
THE CEFR IN ONTARIO

TRANSFORMING CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of research conducted as part of the French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency Pilot Project 2016-2017. The French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency Pilot Project is one of a number of Ontario Ministry of Education initiatives focusing on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) as a reference tool to inform FSL practice in the province. It is part of the Ontario Ministry of Education's commitment to increasing student proficiency and confidence in French and to improving the effectiveness of FSL education in Ontario.

The Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELFL) is the FSL proficiency exam aligned with the CEFR. It consists of four key components that distinguish between the ability to produce and comprehend French. These DELFL components are oral comprehension and written comprehension, the two receptive skills, and oral production and written production, the two productive skills. Throughout this pilot, a number of Grade 12 students from the three FSL programs completed the DELFL exam. Since the implementation of the pilot project in 2013-2014, the number of participating school boards has more than doubled (from 14 in Year 1 to 36 in Year 4), and the number of students in the project challenging the DELFL has risen steadily (from 500 in Year 1, to 600 in Years 2 and 3, to 700 in Year 4).

The teachers administering and correcting the DELFL exam had participated in prior training to become certified correcteurs/examineurs. A day of professional learning was provided to identified correcteurs within each school board to increase their knowledge of the DELFL and to ensure consistency in the administration of the exam. This day of DELFL-related teacher moderation is one of a number of forms of CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning in which Ontario FSL teachers have engaged.

The research conducted as part of phase 4 of the project addressed the question, "*What impact is CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning having on Ontario FSL teachers' classroom practice?*" The report responds to this central question by drawing on the responses of 103 Ontario FSL teachers to an online survey. Teachers were asked to reflect on their FSL teaching practices before and after their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning in the areas of instructional planning, teaching practice, and assessment and evaluation.

PRIOR RESEARCH

The findings of this report will add considerably to what is currently known about the links between teachers' CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences and the resulting changes in their FSL teaching practice. Prior knowledge in this area in the Ontario context is, to date, primarily the result of four previous investigations.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (2011), focused on the potential use of CEFR levels to set FSL program objectives. It also examined the value for teachers of professional learning opportunities centred on CEFR-related teaching and assessment strategies. The findings highlighted the profoundly positive effect that DELF testing has on FSL instruction. They also showed the deeper understanding that teachers developed of the CEFR principles and their application in FSL instruction as a result of their professional learning. The findings led the authors to lobby for continued CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning opportunities for Ontario FSL teachers.

In 2011, Faez, Taylor, Majhanovich, and Brown explored teachers' perspectives on CEFR task-based approaches for improving learning in Ontario FSL classrooms. The teachers were first introduced to CEFR principles and resources and were then asked to incorporate a task-based approach in their FSL classroom instruction. The teachers indicated that "communicative, purposeful, learner-centred instruction" increased their FSL students' ability to perform tasks. The undertaking brought about a change in the teachers' attitude towards task-based learning. However, the authors pointed out that attitudinal change does not necessarily translate into a change in teaching practice. They therefore advocated for collaborative experiences offering teachers concrete, step-by-step strategies to enact a task-based approach in their FSL classrooms.

Further research by Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, and Crowley (2011), focused on teachers' perspectives on the strengths and challenges of incorporating CEFR-informed teaching practice in FSL classrooms in Ontario. By surveying teachers, the authors undertook to determine if and how the CEFR might enhance the educational experiences of FSL teachers and students. FSL teachers in both Core and Immersion programs responded that CEFR-informed instruction not only enhanced learner autonomy and increased student motivation but improved learner confidence and helped teachers promote real and authentic use of the language in the classroom.

In a report on Ontario FSL student proficiency and confidence, Rehner (2014) investigated the receptive and productive skills of Grade 12 FSL learners who had challenged the DELF exam and looked at their proficiency in relation to their level of confidence. The findings led Rehner to recommend, among other things, a renewed focus on particular skill areas through the promotion of oral interaction and through the embedding of grammar and vocabulary in context. The author suggested that improving student proficiency in these areas would require a broadening of "the types of pedagogical strategies and specific interventions used in teaching these skills in the various FSL programs." (p. 33)

METHODOLOGY

For the research as part of the FSL Student Proficiency Pilot, the FSL Project Lead in each of the 36 participating school boards was asked to invite five of their FSL teachers to respond to an online survey in the spring of 2017. To participate in the survey, the teachers had to be active Ontario FSL classroom teachers who were also certified DELF correcteurs involved in scoring the spring 2017 sitting of the exam. The online survey was to be filled out after the teachers completed their scoring of the DELF.

The survey included four main sections. The first section collected background information on the participants' teaching experience and on the CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences in the areas of FSL instructional planning, teaching practice, and assessment and evaluation.

For most questions teachers were to indicate this frequency of use on a 0-5 point Likert scale where 0 represented no use of a particular practice and 5 represented the highest level of use. The analysis of the responses to these questions is presented using mean frequencies as indicators of the teachers' central tendencies (i.e., the average of the teachers' self-reported frequency).

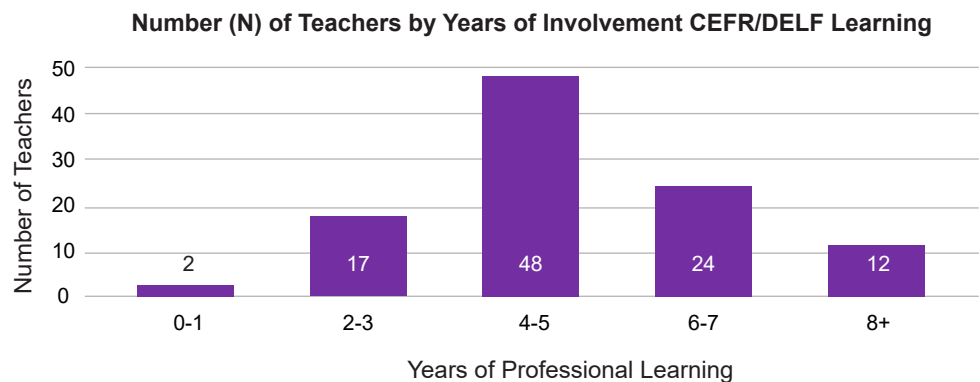
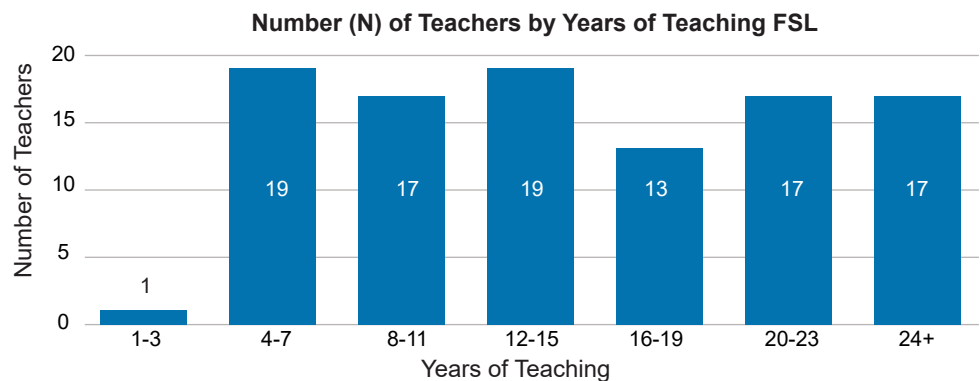
The Teacher Sample

Participation in the survey for the 195 invited teachers was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous (with no personally-identifying information required) with a total of 103 responses to the online survey.

