	21	20
Bachelor of Education	17	19	32	35	40	43
Teaching certification or diploma	6	6	14	18	15	12
Other certification or diploma	—	—	6	4	4	—
Master of Education	17	16	25	20	11	12
Other Master's	15	16	5	4	8	8
PhD	20	13	—	—	2	2
EdD	5	9	1	—	1	3
Demographics						
Woman	54	70	81	73	84	88
Man	32	30	12	27	11	12
Non-binary, Genderqueer, Transgender, Polygender, or Agender Person	3	—	1	—	3	—
Indigenous	5	9	6	—	5	2
Person of Colour	3	4	3	—	10	7
Newcomer to Canada	—	—	—	—	2	—

Note: Percentages are rounded and may not add evenly to 100%.

Overall highlights:

- There is significant variability in the way initial teacher education is organized and delivered.
- Every region (outside the territories) offers some form of FSL specialization.
- Despite ranges in program length and admission requirements, there are some commonalities among institutions in their efforts to recruit candidates for FSL teaching and in supporting their development as beginning FSL teachers.
- Access and engagement with content in French and related to FSL are often limited.
- Teacher education, even in intensive 10-month programs, can offer pedagogical training and support — both in terms of courses and practicum, as well as some linguistic development and maintenance.

Table 3 presents the overarching findings on admission requirements, program delivery, and practicum requirements. See Smith et al. (2022) for further analysis.

Admission

- General admission is an area where we see variability within and across regions. Generally, GPA requirements range between 2.3 and 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Concurrent programs typically have a higher requirement than consecutive programs.
- All institutions in the Eastern region require some form of language proficiency assessment. This is not the case in the Central and Western regions. Eastern region institutions only use internationally recognized scales or standardized tests, and Western region institutions mostly use standardized tests. However, most institutions in the Central region use in-house tests, and only some use standard scales.
- Across institutions, for consecutive programs, there is no consistency in requiring French language courses in the previous degree. Only some institutions require a major or minor in French to do an FSL (often FI) concentration. Most concurrent programs require a Grade 12 FSL course or proof of attending a French-medium institution.

Program

- We see diversity within and across regions in terms of program length. Consecutive programs generally range from 10 to 20 months in the Eastern region, 16 to 20 months in the Central region, and 10 to 24 months in the Western region. There is no uniform consensus across the country regarding the ideal program length for consecutive programs. Concurrent programs, in contrast, are usually 4–6 years.

TABLE 3

Website Scan Analysis Subthemes

Admission requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum GPA for admission • Language proficiency entrance assessment • Type of language proficiency examination (i.e., international standardized test, in-house test, other) • French proficiency level required for course registration • French proficiency level required for practicum
Program information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of program • Type of program (i.e., concurrent or consecutive) • Required number of total and FSL credits • Number of FSL theory or methodology courses offered (and whether these were offered in French or in English) • General L2 education courses offered • Available specialization (e.g., in core French, French immersion, extended French, or intensive French) • Other program features
Practicum-specific information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French proficiency level required for practicum • Total length of practicum placements (over the duration of the program) • Number of practicum placements (including timing during the program) • Minimum percentage of practicum placements offered in FSL programs • Single or multi-level practicum placements • Other key information about practicum placements
Graduation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency exit exam • Capstone course (and whether this was FSL specific) • Exit content examination • Overall program expectations

- There is one area of convergence within and across regions: 60 course hours (CH) is by far the most common requirement for ITE programs in this country. This 60 CH includes courses and practicum. Concurrent programs often include this common 60 CH in their 120–180 CH total.
- Most commonly, programs offer one to three courses related to FSL teaching. In many institutions, additional coursework is required to have an FSL specialization at the elementary level. In a few cases, this is an add-on specialization required at the end of or after the program.
- English-medium institutions generally try to offer 1–2 courses in French during the program (these are usually the FSL methodology courses). There are no English-only institutions that offer 100% of FSL teacher education in French, but there are a few that offer up to 80%. Only French-medium institutions or French programs within English-medium institutions offer the 100% in French option.

