

Panorama

CASLT Research Series

Canadian Empirical Research on the CEFR: Laying the Groundwork for Future Research

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Canadian Association of
Second Language Teachers

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professeurs de langues secondes



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Every effort has been made to cite the works of relevant research correctly in this document. We regret any oversights that may have occurred and would like to rectify them in future printings.

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INTRODUCTION

This annotated bibliography was commissioned by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) in July 2012.

The objective of this annotated bibliography is two-fold:

1. To gather and review the existing empirical research focusing on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in the Canadian context;
2. To identify common themes, foci, and/or notable gaps in the body of empirical studies conducted to date.

METHODOLOGY

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

Relevant literature was collected and reviewed for this annotated bibliography in several ways, bearing in mind that “empirical research” has been defined as:

- “research that is based on data” (Mackey & Gass, 2005);
- “the collection and use of data” (Richards, J. Platt, & H. Platt, 1992).

Considering these definitions, literature reviews, position papers, and works that were not explicitly linked to data were not included in this annotated bibliography. As well, only those studies based on data collected in Canada were considered for inclusion (i.e., research conducted by Canadian scholars in non-Canadian contexts was excluded).

I also considered the “CEFR” focus of this annotated bibliography to include empirical work investigating the various components of the CEFR, including the European Language Portfolio (ELP), the CEFR self-assessment scales, and assessment tools based on the CEFR (e.g., Diplôme

d'études en langue française, DELF; Diplôme approfondi de langue française, DALF; Test de connaissance du français, TCF; etc.)

PROCEDURE

I began by consulting the 2011 Special Issue on “Trends in Second Language Teaching and Teacher Education” of *The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, as many of the empirical studies in this publication had focused specifically on the use of the CEFR in Canada.

Then, I did an electronic search of databases including *ERIC*, *Education Full Text*, *CBCA Education*, and *ProQuest® Educational Journals* using combinations of relevant key words (i.e., CEFR, Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio, Diplôme d'études en langue française, Canada, second language, additional language, etc.).

Following these searches, I reviewed the CASLT Stakeholder Meeting reports that summarized the CEFR-focused studies, programs, and/or initiatives being undertaken by Canadian research centres, universities, and Ministries of Education. Subsequently, I did manual online searches to obtain more information on the findings of those initiatives not represented in the peer-reviewed journal articles that I had located thus far. In many cases, I contacted the principal investigator or program organizer by email in order to obtain technical and summary reports related to data they had collected and/or program evaluations they had conducted.

After completing this search, I read all of the documents and prepared summaries of those I considered relevant based on the inclusion criteria described above (see Appendix A). I sent these summaries and/or a reference list to several Canadian scholars (e.g., Larry Vandergrift, Wendy Carr) involved in CEFR-based work in Canada for feedback and confirmation that I had not overlooked any relevant articles, reports, and/or studies.

FINDINGS

In all, 14 empirical studies satisfied the inclusion criteria for this annotated bibliography.¹ Other than the last three studies, all are presented under the university or organization that sponsored them.

After summarizing these empirical studies, I considered whether there were areas of convergence and/or divergence related to the foci, participants, methods, findings, implications, limitations, and/or future research described in this annotated bibliography.

The following is a list of the common themes that emerged following my analysis of the research to date.

FSL-DOMINANT

Ten of the fourteen studies (71%) focused on the use of the CEFR in the French as a Second Language (FSL) context in Canada. The other four studies examined its use across contexts of learning multiple languages (i.e., Kristmanson, Lafargue, & Culligan, 2011; Piccardo, in progress; Rehorick, Jóhannsdóttir, Parent, & Patterson, 2011) or English exclusively (i.e., Beaudoin, 2010).