Of these 103 teachers, 38 (37%) reported teaching exclusively in a Core French program, 35 (34%) solely in a French Immersion program, and 1 (1%) only in an Extended French program. Interestingly, 29 teachers (28%) indicated teaching in a combination of programs (15 taught in both Core and Immersion, 11 in Core and Extended, 2 in Immersion and Extended, and 1 in all three programs).

The sample of 103 teachers is fairly evenly distributed according to the number of years of teaching experience, with the exception of a lack of teachers with between 1 and 3 years of experience.

The majority of the teachers reported between 2 and 7 years of experience, with nearly half (47%) having had 4-5 years of experience.

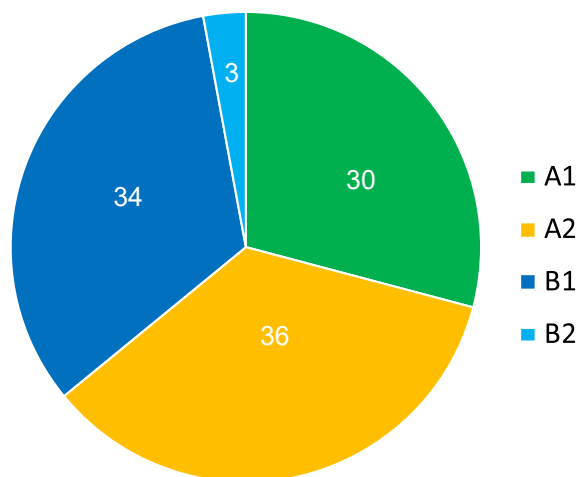


With respect to the various forms of CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning in which the teachers have engaged, all 103 teachers participated in DELF correcteur training. The three most-frequent activities after this were school/board conferences or workshops (in which 93% of the teachers had participated), a DELF correcteur refresher (77%), and job-embedded professional learning (56%). Most survey participants indicated they were currently teaching at the secondary school level in Grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12.

%	CEFR/DELFL-related Professional Learning Experiences	%	Grade(s) Taught
100	DELFL correcteur training	42	Grade 12
93	School/board conferences or workshops	43	Grade 11
77	DELFL correcteur "refresher"	44	Grade 10
56	Job-embedded professional learning	51	Grade 9
55	Provincial Web-conferences	20	Grade 8
54	CEFR regional learning events	22	Grade 7
51	Self-directed	13	Grade 6
50	Other conferences or workshops	13	Grade 5
49	CEFR provincial meetings	12	Grade 4
39	Coaching/mentoring	12	Grade 3
6	DELFL formateur training	8	Grade 2
6	Other	8	Grade 1
		6	Kindergarten

Finally, the teachers were asked to indicate which CEFR level they felt best corresponded to the overall proficiency of a target FSL class they elected to have in mind when responding to the survey. Roughly equal proportions of the teachers chose to imagine a class at the A1, A2, and B1 level, with only 3 teachers indicating a class at the B2 level. As a result, for the analyses that compared CEFR levels, teachers' responses related to envisioning a B2-class were considered together with those from teachers considering a B1 class.

Envisioned CEFR Level (# of teachers)



FINDINGS

The findings of the online teacher survey are organized by the three content-related areas of the survey, namely instructional planning, teaching practice, and assessment and evaluation. Each section lists the survey questions, along with the corresponding overall results. Each section concludes with the results of analyses comparing various teacher groups (e.g., the various CEFR levels of the imagined target classes, the different FSL programs, the range of years of CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experience, or the range of years of FSL teaching experience).

Instructional Planning

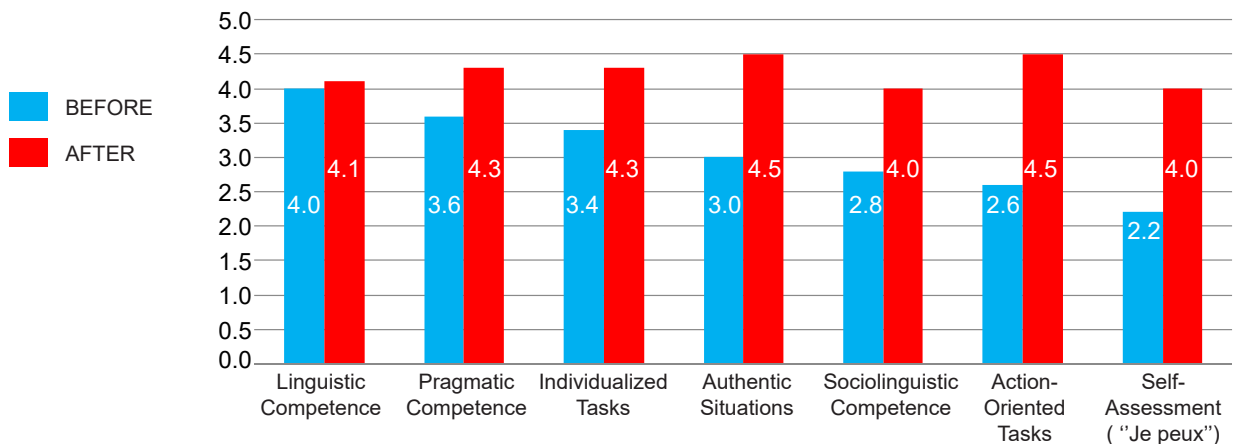
Teachers were asked to consider their FSL planning practices before and after their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences. They were to reflect on the strategies they used in their planning to develop their students' proficiency, to consider their planned allotment of class time for reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and to report on how their professional learning has developed or confirmed their understanding of the CEFR and impacted their FSL instructional planning and choice of resources.

1. Before and after your CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences, which of the following items figured most prominently in your planning to develop your students' FSL proficiency, and how often did your planning make use of each item?

Before their professional learning, the teachers reported planning practices that focused most often on opportunities related to the building of linguistic competence (an average score of 4.0 on the Likert scale) and pragmatic competence (3.6), as well as on opportunities to engage in individualized tasks (3.4).

After their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning, the teachers indicated a marked increase in the frequency of use of each of the targeted items, except for opportunities to develop students' linguistic competence. While linguistic competence figured as the most prominent response in their planning practices before their professional learning, it remained at roughly the same level after (4.0 vs 4.1). The most dramatic increases after professional learning involved the teachers' planning for the use of action-oriented tasks (rising from 2.6 to 4.5) and authentic situations (rising from 3.0 to 4.5). These strategies were the two most-frequently-reported items of focus after the teachers' professional learning. Planning involving opportunities for self-assessment through the use of 'je peux' statements also demonstrated a dramatic increase (rising from 2.2 to 4.1).