Practicum

- Language proficiency comes into play again regarding finding practicum placement in some regions, especially in the East. Generally in the Central and Western regions, passing the language proficiency test to enter the program is enough proof for teacher candidates to succeed in their practicum placement in FSL programs.
- The length of practicum often ranges from 15 to 26 weeks. These weeks may be divided over two to five placements.
- Some institutions require that FSL teacher candidates spend at least 50% of their time in a classroom where French is the language and/or subject of instruction. However, most stakeholders reported values ranging from 25% to 40%, with only one placement in FSL being expected/guaranteed.

Key Gaps and Requirements

- It is important to remember that ITE programs are one early step in the ongoing professional development of FSL teachers. Ministries, universities, and School Boards must work together to ensure smooth transitions and support into and during FSL teacher careers.
 - » Valuing and leveraging prior learning and experiences, encouraging continued learning, and building bridges with other stakeholders are crucial for FSL teacher recruitment and retention.
- Because of the high need for candidates who can teach subjects like math or science in French immersion, the two deciding factors are language proficiency and content background (e.g., a degree in Biology combined with a minimum of B2). It is not clear how universities accommodate candidates with this particular background.

Some universities do not accept candidates who graduate with specialization in a content area from a French program or university to apply to become FSL teachers (i.e., a student who did their undergraduate degree in Science in French who wants to apply to become an FSL teacher).

- Keeping in mind that candidates in teacher education programs often need both language and pedagogical support, consideration needs to be given to the full trajectory of professional development for FSL teachers, of which ITE is only a part. Especially in terms of consecutive programs for FSL specialists, learning and experiences prior to teacher education programs and professional bridges to FSL careers must be considered.
- Very few English-medium institutions offer courses in French on how to teach specific content areas (e.g., math, science, social sciences, etc.), which is an issue for future French Immersion teachers who have stated they need support in developing the vocabulary and pedagogy for these classes.
- Stakeholders reported issues securing placements in French, and some English-speaking institutions expect/require students to complete at least one practicum in an English classroom setting. This information was infrequently found on program websites; our stakeholder contacts provided it. Faculties of Education must make this information available to potential students.

The following is a summary of the considerations and implications stemming from the website scan:

1. We need to maximize formal and informal opportunities to use French in teacher education programs.
2. In courses, practica, and co-curricular experiences, finding positive and collaborative opportunities to develop and enhance linguistic and pedagogical knowledge is key.
3. What is critical in FSL teacher education programs is not the amount of time spent in the ITE program but how that time is spent. Even in shorter and more intensive programs, if the approach is strategic and intentional, gains can be made in both pedagogical and linguistic development.
4. Collaboration within and across teacher education institutions and between educational stakeholders could hold promise for seeing FSL teacher education as career-long professional learning that begins even before starting ITE programs.
5. A more consistent and collective understanding of the core competencies (linguistic, pedagogical, cultural) is required for FSL teachers to further refine teacher education initiatives. This includes understanding how to support FSL teacher identity construction, addressing the disenfranchisement of FSL teachers, and dispelling myths related to native speaker norms.

In broad strokes, the certification requirements outlined by Salvatori (2009) seem to hold true. Most provinces and territories require a certain length of ITE program, time in teaching practice, and number of credits — both overall and in the identified “teachable subject(s).” While there are variations in the number of years of study or degree requirements — whether or not a non-B.Ed. undergraduate degree is required — provincial governments ultimately certify based on the completion of a “recognized” ITE program.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC, 2020) provides a summary table of the general qualifications required for elementary and secondary teacher certification (see [Table 4](#)). CMEC (n.d.) notes efforts for coordinating teacher mobility within Canada, such that:

- Certificate recognition exists in the teaching profession so that a qualified teacher in one province or territory is qualified in all other provinces and territories, within the guidelines of the AIT [Agreement on Internal Trade]
- Mechanisms are established to reconcile the various provincial and territorial registration policies and requirements
- Through communication between governments and universities, teacher education programs reflect government regulations and policies
- Each jurisdiction has developed regulations that respond to the diversity in teacher education programs throughout Canada

- Accountability and transparency exist on issues related to the suspension or cancellation of teacher certificates and to criminal record checks (para. 2)

Most provinces and territories issue generic teacher certificates without particular endorsements or requirements for FSL: e.g., the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, n.d.) states that “[t]here are no endorsements for subject areas. Certificate holders may teach any subject area within the grade-level endorsement which they hold” (para. 1). The notable exceptions to this for FSL are Ontario and New Brunswick, which are discussed below.

School Districts may (and do) choose to consider or even require additional coursework, degree(s), prior experience, proficiency testing, etc., as part of their hiring process. Yet, this is separate from the certification baseline. Disentangling these notions is important — stakeholders are understandably more often concerned with what will get teachers *hired* rather than what will get them *certified*.

Language proficiency. Most Ministry websites discuss language proficiency when addressing the certification of internationally trained teachers. Teachers are expected to be “proficient” in an official language (CMEC, 2013), whichever is the dominant language of the school. This topic was rarely framed directly in relation to the training and certification of (domestic) language teachers.



Here, New Brunswick, PEI, and Ontario are exceptions. In New Brunswick (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.), teachers must “demonstrate a minimum oral proficiency of Advanced Plus (B2.2) on the New Brunswick Second Language Proficiency Scale for French Intensive positions and Superior (C1) for French Immersion positions.” Likewise, in PEI (2019), “[i]n the French Immersion program, you must achieve the superior level. In the Core French program, you must achieve the advanced level” (para. 3). This is one of many examples where stakeholders have set varying standards surrounding language proficiency in French as part of the FSL teacher certification process.

In a similar statement, the Ontario Ministry of Education (Government of Ontario, 2022) recognized that:

Language proficiency is essential: teaching in French in the French-language system requires superior French-language skills; teaching French in the English-language system requires advanced French- and English-language skills. If you are proficient in French, you may obtain qualifications to teach French as a Second Language. (p. 2)

However, neither this document nor the Ontario Ministry of Education website details the criteria used to determine “proficiency.” Graduating from an ITE program with an FSL specialization or completing the FSL Additional Qualification (AQ) course are the main criteria for this certification in Ontario. However, according to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), the entrance requirements for these programs and courses are set by the host institution (i.e., FOLs). While these courses must be based on the appropriate AQ implementation guidelines (OCT, 2016), there is no mention in the certification documents reviewed of a specific level of proficiency for ITE or AQ participants.

Ontario. The most complex case for FSL certification in Canada seems to be Ontario. In Ontario, FSL is listed as a “Restricted Subject,” meaning that teachers must hold the appropriate qualification to teach it or be given a Temporary Letter of Approval (OCT, 2005).

The OCT makes an important distinction between the qualifications for French-language and English-language School Districts. The language of the institution/program determines the certificate provided to graduating teachers — i.e., French-language Boards for those graduating from French-language programs, and vice versa. An AQ course in the other official language is required to be certified to teach in the other language district. Indeed, a recent OCT memorandum (Bélisle, 2020) clarified:

An English-language provider prepares candidates to teach The Ontario Curriculum, using curriculum documents written in English, in English-language Boards of Education. A French-

language provider prepares candidates to teach *le curriculum de l'Ontario*, using the *programmes-cadres* written in French, in French-language Boards of Education. (. . .) FSL pre-service programs, FSL as an area of study in initial teacher education programs and FSL AQ/ABQ programs may only be offered by English language providers. (p. 1)

This poses a number of complications and contradictions for FSL.