CEFR FOCUS

There has been an equal focus on practices and assessment tools in the CEFR studies conducted to date. Six of the fourteen studies (i.e., 43%) reviewed here focused on the use of CEFR assessment tools (i.e., DELF/DALF, TCF) with secondary- or university-level FSL students. Six other studies investigated the use of other components of the CEFR (e.g., assessment grids, intercultural competence surveys) in

1 Although there are 16 summaries included in this annotated bibliography (see Appendix A), the three documents from Western University represented one larger study and were therefore counted as one empirical study.

school-based Canadian FSL programs and FSL teacher education programs. The two remaining studies examined adaptations of the ELP for the Canadian context.

FOCUS ON TEACHERS

Over half of the studies reviewed here (i.e., 9 of 14, or 64%) focused on teachers,² either exclusively or as one of many participant groups. The primary emphasis in the majority of these studies was on investigating teacher attitudes about the framework and the feasibility of adopting CEFR-related practices following a CEFR-based intervention (e.g., ELP implementation, action research group, CEFR-assessment grid training, etc.), which was most often provided by the researchers. Teacher perspectives were also sought (albeit to a lesser degree) about their experiences administering the DELF, their attitudes toward the CEFR-based tests, and their general beliefs about assessment and French in general.

The second most popular participant group represented in the studies conducted to date was students,³ focusing mainly on their reactions to taking the CEFR assessments (i.e., DELF, TCF). B.Ed. students and other participant groups (i.e., parents, principals, working adults) are not represented to the same degree as teachers and students in the empirical studies to date.

2 The term “teacher” used here is meant to refer to school-based elementary and/or secondary teachers, Bachelor of Education instructors, and teachers who were examiners for CEFR-based test administration (e.g., DELF assessors).

3 The term “student” used here is meant to refer to school-based elementary-, secondary- or university-level students.

METHODS

Nine of the 14 studies (i.e., 64%) used more than one research method to gather data related to the particular phenomenon under investigation. Questionnaires were used most frequently across all of the studies as the data collection method. The majority of studies that focused on the CEFR assessment tools included questionnaires to gauge learners' attitudes about the tests and their assessment experiences. As well, multiple participant group perspectives were included in 43% of the studies reviewed here, mostly for the purposes of triangulation (i.e., getting multiple perspectives on the same phenomena).

While a wide range of sample sizes was represented in this body of research, from smaller-scale case study inquiries to larger-scale studies with hundreds of participants, each focused on the applicability of the CEFR to their particular context (i.e., classroom, school, school board, province, etc.). This trend coincides with David Little's recommendation that small-scale CEFR inquiries are "the most effective way of responding to the CEFR's key challenge: that we 'democratize' L2 education by creating the conditions in which learners can 'steer and control' their own learning" (2011, p. 392).

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Calls for future research put forth by some of the authors centered on the following two areas:

1. Need to assess how teachers are making sense of the CEFR related to their existing beliefs and practices, and following trial implementation of CEFR activities/techniques;
2. Need to assess the experiences and perspectives of students regarding the CEFR-related teaching and/or testing they are exposed to.

Despite these recommendations and the trends related to the foci of the studies to date, it is clear from this review of the empirical literature that there are many possible avenues for future research on the CEFR in Canada. Furthermore, while there is evidence that some inquiries have been made regarding the CEFR and its adaptability to the Canadian context, the fact remains that many participant groups, provinces, and territories remain under-represented in the research to date. Certainly, this warrants a meeting of key researchers across Canada in order to develop a collective agenda for future research on CEFR.

As a starting point for considering future CEFR-related research directions, it would be fruitful to consider the reflective and research-based recommendations suggested by David Little (2011) in his article entitled *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: A research agenda*. Overall, Little urges that any CEFR research agenda needs to consider the interdependence of each educational area implicated, focusing particularly on pedagogy:

Anyone who wishes to implement a research agenda concerned with the interdependent development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment will need to begin by engaging with central features of the CEFR and reflecting above all on their pedagogical implications. (p. 383)

In addition to this general recommendation, Little proposes that researchers should concentrate on completing specific research tasks related to particular areas in education (see table below). In order to get a sense of how the Canadian research fares in relation to these objectives, I have referenced those Canadian studies that correspond to the objectives put forth by Little, where these exist.