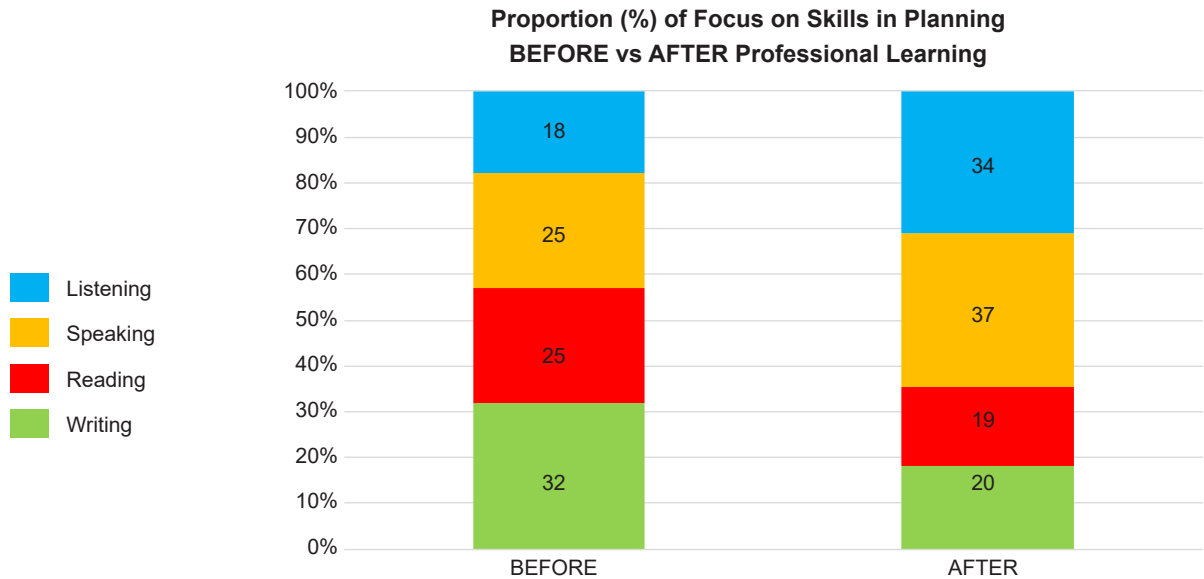
Frequency (0-5) of Using Strategies BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning



2. What percentage of class time did you allot to each of the four language skills in your FSL planning before and after your CEFR/DELF-related professional learning experiences?

Before their professional learning, the teachers indicated allotting most class time in their FSL planning to activities developing their students’ writing skills (32%). They reported dedicating equal proportions of class time to activities promoting reading (25%) and those practising speaking (25%) and the least class time to activities developing their students’ listening skills (18%).

After their professional learning, the teachers revealed a shift to a clear privileging of the oral skills, particularly speaking (speaking: 37%; listening: 34%), over the written skills (writing: 20%; reading: 19%), to which they reported allotting relatively equal focus.



3. What aspect of the CEFR has been the most important in your FSL planning and why?

The most frequent aspects of the CEFR that are the focus of teachers’ instructional planning are authentic tasks, a focus on communication, and the action-oriented approach.

Number of teachers who responded

Aspects of CEFR
(Sample Responses)

57

Authentic tasks

“it contextualizes the learning and engages students the most”
 “students feel much more engaged and in control of their learning...”
 “students see the utility of knowing a second language”
 “[authentic tasks] represent real opportunities our students will encounter outside the classroom”

29

Focus on oral communication

“creating opportunities to ‘partager/parler/participer’ on a daily and regular basis”
 “they are the foundation for learning a L2”
 “giving the students the opportunity to interact in spontaneous and meaningful ways”



Action-oriented approach

“incorporate open-ended situations where they have to give their opinions. When an issue has a personal connection to the students, they want to share their ideas and thoughts on the matter.”

“allowed me to really think about which objective the students should achieve or what problem they need to solve as social agents.”



‘Je peux’ statements

“je peux statements which help them be more motivated and see how they can move along the continuum by creating goals and reflection on their learning and how they work best.”

“as success criteria for my learning goals depending on the proficiency of the student”



Balanced approach

“making sure there is a balance of listening, reading, speaking and writing tasks to allow students to excel in areas where they have their strength”

“all competencies are equally important”



Other

“metacognitive awareness for students of their own levels and learning”

“sharing A1 level Expectations and allowing students to select their priorities”

“backwards design”

4. In what ways, if any, has your experience scoring the DELF developed or refined your understanding of the CEFR and impacted your FSL planning?

Number of teachers who responded

Impact of DELF-Scoring

(Sample Responses)

The teachers indicated that scoring the DELF motivated them to revisit their planning, revisit their expectations and assessment of students, understand the importance of oral comprehension and production, and gain a better understanding of the language learning process.



Revisit planning

“purposeful planning based on the levels of my students”

“my DELF-scoring experience has really put into perspective how I further need to change my method of teaching, where the onus is solely on the student as the learner.”

“create a truly balanced program in which students are active social agents”

“the end goal. Getting my students ready and speaking to them (and their parents) about it...to bring back to the classroom for planning”

“more valuable activities; more practical and useful for the students’ life”

Revisit expectations and assessment

“I used to expect a lot from them. I revisited my evaluation practices to make sure the criteria allowed for a continuum.”

“Made me create rubrics/scoring charts that are more easily understood by my students”

“better understand criteria that we are looking for when we are evaluating our students; it’s not just about grammar. It’s about pragmatic, sociolinguistic and linguistic competence.”

“assessment of these tasks vary depending on where the students are on the continuum”

“more emphasis on the message transmitted rather than the grammar accuracy all the time”



Importance of oral comprehension and production

“I have now blocked off a period each week to have the students practice authentic conversation in a structured context.”

“Oral communication is key”

“need to use listening and speaking activities more frequently as a springboard for improving reading and writing skills”

“I am less strict with certain structures and focus more on their communicative ability”



Better understanding of the language learning process

“it has really helped me include more meta-cognition in my lessons”

“It gives me a better idea of the learning process and reassures me that the goal is accessible”

“the idea that students are presented with a much more realistic approach to language acquisition and the fact that there is a greater accent on their progress (i.e., I can statements) within the class”

“made me aware of acquisition of language and how to help students through this process to help them use (rather than perfect) the language”

“understand how self-confidence is important in all aspect of the learning of a second language”

“it helps me to open my eyes to the needs of my students”



Other

“From the B1 level up, almost half of the marks in the DELF evaluation grid for oral and production are for language acquisition....I had been putting less emphasis on grammar and language precision, but this makes me think that it is still needed.”

“The DELF scoring places a large emphasis on grammar accuracy that is difficult to enforce when so much time is spent in class to encourage speaking and listening proficiency.”

“focus on previous knowledge”

“a sense of relationship between the CEFR and curriculum document”



5. What changes, if any, have you made to the instructional resources you use in your FSL teaching to reflect your CEFR/DELF-related professional learning?

A total of 97% of the teachers reported changes. These reflected a greater use of online resources, authentic documents and action-oriented tasks, specific CEFR/DELF resources, as well as a wider array of reading materials and other types of resources.

Number of teachers who responded **Instructional Resources**
(Sample Responses)



Online Resources

“There are so many resources online that are more authentic for students to listen to, and that invoke authentic conversations about what is going on in the world today.”

“I have incorporated more listening activities from French media texts from foreign countries to expose my students to different accents and cultural nuances.”

“I try to incorporate the use of online sites that offer CEFR leveled activities, such as TV5monde.”



Authentic documents and action-oriented tasks

“Most of my activities involve talking about themselves and their surroundings. I focus on the basics using a variety of different authentic activities.”