Since English-language ITE programs cover the English Ontario curriculum, this includes all three programs in the FSL curriculum — Core, Extended, and Immersion. Therefore, teachers who are expected to operate frequently (or perhaps, always) in French are expected to receive most of their teacher training in English. Usually, only FSL methodology courses are provided in French, comprising a small portion of coursework in Ontario programs (see Smith et al., 2022). For example, in the recent accreditation of the Queen's University Primary FSL stream, the committee outlined that “French will be the language of instruction in the Primary/Junior FSL method courses and all assignments will be completed in French” (OCT, 2019, p. 6). This contrasts with what stakeholders from all groups called for in this project: there must be additional opportunities to use French beyond the FSL methods course(s).

We contacted a representative from the OCT to provide additional insight regarding the general expectations around practica. Programs are required to provide a minimum of 80 days of practicum (OCT, n.d.) but may provide additional practice teaching time. Our contact added:

The practicum, which is a mandatory component of the initial education program, must meet regulatory requirements and must include a minimum of 80 days of practicum in an English-language school/setting for those teacher candidates in an English-language program who are being prepared to teach in Ontario's English-language schools. However, practicum days beyond the regulatory requirements may be completed in an alternative setting. This means that a practicum in a French-language school could be put into place once a teacher candidate has completed the 80 days of required practical experience.

This clarifies that the minimum practicum teaching for FSL teacher certification in Ontario is dedicated to being completed in English, not *en français*. Again, this restriction is the opposite of what many teacher candidates want from their practice teaching. This requirement raises further questions in an era when participants in this study repeatedly note being unable to leave FSL for the English classroom even if they request it, given the ongoing demand for French teachers. We therefore wonder if it makes sense to continue to interpret this requirement in this way.

TABLE 4

CMEC (2020) Qualification Requirements for Teachers in Provinces and Territories

Province or territory	Qualification required for elementary and secondary teacher certification
British Columbia	Bachelor of Education (BEd) or bachelor's degree and 30 credits of general coursework in areas related to the BC elementary curriculum
Alberta	Four-year university degree that includes a basic teacher-preparation program (BEd) or a bachelor's degree supplemented with a teacher preparation program (two-year postdegree for teacher course work and practicum)
Saskatchewan	University degree or equivalent (i.e., four years of postsecondary education) and completion of an approved teacher-education program consisting of at least 48 semester hours, including a practicum
Manitoba	Bachelor of Education (BEd) requiring an undergraduate degree (three or four years) followed by two years of training in education
Ontario	A Bachelor of Education (BEd) or undergraduate degree and four semesters (approximately two years) of teacher education is required
Quebec	Four-year university degree: Baccalauréat en Éducation préscolaire et enseignement au primaire et baccalauréat en enseignement secondaire (according to chosen concentration)
New Brunswick	A university undergraduate degree, a one-year Bachelor of Education, and a New Brunswick Teacher's Certificate
Prince Edward Island	Bachelor of Education (BEd) (typically four years)
Nova Scotia	Undergraduate degree: three years of approved undergraduate content studies and two years of an approved program of professional studies including a practicum
Newfoundland and Labrador	Bachelor of Education (BEd) or a BA plus one year of postdegree study in education
Yukon	Bachelor of Education (BEd) or a bachelor's degree plus an approved program of teacher preparation of not less than one academic year
Northwest Territories	Bachelor of Education (BEd) or a bachelor's degree plus an approved program of teacher preparation of not less than one academic year
Nunavut	Bachelor of Education (BEd) or a two-year postdegree bachelor of education after degree (BEAD)

Note: Qualification requirements for Kindergarten (pre-primary) teachers are generally the same as those for primary and secondary teachers. Some provinces and territories require additional courses or certification to teach Kindergarten.

Since retention was one of the key outcomes of interest in this study, one-way ANOVAs were run to explore which factors most influence retention in teachers. Factors were compared against question Q56, “Have you ever considered leaving the FSL teaching profession to move to the English stream or pursue another career?” The significant predictors of retention status are summarized below.