Research Task (Little, 2011)	Canadian Studies
Descriptors	
Adapt existing descriptors to develop new scales for spoken interaction and spoken production that focus on learner talk and teacher talk as components of classroom discourse calculated to promote L2 learning through L2 use.	n/a
Develop descriptors for e-mail, texting, chatting, and other forms of electronic communication (written interaction).	n/a
Expand the descriptors in the illustrative scales and/or develop new descriptors that reflect the varieties of Internet communication available to learners at successive proficiency levels.	n/a
Learner Trajectories	
Develop CALP-oriented (i.e., Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) descriptors for levels A1, A2, and B1.	n/a
Plurilingualism	
Explore the ways in which existing descriptors can be applied to L1 use and identify which parts (if any) of the CEFR's descriptive scheme cannot be applied to L1 use.	n/a
Curriculum	
For your chosen learner group, develop a CEFR-based curriculum that reflects the learners' needs, explicitly accommodates learner initiative, recognizes that language learning is a form of language use, defines communicative outcomes in "can-do" terms, and describes the varieties of classroom discourse apt to promote learning.	n/a
Develop a goal-setting and self-assessment tool to support the reflective learning processes central to curriculum implementation.	n/a
Develop a handbook for teachers.	Resources developed for/by language teachers: Kristmanson et al. (2011) Majhanovich et al. (2010) Piccardo (in progress)
Develop a portfolio for teachers, designed to support record-keeping and encourage reflection on the learners' progress towards the L2 learning goals articulated in the curriculum.	Second Language Research Institute of Canada. (2010)
Use action research methods (e.g., Burns, 2010) to explore and evaluate the implementation phase of the project.	Kristmanson et al. (2011)
Assessment	
Develop assessment tasks that derive directly from the "can-do" descriptors of the curriculum and rating grids that draw on the language quality/competence scales in Chapter 5 of the CEFR.	Assessment scales/grids adapted for/by language teachers: Kristmanson et al. (2011) Majhanovich et al. (2010) Piccardo (in progress)

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Second Language Research Institute of Canada. (2010). Extending the language portfolio to teacher education. *L2RIC Notes*. University of New Brunswick: Fredericton, NB.

Tang, M. (2010). Le DELF et l'avenir de l'apprentissage du français en Colombie-Britannique. *Immersion Journal*, 32(2), 20–24.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REFERENCED IN THE REPORT

Little, D. (2011). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 44(3), 381–393.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of language teaching & applied linguistics* (2nd ed.). Essex, UK: Longman.

APPENDIX A:

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (ORGANIZED BY INSTITUTION)

WESTERN UNIVERSITY

1. Majhanovich, S., Faez, F., Smith, M., Taylor, S., & Vandergrift, L. (2010). Describing FSL language competencies: The CEFR within an Ontario context. Unpublished manuscript, Western University, London, ON.

FOCUS

- To inform upcoming Ontario Ministry FSL curriculum review
- To explore how CEFR might support FSL teachers as they plan, teach, and assess student French language proficiency
- To determine if CEFR will motivate FSL students
- To determine if CEFR descriptors could be useful as a self-assessment tool

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers (n = 83)

- Mostly female (only 5 males)
- Range of teaching experience

Program:	Grade Level:
CF (n = 44)	Elementary (n = 40)
FI (n = 39)	Secondary (n = 43)

Students (n = 942)

Program:
CF (n = 466)
FI (n = 377)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Curriculum Mapping

- Mapped CEFR descriptors on to Ontario FSL curriculum

CEFR Training

- See Faez et al., 2011a

Questionnaire (pre and post)

Teachers (see Faez et al., 2011a)

Informed by literature on task-based language teaching.