“I use a more action oriented approach and choose resources that are authentic as opposed to grammar worksheets”

“I am in the process of making changes. I plan to do so for the following school year by taking examples from one of my resources entitled Scenarios for an Action Oriented Classroom and building on them, by allowing students to take ownership for their learning.”



Specific CEFR/DELF resources

“DELFL resources and pedagogical materials reflecting teaching practices in language acquisition”

“I am using much more DELF inspired activities using the DELF guides and manuals”

“I have made more use of DELF-type practice assignments and speaking activities. I like them because they help my students be prepared for the test, but also because they go hand-in-hand with our curriculum and are authentic types of tasks and situations that students can relate to.”

“I use the CEFR descriptors to guide my long range planning.”



Other

“I have shifted my use of rubrics to better explain success criteria in terms of what students are capable of doing (‘je peux’ statements). I have also shifted my practice to utilize learning centers in my classroom so that lessons are more student-centered and allow for students to access the lesson at various entry points (depending on their learning needs and DELF levels).”

“I use Power Points a lot, so I can show pictures students can talk about in French.”



Wider array of reading materials

“We have the most changes in the area of reading. We used to focus on literature primarily (plays, novels, poetry) as really the only form of written word but now we look for resources with a variety of text (letter, advertisements, posters...)”

“No more literature where one book is read by the entire class; students read a book of their choice (weekly journal and book club critique)”

“Texts that my students read are much more authentic (newspapers, emails, invitations, etc...), rather than from a textbook, for example.”

Create own resources

“We co-create anchor charts based on the vocabulary and expressions”

“We develop many more of our own department materials in conjunction with authentic texts and media in the target language”

“I create many of my own learning activities to focus on action oriented tasks that will engage my students.”



Analyses of Teacher Groups

Analyses were performed for each question in this section to determine whether particular planning practices were reported with similar frequencies across various teacher groups (i.e. FSL program, years of teaching experience, and CEFR level of the envisioned class). The analyses sought to answer the question, “Is the impact of professional learning on planning practices shared across various teacher groups in ways that match the overall results?”

These analyses identified that the patterns of reported planning practices were shared across the various teacher groups in ways that matched the patterns established in the overall analyses.

The patterns suggest that CEFR/DEL F-related professional learning is having a wide-reaching, meaningful impact on the planning practices of teachers across the spectrum.

Instructional Planning Question Focus	Teacher Groups for Analyses	Patterns Shared Across Groups	Patterns Matched Overall Results
1. Strategy use	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
2. Four skills	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
3. CEFR aspects	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
4. DEL F-scoring	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
5. Resource use	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes

TEACHING PRACTICE

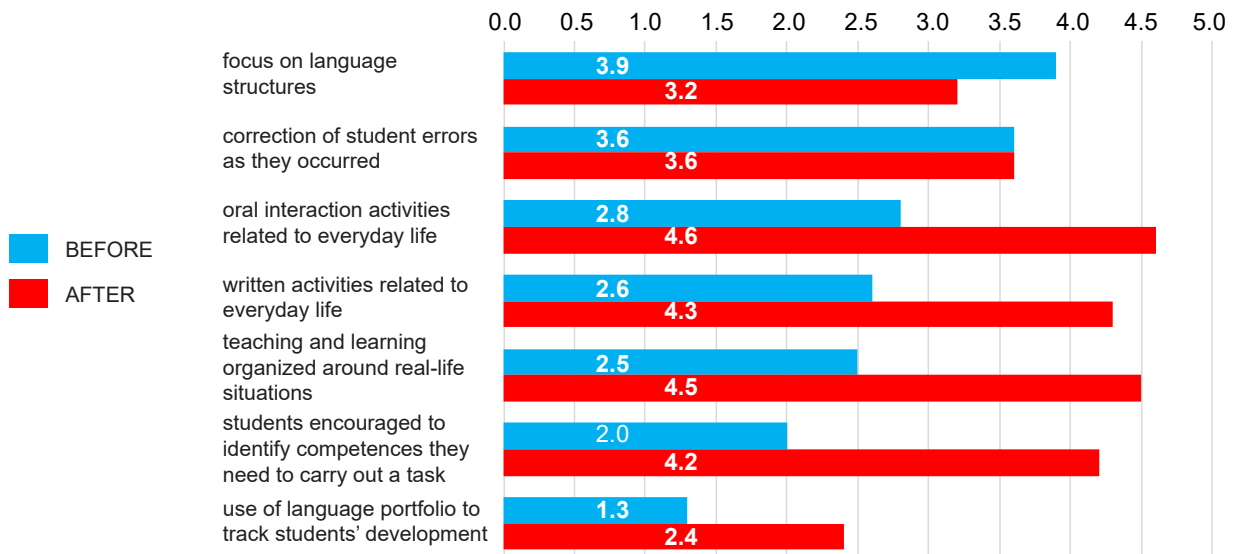
In responding to the questions in this section teachers considered the teaching practices they used in their classroom both before and after their CEFR/DELF-related professional learning experiences. Teachers were asked to reflect on the types of activities they used, the amount of emphasis they placed on specific competences, the ways in which language was presented to the students, and what changes in their teaching practice they felt had the greatest impact on increasing their students' FSL proficiency.

1. Please consider the following statements concerning teaching practice and indicate how often you made use of each item in your FSL teaching before and after your CEFR/DELF-related professional learning experiences.

Before their professional learning, the most-frequently-used teaching practices reported by the teachers were a focus on language structures (3.9) and the correction of student errors as they occurred (3.6).

After their professional learning, teachers reported an increase in using each of the targeted practices, except for focus on language structures (3.2) and correction of student errors as they occurred (3.6). The practice displaying the greatest degree of increase after the teachers' professional learning was related to asking students to think about the competences they would need to develop to carry out a task (before: 2.0; after: 4.2). Interestingly, the use of a language portfolio to track students' development was the least-frequent response both before (1.3) and after (2.4) the teachers' professional learning.

Frequency (0-5) of Teacher Practices BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning

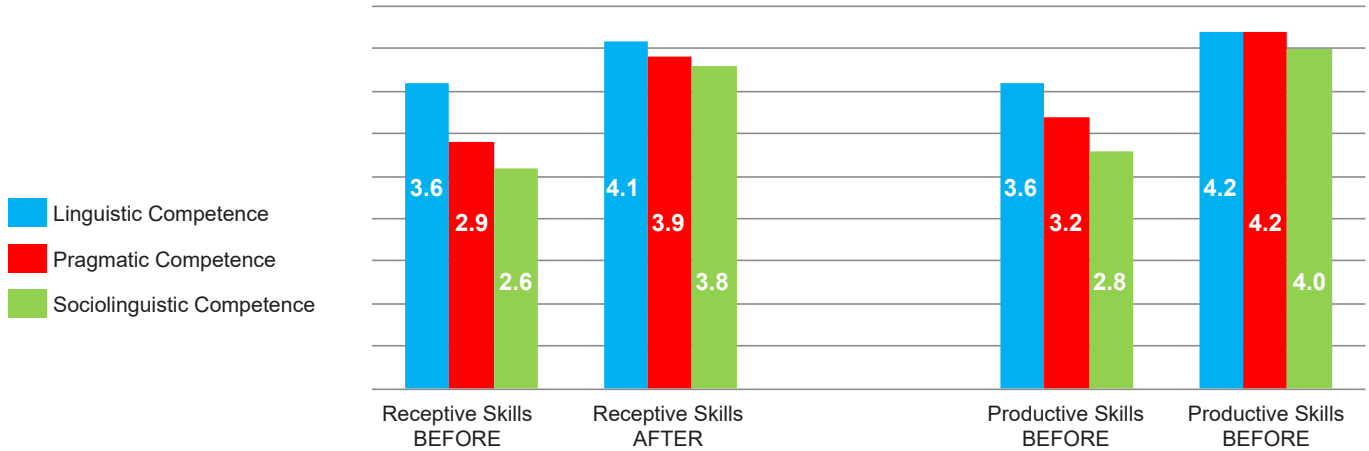


2. Please indicate the degree of emphasis you placed before and after your CEFR/DELF-related professional learning on linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences when your teaching was focused, first, on the development of your students' receptive skills (i.e., reading and listening) and, second, on the development of your students' productive skills (i.e., writing and speaking).