TABLE 5

Data Points by Participant Group and Region

Region	Participant Group	Website Scans	Survey	Focus Group
East		10	47	16
	Teachers	—	25	6
	Districts/ Ministry of Ed.	—	11	3
	Faculties of Education	10	11	7
Central		23	111	46
	Teachers	—	73	29
	Districts	—	27	9
	Faculties of Education	23	11	8
West		11	95	17
	Teachers	—	50	7
	Districts	—	30	13
	Faculties of Education	11	15	7
Total		44	253	89

(Q5) The following aspects of my undergraduate experiences encouraged me to choose a career as an FSL teacher (select all that apply).

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed based on the type and number of aspects that encouraged them to choose a career as an FSL teacher. The more options teachers selected, the **less** likely they were to consider leaving the profession, $F(1, 144) = 4.512, p = 0.035$.

(Q14) The number of courses in my teacher education program offered in French was sufficient for me to succeed in my practicum placement.

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed

based on their feelings of preparedness for the practicum placement from the number of courses taught in French during their teacher education program. The more unprepared teachers felt (i.e., the more they disagreed with the question), the **more** likely they were to consider leaving, $F(1, 141) = 6.06, p = 0.015$.

(Q15) The number of courses in my teacher education program offered in French was sufficient for me to be able to teach in any FSL program.

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed based on their feelings of preparedness for teaching in FSL from the number of courses taught in French during their teacher education program. The more unprepared teachers felt (i.e., the more they disagreed with the question), the **more** likely they were to consider leaving, $F(1, 142) = 5.384, p = 0.022$.

(Q43) I felt sufficiently prepared to answer pedagogical questions during my FSL teaching interview.

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed based on their perceived preparation to answer pedagogical questions during the FSL hiring interview. The more unprepared teachers felt (i.e., the more they disagreed with the question), the **more** likely they were to consider leaving $F(1, 143) = 8.89, p = 0.003$.

(Q49) The following would make professional development more accessible to me (select all that apply).

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed based on their preference for more accessible professional learning. Teachers that chose the option “in-school PD” were **more** likely to consider leaving, $F(1, 144) = 5.76, p = 0.018$.

(Q62) I teach _____ (select all that apply).

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the desire to remain an FSL teacher differed for participants who taught at different grade levels. Elementary school teachers were found to be **less** likely to consider leaving, $F(1, 143) = 5.455, p = 0.021$.

(Q66) I am a member of the following professional organizations or associations (select all that apply).

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the desire to remain an FSL teacher differed for participants who were members of different professional groups or associations. The more professional teaching organizations teachers were a part of, the **less** likely they were to consider leaving, $F(1, 142) = 5.8, p = 0.017$.

(Q67) I acquired French as _____ (select all that apply).