Students

- What they can/like to do in French
- How well they think they can do these things in French (i.e., “can-do” questions related to CEFR descriptors)
- Asked to define “bilingualism” and report the degree to which they believed they were bilingual

Questionnaire simplified for lower grades, but not for older students; older student questionnaire data was triangulated with teacher responses.

Focus Groups

- See Faez et al., 2011a

Interviews

- Subsample of FI teachers (n = 11)
 - Elaborate on questionnaire responses

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Curriculum Mapping

- Ontario FSL curriculum matches CEFR descriptors

Students

- Statistical increase in students' perceived competence and affiliation towards CEFR-related FSL activities
- Strongest change = Male Grade 9 CF students
- Marked increase in the use of French outside of the classroom in Ottawa area (attributed to French presence)
- CF and FI students reported significant increases in French skills after experience with CEFR activities

Teachers (CF and FI)

- Positively inclined toward CEFR, especially after using CEFR activities
- Reported need for more training (i.e., how to use CEFR; how to incorporate CEFR into their program)
- Reported that CEFR promotes learner autonomy, goal setting, learner self-confidence, self-assessment, motivation to learn French, and supports development of functional bilingualism

For detailed Teacher Findings see Faez et al., 2011a, 2011b.

LIMITATIONS

- Cannot generalize to Ontario population (especially with respect to relatively small CF and FI teacher samples)
- Teachers had short time with CEFR activities, which explains their misconceptions about what the CEFR is and what it can do, and their reported need for more PD

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2. Faez, F., Majhanovich, S., Taylor, S., Smith, M., & Crowley, K. (2011a). The power of “can-do” statements: Teachers' perceptions of CEFR-informed instruction in French as a second language classrooms in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 1–19.

FOCUS

- To gauge teacher perceptions of CEFR, CEFR-informed instruction, and student interest in CEFR-based instruction

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers (n = 93)

- Ontario FSL teachers

Program:	Grade Level:
CF (n = 50)	Elementary (n = 54)
FI (n = 43)	Secondary (n = 39)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

CEFR Training (n = 93)

- Task-based activity kits (p. 7)
- Teaching approach based on CEFR “can-do” statements
- 5-skills/activities from CEFR
- Spent 3 months using materials

Focus Groups (n = 53)

- Divided into 2 groups (elementary and secondary)
- Experiences implementing CEFR training kits
- Understanding of descriptor levels
- Classroom strategies and supplementing

Interviews (n = 11)

(all FI teachers)

- Protocol based on focus group data
- Frequency and effectiveness of teachers' use of CEFR-informed instruction
- Observations about student confidence and/or autonomy
- Perceived student interest in CEFR-based instruction

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Perceived Strengths/Advantages of CEFR-based Instruction

- Enhances learner autonomy
- Increases student motivation
- Builds student self-confidence
- Promotes authentic language use
- Students are able to assess their own abilities in French.

Perceived Challenges of Using CEFR-based Instruction

- CEFR teaching = separate from curriculum
 - Viewed training as an add-on to the curriculum rather than an approach used to cover various aspects of the curriculum
 - Reported time restrictions associated with implementation
- Limited understanding of the CEFR and its applicability in their classrooms
 - Confusion about descriptors; different interpretations of levels; need for more exemplars
- Transition to CLT-oriented pedagogy
 - Grammar- to action-oriented teaching = challenging
- Suggested solutions:
(i) time/exposure to CEFR-based teaching; (ii) CEFR-related PD (e.g., exemplars)

Relevance of CEFR to Context = CF vs. FI

- Reported belief that CEFR needs to be applied differently
 - CF = learning French; FI = learning content through medium of French
- Suspect potentially stronger impact in CF
 - CF students generally have lower confidence in their language abilities
 - Potentially more applicable to CF because of focus on learning language as opposed to content
- Suggested solutions: (i) adapted descriptors for FI context; (ii) adapted expectations for CF/FI context

LIMITATIONS

- CEFR-based instruction was limited to TBLT activities (should be more comprehensive)
- CEFR-based instruction was focused on general L2 ability (should be oriented to context, like CF or FI)
- ELP was not included in this investigation of CEFR implementation

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Should examine how teachers make sense of the CEFR relative to how they implement it
- Could observe CEFR-based instruction in action
- Explore student views of CEFR-related practice in more detail

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3. Faez, F., Taylor, S., Majhanovich, S., & Brown, P. (2011b). Teacher reactions to CEFR's task-based approach for FSL classrooms. *Synergies Europe*, 6, 109–120.