Before their professional learning, when their teaching was focused on their students' receptive skills, the teachers placed the greatest emphasis on linguistic competence (3.6), less emphasis on pragmatic competence (2.9), and the least emphasis on sociolinguistic competence (2.6). This ordering of emphasis was the same when the teaching was focused on their students' productive skills (linguistic competence: 3.6; pragmatic competence: 3.2; and sociolinguistic competence: 2.8).

After the teachers' professional learning, whether the teaching was focused on students' receptive or productive skills, all three competences saw an increase, particularly so for sociolinguistic competence (receptive: 3.8; productive: 4.0) and pragmatic competence (receptive: 3.9; productive: 4.2). These changes resulted in a more-balanced emphasis on the three competences (though with still a slightly greater reported emphasis on linguistic competence (4.1) when the teaching was focused on the receptive skills).

Emphasis (0-5) on Competences in Receptive and Productive Skills BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning



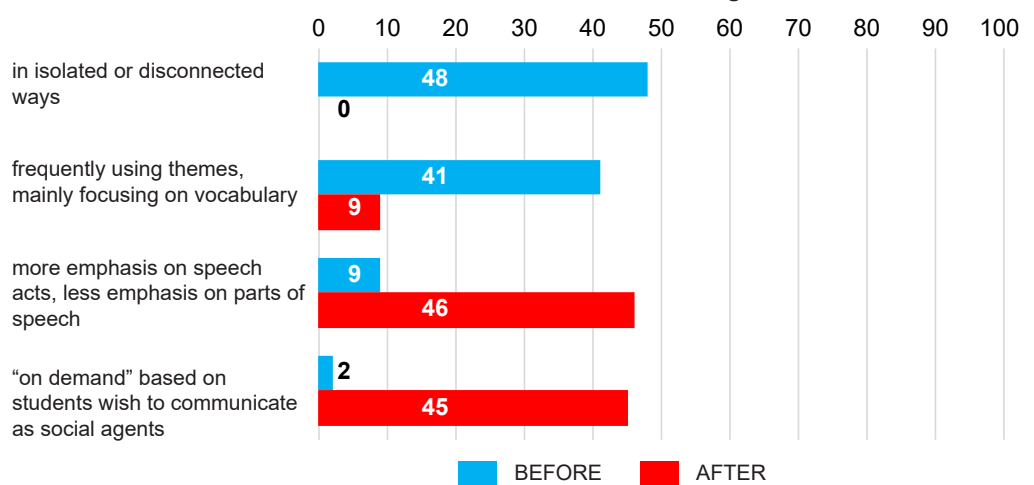
3. Please select the statement that best reflects how you presented language in your classrooms before and after your CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning.

Before their professional learning, the teachers indicated that language was most commonly presented in theme-based (48%) or in isolated or disconnected ways (41%). The presentation of language through speech acts (9%) or on-demand (2%) was very uncommon.

After their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning, the teachers demonstrated a dramatic and near-complete reversal of these patterns. The presentation of language through speech acts (46%) or on-demand (45%) after such learning accounted for nearly all responses, with a theme-based presentation accounting for only 9% of the responses and an isolated form for presentation being entirely absent from the teachers' responses.

The fundamental sweeping change in how teachers reported presenting language in their classrooms is worthy of note, as it assumes changes in how teachers would engage in planning practices and implies changes in how assessment and evaluation would be carried out.

Emphasis (0-5) on Competences in Receptive and Productive Skills BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning



4. Please describe one effective activity that you have used to teach grammar and/or vocabulary in context.

In nearly all responses, the activities mentioned in each category required students to use the language in purposeful and meaningful ways.

Number of teachers who responded

Activities

(Sample Responses)



Role-plays

“Being asked a question (interview style) and having to respond spontaneously in French.”

“giving a tour of an apartment for rent”

“Going shopping in a store – this role-playing activity is a good time to review vocabulary associated with clothing, sizing, money, conditional tense (polite requests), asking questions.”

Guided Reading

“Using simple, authentic texts, like tourist brochures as vehicles for grammar and vocabulary.”

“poetry and drama activities to teach parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs)”

“Students attempt to discover the rule for “prepositions de lieu” by reading a blog about a variety of dangerous and extreme sports around the world.”



Relating Personal Experiences

“A conversation discussing childhood (games, toys, etc.) using passé composé and imparfait”

“Talk about your weekend where we accent and use the passé composé in proper context.”

“For example, to teach adjectives and conditional tense, I do an activity where students describe a friend and discuss what they think they should buy him or her for his or her birthday based on what the person likes to do”



Planning/Problem solving

“Students are working in small groups to plan a birthday party.”

“What would you put in your suitcase if you were going to Hanoi?”

“Students wrote letters of advice to the grade 6 students moving into the intermediate division using the conditional verb tense”



Visual Prompts

“I like to throw up 5 or 6 pictures randomly and ask students to describe what they think is happening. Sometimes I ask them to incorporate all of the pictures. This not only builds vocabulary, but if I ask them to tell the story in the past, then they can use different verb tenses when speaking.”

“I have posted a list of frequently used words/expressions etc. on my wall. They are there -- always...so that students can refer to them on a daily basis.”

“Students used a photo of themselves with a think bubble. They used the past to describe what they were daydreaming about (something that they did on the weekend)”





Audio Prompts

“Watch videos of adolescents describing their homes and lives, discussing how they generally only use the present tense, identifying verbs in the present tense and exploring their usage”

“We might listen to a current song, and focus our attention on the vocabulary and verb tenses chosen to convey the meaning”

“Listen to text with that structure, pick out new structure, analyze in groups, analyze with teacher, teacher presents rules”

Writing for a Purpose

“Students create a postcard from a recent trip. Emphasis on parts of the postcard (salutation, message, person addressed)”

“The students were really upset about the school dress code. They decided that they would like to change it. They started by expressing their opinion in a short video recording. We researched dress codes from other schools. This created great discussion in which they enhanced their vocabulary. They had to write letters to the principal to express their opinion and make suggestions in a polite and formal manner. We talked about how to approach this task properly.”

“My students have a “Mon dictionnaire Personnel” in which they record new vocabulary along with the English translation. They also use write a sentence using the new word. I also have them (with my help), indicate whether the word is un nom, un verbe, un adjectif ou un adverbe and if it is a noun whether it is un nom masculin ou feminin. They get really excited when they get to write their own sentences!”