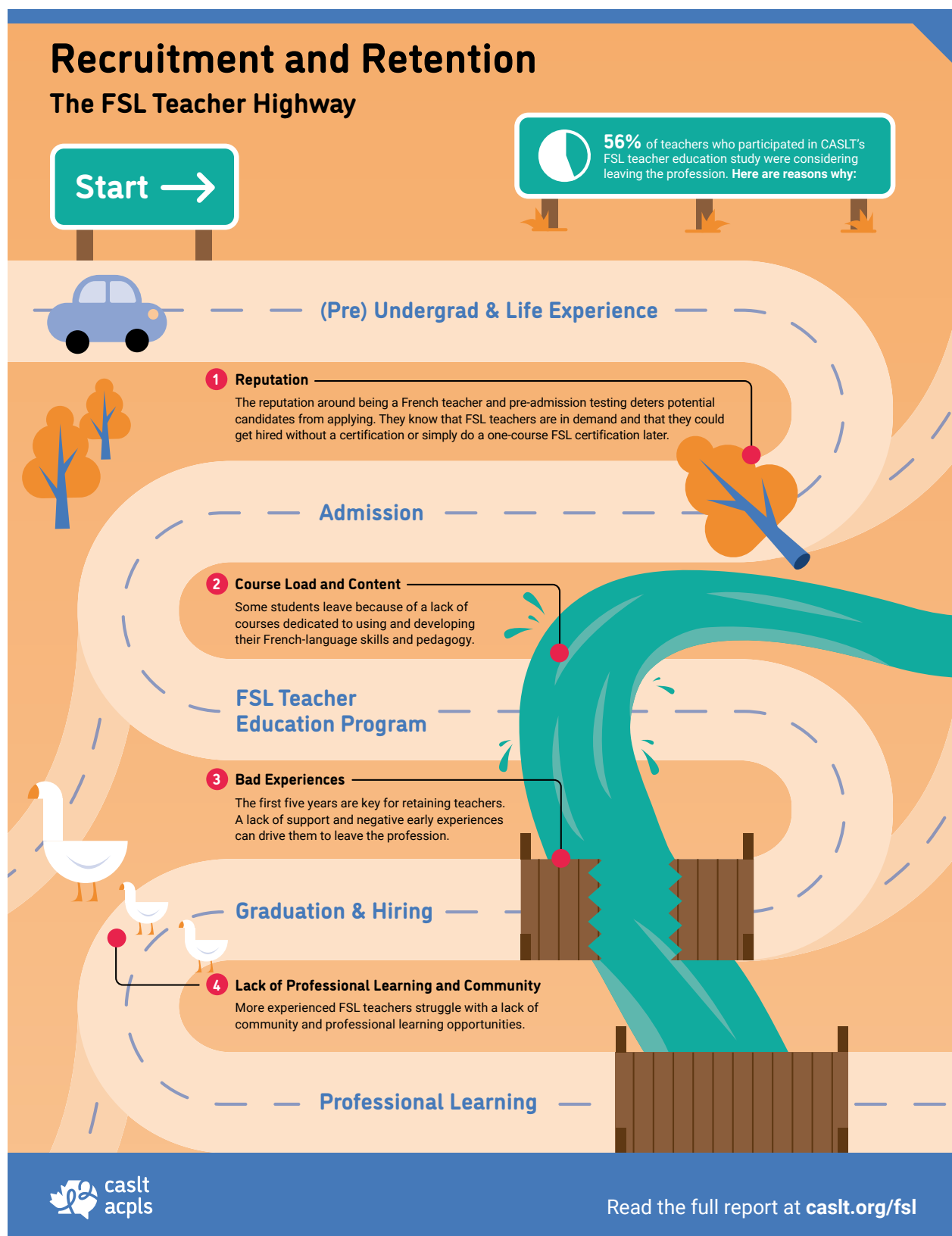
- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed based on how they acquired French language proficiency/experience. Simultaneous bilingual speakers were found to be **more** likely to consider leaving, $F(1, 144) = 4.969, p = 0.027$.

(Q74) My educational background includes a _____ (select all that apply).

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if participants' desire to remain an FSL teacher differed with varying degrees and certifications. Ph.D. holders were found to be **less** likely to consider leaving the profession, $F(1, 144) = 8.124, p = 0.005$.
» Note: there is no correlation with more education generally (i.e., more degrees does not mean more likely to remain). This was based on a small sample and should be interpreted with caution.



This infographic uses the “highway” metaphor to illustrate the report findings related to obstacles to FSL teacher recruitment and retention.



This infographic uses the “avalanche” metaphor to illustrate the report findings related to why FSL teachers are leaving the profession.



This report provides a detailed synthesis of the findings of a two-year pan-Canadian research project. The study aimed to document and describe current practices while validating the perspectives and efforts of new FSL teachers, District representatives, and Faculty of Education representatives to optimize FSL education in Canadian K–12 contexts.

Specifically, the findings of this report respond to the following research question: What do participants identify as **strengths**, **challenges**, and **opportunities** regarding FSL initial teacher education, practice, and professional learning in the early years after transitioning to the field?

The final section of this report outlines recommendations in the form of questions meant to inform ongoing FSL teacher education and professional support across Canada and guide ongoing efforts to respond to the chronic shortage of FSL teachers across the country.