FOCUS

- To determine if/how introduction to CEFR and task-based approach had an effect on FSL teachers
- To investigate links between use of TBLT activities and teacher's
 - Attitudes and beliefs about teaching grammar and communication
 - Perceptions of student abilities
 - Interest in continuing such activities

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers (n = 93)

- Ontario FSL teachers

Program:	Grade Level:
CF (n = 50)	Elementary (n = 54)
FI (n = 43)	Secondary (n = 39)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

CEFR Training (n = 93)

- Task-based activity kits
- Connected to “can-do” statements
- 5-skills/activities from CEFR

Pre-Questionnaire (n = 93)

(All teachers from training)

- Demographic information
- Prior experience learning/teaching French
- Attitudes towards teaching French
- Attitudes towards CLT and TBLT
- Perceptions of student abilities

Post-Questionnaire (n = 53)

- Shift in attitudes towards TBLT and CEFR instruction?
- Shift in perceptions of student abilities in French?

These were the same teachers who participated in the focus group (see Faez et al., 2011a).

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Changes from Pre- to Post-Questionnaire

CF and FI Teachers

- Increase in perceived student confidence and ability to perform tasks in French (bigger difference for CF teachers)
- Positive correlation between teacher experience with CEFR-based instruction (i.e., the extent to which they used the activity kits) and interest in continuing to use this approach (i.e., the more they used them, the more they wanted to use them in the future)

Only CF Teachers

- Marginally positive change in attitude toward task-based approaches vs. grammar-based approaches (FI teachers = no significant change)

IMPLICATIONS

- Potential benefits of PD sessions that target teacher beliefs related to:
 - Theory/premise behind the CEFR
 - Perceived student abilities

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Need more comprehensive approach to the implementation of CEFR pedagogy if making links to student outcomes (i.e., more than just TBLT)

OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (OCDSB)

Phase 1

1. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. (2010). *Grade 12 proficiency test: Spring 2010 pilot project* (Technical report). Ottawa, ON.

FOCUS

- To examine potential use of CEFR levels to set program objectives
- To provide further training opportunities on CEFR teaching and assessment strategies
- To investigate potential benefits of sharing assessment strategies across the province to inform practice
- To determine the place of the CEFR in the revised curriculum

Project funded by Ontario Ministry of Education.

PARTICIPANTS

Observers (n = 14)

Examiners (n = 13)

- Majority taught FI

Students (n = 84)

- Grade 12 FSL students
- More females than males
- Large proportion were in early FI programs in Gr. 8
- Sample of convenience
- Students assigned to one of three test level groups based on program of study:

CF/DELTA A2 (n = 17)
EF/DELTA B1 (n = 22)
FI/DELTA B2 (n = 45)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

DELTA Test

- Four components (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
- Used descriptive statistics to compare performance of three groups (composite score and section scores)

Comparison involved achievement of three different groups of students on three different measures of proficiency.