Task-based Vocabulary and Grammar Building

“Student generated list of language needs. Typically taught through identifying a task, the role the students will play, then collaborative discussion around types of expressions needed to achieve success in that task.”

“Students learned to use the future tense to describe a trip they were planning to take to a French speaking European country.”

“Parler de son weekend -- what strategies, language structures, etc do you need to do this effectively?”



Other

“Mini lessons in context based on what/where I see an issue in their work. We will do some oral examples and very occasionally (like if I have a supply teacher in) I may do a worksheet to reinforce the concept”

“Students maintain a feedback log (La langue sur demande: vocabulaire, grammaire, homophones). Daily conversations and writing are followed with individual and group feedback. Students interpret the feedback and make notes in their log. The log is collected 3 times to ensure that they are keeping up. They are allowed to use this log for the final exam.”

“Using the 4 strands to observe grammar one thing at a time; example past tense”

“All grammar is introduced orally in context first and I find kids pick up on using it this way.”



5. Please describe one activity that you have used to encourage authentic, spontaneous student-to-student interaction.

In nearly all responses, the activities mentioned in each category required students to use the language in purposeful and meaningful ways.

Number of teachers who responded **Activities**
(Sample Responses)

28

Structured or Unstructured Discussions

“Every week on Fridays, we choose a current event theme (e.g. environment), students pick controversial issues in the news, then do an oral or written production on topic in the form of a RAFT, then they go into groups having same topic and present their topic, then discuss the topic or controversy. Students share best productions with other students with whole class.”

“I give students different topics weekly and they have to speak for 2-5 minutes (depending on the subject) with another student focusing on speaking strategies already discussed and on the wall.”

“Daily unstructured talk-time. Students form into small discussion groups and are given time to chat in a very general manner about whatever they’d like to discuss.”

“Opinion sharing in small group situations with little or no preparation however they do have access to a guide-sheet with specific sociolinguistic structures of focus.”

“I take a topical issue or a controversial issue and have students talk with each other about it.”

“One activity that is simple, but that students enjoy is simply getting in partners to talk about their weekend”

27

Guided Role-plays

“Students order food but the server brings the wrong item”

“Role playing as family members to design a holiday with a set budget.”

23

Answering Personal/General Questions

“Asking each other basic questions about their families and past times which they must try to answer in full sentences.”

“I have pre-made questions that are based on authenticity (Where do you live, What do you eat after school etc...) I pulled it from the wheel of A1”

“Inside outside circle - daily conversation with specific grammar in mind”

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Other

“Providing feedback on assignments that are in-progress”

“Students are participating in a post-card exchange with French students. When they receive their responses, we discuss their correspondent’s message orally, talk about how we would like to respond, and then respond in writing.”

“An image as a déclencheur. Very often I add prompts so students also express details. Ex: An image of a girl on horse, a prompt for Wednesday and a prompt for afternoon”

“We use a recorder to record interaction between students on various topics, which pushes students to speak French.”



Problem Solving/Planning

“Giving students a problem to solve together (building something, solving a puzzle, etc.) where they have to speak in French and work as a team to accomplish the task.”

“We work on either reviewing a recent trip OR promoting the trip (with students who already took the trip) OR researching/ planning out what we will do on our trip - from train schedules / to researching possible lodgings, to itinerary planning”

“One of our blocks of conversation class had the students shop for clothes. This required conversation and questions around clothing but also around solving problems and around money.”



Discussing Media

“Music video reviews and discussion regarding what parts of the song/video students enjoyed and what they disliked.”

“I create a unit where students watch ... ‘La voix junior’ and they are the judges. They must give oral and written feedback on the performances using a bank of criteria we came up with in class”

6: Which change in your own teaching practice do you believe has had the greatest impact on your students’ proficiency?

Many teachers explained that the changes in their teaching practice had positively impacted their students’ proficiency because they devoted more time to student interaction (particularly speaking), they moved the classroom focus away from traditional grammar-focused lessons, and they situated grammar and vocabulary instruction within the skills needed to complete a task. They also commented on how these new teaching practices stressed the importance of meaning over isolated grammatical structures.

Whatever their particulars, the responses to this question consistently highlighted the move towards a more purposeful use of the target language.

Number of teachers who responded

Changes in Teaching Practice (Sample Responses)



Increased opportunities for students to practice the language

“Greater exposure to the language (for the students) while providing multiple opportunities to use the language

“Providing students with daily opportunities to parler/partager/ participer and to take risks”

“Actually setting aside intentional time for conversation in a structured manner has increased student proficiency in speaking French. Their confidence and willingness to take the risks to speak in French have increased by a large amount.”



Authentic action-oriented tasks

“Intentionally focusing on building capacity in students’ oral production through action-oriented, authentic tasks and discussions”

“Authenticity of tasks increase interest of students”

“Often using action-oriented tasks because students always see a concrete reason to communicate (and they want to do it).”



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Stress on using language in context (as opposed to grammar)

“What are they going to say, not do they know the passé composé”

“Now they know how to use correctly the grammar structures.”

“Teaching communicative acts through practice, validating if they can communicate a message and not if the grammar is off”

More student input into lessons, assessments, and goals

“Co-construction of success criteria and proposing authentic tasks. Providing the opportunity for self-reflection and goal setting.”



13

“I have student self- assess their work more frequently in order to strengthen the quality of their work and to help them further develop their skills.”

“I guess that letting students be part of the activity planning and execution is really great. They are often so creative and think of things in a wonderfully, smart way! Letting students get involved and having a real say in things is a win-win!”



7

Focus on all four skills

“Incorporating listening, speaking, reading, writing every day”

“Learning Centers which insure that students are being exposed to all competencies.”

“By incorporating all four stands into an interactive theme, I see that students are much confident with the FSL”

Other

“Teaching the same or familiar content using a variety of different activities in order to acquire fluency and mastery”

“Taking time to see and understand the needs of each student”

“Thinking about teaching in a different way.”

“When I use the I can statement for describing a task it improved the clarity of the expectations”



7



6

Use of more authentic resources

“Listening to authentic videos has vastly improved my students listening skills”

“Including authentic situations/vocabulary/videos”

“Currently, I am using more authentic listening resources than ever before. We use these for listening comprehension and in addition, they use these listening resources to create dialogues and skits which they then use in speaking performance tests.”

Analyses of Teacher Groups

Analyses were performed to determine whether particular teaching practices were reported with similar frequencies across various teacher groups (i.e. FSL program, years of teaching experience, and CEFR level of the envisioned class). The analyses sought to answer the question, “Is the impact of professional learning on teaching practice shared across various teacher groups in ways that match the overall results?”

Despite a few minor and isolated differences, the results demonstrate the beneficial impact that CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning is having on teachers across the various groups.

These findings suggest that CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning is having a wide-reaching and meaningful impact on the teaching practices of teachers across the spectrum.

	Teaching Practice Question Focus	Teacher Groups for Analyses	Patterns Shared Across Groups	Patterns Matched Overall Results
1.	Teaching Practices	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
2.	Emphasis on Competences (Receptive Skills)	CEFR-level of envisioned class Years of FSL teaching experience	Mostly	Mostly
2.	Emphasis on Competences (Receptive Skills)	CEFR-level of envisioned class Years of FSL teaching experience	Yes	Yes
3.	Presentation of Language	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
4.	Activities for Teaching Grammar / Vocabulary	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Mostly	Mostly
5.	Activities for Authentic, Spontaneous Student Interactions	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Yes	Yes
6.	Changes in Teaching Practice	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Mostly	Mostly

Assessment and Evaluation

In responding to the questions in this section, teachers considered their assessment and evaluation practices before and after their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences. The teachers reflected on the emphasis of their learning goals, success criteria, and feedback, the frequency of targeting various aspects of their students' work, the distribution of their summative evaluation across the four basic skills, and changes in their assessment and evaluation practices that they believed had had the greatest impact on increasing their students' FSL proficiency.

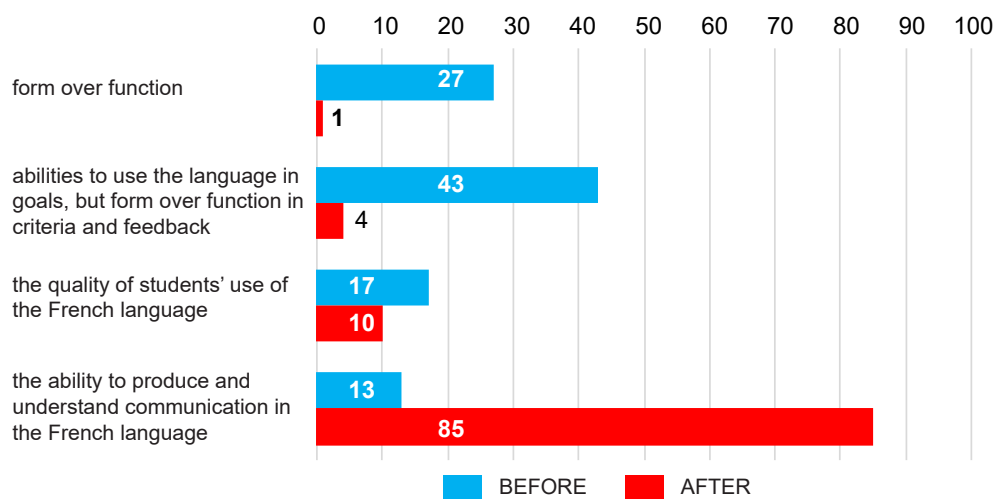
1. Please select the statement that best describes the emphasis of the learning goals, success criteria, and feedback in your FSL teaching before and after your CEFR/DELFL professional learning experiences.

Before their CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning the vast majority of the teachers reported a focus on form over function in their learning goals, success criteria, and feedback (27%) or only in their success criteria and feedback (43%).

After their professional learning, the teachers' responses revealed a striking and near-complete change in focus, with the vast majority of the teachers reporting either an emphasis on students' ability to produce and understand communication in the French language (85%) or on the quality of students' use of the French language (10%).

Emphasis (%) on Learning Goals, Success Criteria, and Feedback
BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning

This dramatic change in focus is worthy of note as it is in keeping with the earlier finding of a reported shift in how teachers reported presenting language in their classrooms.

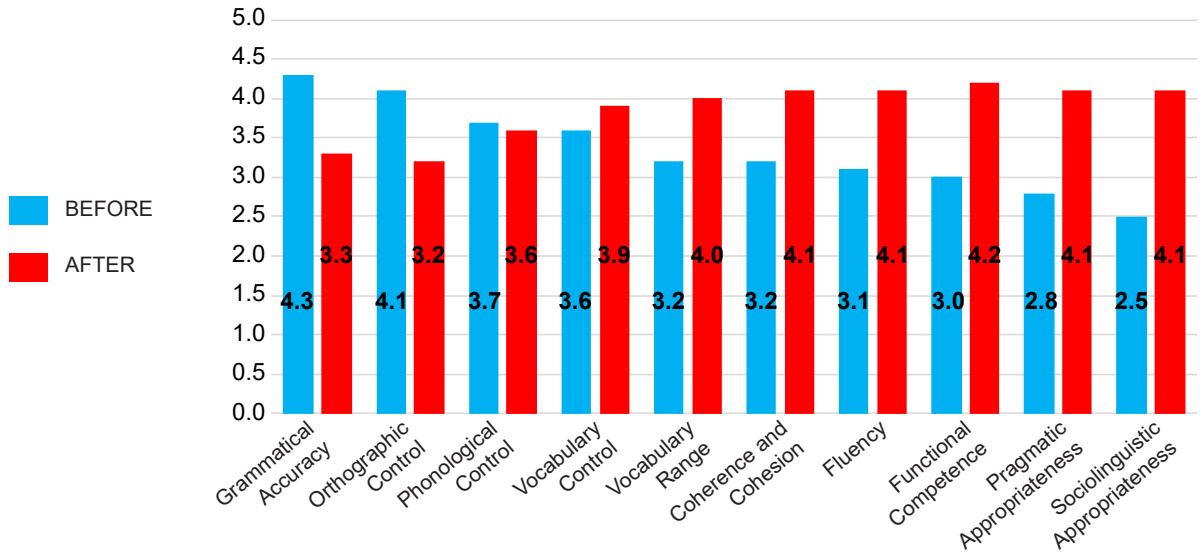


2. Please indicate how often you targeted the following aspects of your students' work in your feedback before and after your CEFR/DELFL-related professional learning experiences.

Before their professional learning, the teachers reported most often targeting grammatical accuracy (4.3), orthographic control (4.1), and phonological control (3.7) in their feedback on their students' work and least often targeting sociolinguistic appropriateness (2.5), pragmatic appropriateness (2.8), and functional competence (3.0).

After the teachers' professional learning, the reverse is true. The teachers indicated that their feedback targeted least often orthographic control (3.2), grammatical accuracy (3.3), and phonological control (3.6) and most often targeted functional competence (4.2), pragmatic appropriateness (4.1), and sociolinguistic appropriateness (4.1).

Frequency (0-5) of Targeting Aspects of Students' Work
BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning

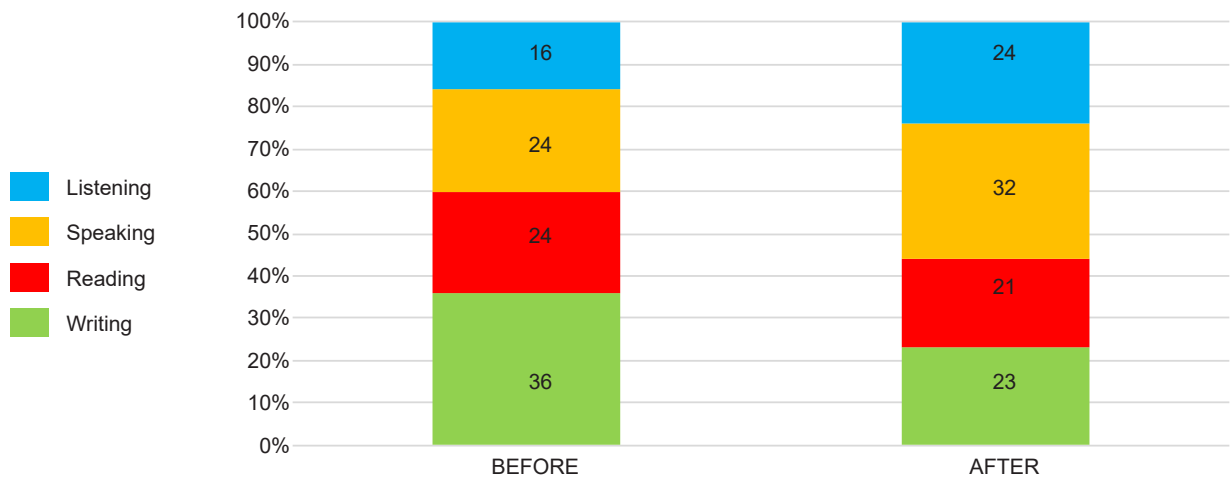


3. Please indicate approximately what percentage of your summative evaluation was devoted to each skill area before and after your CEFR/DEL F professional learning experiences.