Questionnaire

Post-Test Students (who wrote the DELTA), Assessors and Observers

- Likert-scale items (closed)
- Open ended questions
- Descriptive stats and some non-parametric stats run on responses

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Testing

- All 84 students were successful at level tested
- CF students (i.e., A2 level) had highest average score
- Trends across all participants/levels challenged
 - Lowest score = speaking
 - Highest score = listening (CF & EF); reading (FI)

Questionnaire

Attitudes about French

- Learning French important to future
- Enjoy listening and speaking the most
- Significant relationship between use of French outside class and belief that learning French will help in future

Perceptions of DELF (general, difficulty, similar/different to class activities)

- Majority felt DELF is a fair assessment of proficiency is helpful for future pursuits
- Most were confident that they had achieved the level tested
- Students with higher confidence ratings = higher test scores
- CF and EF = speaking section of DELF identified as being most difficult (same as examiners and observers)
- FI = listening section identified as being most difficult
- DELF writing activities = most similar to in-class tasks
- Listening activities (examiners felt DELF activities more similar to class than students)
- Examining and observing perceived to be beneficial PD

Test Preparation

- 20% reported preparing for test
- Individually or with help from teacher

LIMITATIONS

- Sample not representative of larger FSL population

IMPLICATIONS

- Purposeful development of learning and assessment activities similar to DELF test activities (specifically for listening and speaking) could help students be more successful on DELF tests

FUTURE RESEARCH

- More research is needed with larger more random sample to enable generalization to the broader population
- Should also investigate if students choosing their own level makes a difference in perceptions and/or test scores (e.g., less “near perfect” scores when choosing lower level than actual proficiency)
- Need to try administering the DELF twice over the course of the school year (i.e., one per semester to decrease any delayed effects if taking test long after FSL class or effects of more time to prepare)
- Should review existing research for similar studies to justify this research, improve instruments, guide analysis, and interpretation of data, etc.

Phase 2

.....
2. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. (2011). *Grade 12 proficiency test: Results from 2010-2011 administration* (Technical report). Ottawa, ON.

FOCUS

- To investigate the appropriateness of DELF as measure of French proficiency for Grade 12 students

PARTICIPANTS

Students (n = 171)

- Grade 12 FSL students
- Majority were in early FI programs in Gr. 8
- Still more females (larger sample than Phase 1)
- 500 students invited

- Inclusion criteria = all CFs and EFs invited b/c low enrollment; but random selection of FI b/c high enrollment
- Exclusion criteria = late FI enrolment in Gr. 8; Phase 1 participation

Program:	DELFL Level Selected:
CF (n = 40)	(includes CF, EF, and FI)
EF (n = 34)	A2 (n = 11) (all CF)
FI (n = 97)	B1 (n = 33) (all three levels; 60% of CFs)
	B2 (n = 127) (4% of CFs; 94% of EFs; 94% of FIs)

DELFL Assessors (n = 53)

- 10 assessors supervised testing during both semesters

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

DELFL Test

- Levels A2, B1, and B2 selected
- Test administered twice
 - Semester 1 (n = 95)
 - Semester 2 (n = 76)

Questionnaire

Pre-Test

(Students who opted out of testing)

- Language spoken at home
- Attitudes toward French language
- Reasons for not participating
- Factors that would make them choose to write the DELFL

Post-Test

(Students who wrote DELFL and Assessors)

11 questions (closed and open-ended)

- Attitudes about the French language
- Reasons for taking DELFL
- Test level selection
- Test preparation
- Perceptions of the DELFL
- Difficulty of DELFL activities

- Similarity of DELFL and classroom activities
- Recommending the DELFL to others

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Testing

- 97% of participants were successful on DELFL level tested
- Range of scores = 68.6%–73.8% (50% = minimum to pass)
 - A2 = most successful on reading; least on speaking
 - B1 = most successful on speaking; least on writing
 - B2 = most successful on speaking; least on listening
- No program differences observed
- Those who did not respond to the DELFL invitation had significantly lower French grades than those who did respond (i.e., who opted out or took the test)

Questionnaire

Attitudes about French

- Similar to Phase 1
 - Learning French important to future
 - Enjoy listening and speaking better than reading and writing
- Different from Phase 1
 - No significant relationship between belief that learning French is helpful in the future and increased use outside classroom