Before their professional learning, the teachers reported devoting a combined 60% of their summative evaluation to the written skills (writing: 36%; reading: 24%) and only a combined 40% to the oral skills (speaking: 24%; listening: 16%).

After their professional learning the teachers shifted this distribution to a privileging of the oral skills (speaking: 32%; listening: 24%) over the written skills (writing: 23%; reading: 21%).

Proportion (%) of Skills in Summative Evaluation
BEFORE vs AFTER Professional Learning



4. Which change in your own assessment practices do you believe has had the greatest impact on increasing your students' FSL proficiency?

In nearly all cases, changes in assessment practices focused on students' use of the language in purposeful and meaningful ways.

Number of teachers who responded

Changes in Assessment Practices (Sample Responses)



Focus on speaking

"With way more focus on speaking than in the past, evaluations used to be tests, but now take many different forms."

"Making the speaking worth more has not only increased the students' marks, but also their confidence."

"Greater focus on oral communication and setting goals to speak more often."



Focus on communication

"a greater presence of communication in class"

"let the students talk and express their ideas"



Authentic tasks

"an authentic oral exam"

"carefully designing authentic tasks and selecting specific success criteria"



Feedback

"descriptive feedback"

"formative and constant"

"anecdotal written feedback ending with next steps"



Focus on listening

"the focus on specific listening strategies and the use of authentic listening examples"

"much more frequent listening activities"



Focus on all four skills

"Incorporating listening, speaking, reading, writing every day"

"Learning Centers which insure that students are being exposed to all competencies."

"By incorporating all four stands into an interactive theme, I see that students are much confident with the FSL"



Other

“Teaching the same or familiar content using a variety of different activities in order to acquire fluency and mastery”

“Taking time to see and understand the needs of each student”

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“Currently, I am using more authentic listening resources than ever before. We use these for listening comprehension and in addition, they use these listening resources to create dialogues and skits which they then use in speaking performance tests.”

Analyses of Teacher Groups

Analyses were performed to determine whether particular assessment practices were reported with similar frequencies across various teacher groups (i.e. FSL program, years of teaching experience, and CEFR level of the envisioned class). The analyses sought to answer the question, “Is the impact of professional learning on assessment practices shared across various teacher groups in ways that match the overall results?”

Despite a few minor and isolated differences, the results demonstrate the beneficial impact that CEFR/DELF-related professional learning is having on teachers across the various groups.

These findings suggest that CEFR/DELF-related professional learning is having a wide-reaching and meaningful impact on the assessment practices of teachers across the spectrum.

Assessment Practices Question Focus	Teacher Groups for Analyses	Patterns Shared Across Groups	Patterns Matched Overall Results
1. Learning Goals, Success Criteria, and Feedback	CEFR-level of envisioned class Years of professional learning	Yes	Yes
2. Aspects of Students' Work	CEFR-level of envisioned class FSL Program	Mostly	Mostly
3. Four Skills	CEFR-level of envisioned class Years of professional learning	Yes	Yes
4. Changes in Assessment	CEFR-level of envisioned class Years of professional learning	Yes	Yes

CONCLUSIONS

Three major conclusions emerged from the analyses of the responses to the survey provided by the participating FSL teachers.

1. Reorientation of How Language Is Presented

The teachers' CEFR/DELF-related professional learning is pushing them toward a sweeping reorientation of how language is being presented in their classrooms, right from the instructional planning stage, through the teaching practices used, down to how language is assessed and evaluated. This reorientation is very much in line with the principles and spirit of the CEFR and makes this finding important and worthy of note.

The results show that, in their planning, the teachers now place a more balanced emphasis on linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competences. They present authentic situations by means of action-oriented, individualized tasks. This emphasis is replacing former planning practices that privileged the development of linguistic competence realized by a planned focus primarily on the written skills enacted by way of a focus on form.

As concerns teaching practice, the teachers reported presenting language by way of speech acts or on-demand through a focus on authentic, everyday uses of the language. This includes increased opportunities for students to practise the language.

Finally, the teachers reported a focus in their assessment and evaluation on students' ability to produce and understand communication in the French language or on the quality of students' use of French. To this end, the teachers explained that they now use a variety of assessment and evaluation strategies and indicated providing descriptive feedback in formative and constant ways, using success criteria that are on a continuum.

2. Strategies and Materials Grounded in More Authentic, Everyday Uses of the Language

The teachers reported their CEFR/DELF-related professional learning has led them to place greater emphasis on the use of strategies and materials grounded in more authentic, everyday uses of French. They identified increased use of action-oriented tasks, authentic tasks, and authentic situations to develop their students' proficiency and to connect learning in their classrooms to authentic, everyday uses of the language.

The teachers also described increased use of online resources, authentic documents, specific CEFR/DELF resources, a wider array of reading materials, and resources they created on their own. The teachers explained that such authentic resources allow students to take ownership of their learning, provide tasks and situations that students can relate to, and go hand-in-hand with the FSL curriculum.

Finally, the teachers reported the use of authentic tasks and other means of assessment and evaluation, as a way of better understanding the needs of each student and of making assessment relevant for the students.

3. Changes in Practice

The changes in practice over time as a result of CEFR/DELF-related professional learning are being taken up in consistent and wide-reaching ways across various teacher groups (i.e. FSL program, years of teaching experience, years of CEFR/DELF-related professional learning experience, and CEFR level of the envisioned class)

The analyses showed that, except for a few minor isolated differences, the impact of CEFR/DELFR-related professional learning on the teachers' instructional planning, teaching practices, and assessment/evaluation practices were shared across various teacher groups in ways that matched the overall results. In other words, regardless of the CEFR level of the class the teachers had in mind when responding to the survey, whether the teachers were from a Core or Immersion program, and regardless of the number of years of FSL teaching experience or CEFR/DELFR-related professional learning the teachers had, they all reported similar influences on their practices as a result of their professional learning.

This is an important finding in that it suggests that the influence of this type of learning supersedes any differences reflecting the teachers' professional characteristics. It also shows that the varied forms of CEFR/DELFR-related professional learning experiences in which the Ontario FSL teachers engaged have resulted in a general, consistent, and wide-reaching shift toward privileging the development of students' ability to communicate in French in authentic, everyday situations.

In sum, this research found that CEFR/DELFR-related professional learning is having a powerful, positive impact on the reported practices of Ontario FSL teachers across the spectrum in ways that reflect the principles and spirit of the CEFR. These changes are well poised to further strengthen student proficiency and confidence in French and improve the effectiveness of FSL education in Ontario.

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