Reasons for Taking DELF

- Not asked in Phase 1
 - Reasons FOR taking the test:
(i) belief that test would help in future; (ii) encouragement from parents; (iii) confidence in passing test
 - Reasons for OPTING OUT:
(i) too busy; (ii) desire to avoid missing a full day of school; (iii) no perceived benefit to them

Test Level Selection

- Not asked in Phase 1
 - Nearly all students felt they had made the right choice of level
 - 75% received help selecting test level
 - FI students received more assistance than CF students
 - CF students reported that choosing test level was more difficult

Test Preparation

- Similar to Phase 1
 - Students got help preparing for the test from their teacher or prepared individually
- Different from Phase 1
 - Larger proportion (i.e., 36%) reported preparing for test

Perceptions of DELF/Success

- Similar to Phase 1
 - Majority felt DELF was fair assessment of proficiency and helpful for future pursuits
 - 88% = confident they had been successful on test (higher confidence rating = higher test score) (BUT students in Phase 2 chose their level)

Remaining ANALYSES = across TEST LEVEL whereas in Phase 1, analysis = across PROGRAM.

Difficulty with DELF Activities

- Different from Phase 1
 - Reading and writing activities = easiest
 - Reported enjoyment of specific activities closely related to ratings of difficulty
 - A2 = speaking activities most difficult
 - B1 and B2 = listening activities most difficult

Students vs. Assessors = contrasting patterns! (i.e., A2 and B2 = speaking most difficult; B1 = writing most difficult).

Similarity Between DELF and Classroom Activities

No significant relationship between student similarity ratings and overall DELF component scores.

- Similar to Phase 1
 - Across all test levels, DELF writing activities = most similar to in-class tasks

Students vs. Assessors = contrasting patterns (i.e., assessors rated speaking activities as most similar).

Recommending DELF to Others

- Similar to Phase 1
 - Majority of students were positive about the DELF
 - Reported willingness to recommend DELF to others
- Different from Phase 1
 - Assessors more likely to recommend the DELF because students were able to choose their level this time

IMPLICATIONS

- Authors advocate for continuation of CEFR training for CF and FI teachers
- Testing is having a profound effect on FSL instruction at secondary level (e.g., teacher awareness of need to focus on developing listening and speaking skills)
- Student information sessions about the DELF may help to encourage reluctant students to take part

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Should invite all eligible Grade 12 students to better understand potential demand for DELF
- Need for testing to take place across multiple schools to maximize logistics (e.g., long travel; missing full day of school, etc.)
- Should investigate in more detail student reluctance in taking the DELF

Phase 3

.....
3. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. (in progress). Grade 12 proficiency test: Preliminary results from 2011-2012 administration (Technical report). Ottawa, ON.

PARTICIPANTS

- Grade 12 FSL students (i.e., n = 467)
- Open invitation sent to all 740 Grade 12 students

Semester #1 (n = 245)

Semester #2 (n = 222)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Testing

- Administered test twice (November and April)
- Similar patterns in student choice to Phase 2 (i.e., A2 = only CF; B1 & B2 = all three levels)
- More testing locations provided

Questionnaire

- New online format
 - Pre-Test (ALL Students)
 - Post-Test (Principals, Assessors)
 - Post-Test (Students who wrote the DELF)

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Preliminary Findings

- Similar to Phases 1 and 2
 - Students were well-prepared for DELF and highly successful
- Different from Phases 1 and 2
 - Larger-scale sampling/testing show encouraging results in the benefits they provide (e.g., increased student interest, heightened awareness of the DELF, improved perceptions of student capabilities in French, evidence of deeper understanding of CEFR principles and their application to teaching and planning)

Online Format (questionnaire)

- Improved quantity and quality of data collection, ease of data analysis, data security

IMPLICATIONS

- Greater pressure and potential methodology risks associated with implementing DELF in multiple sites

1. Kristmanson, P. L., Lafargue, C., & Culligan, K. (2011). From action to insight: A professional learning community's experiences with the European Language Portfolio. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 53–67.

FOCUS

- To investigate work of PLC within an action research project
- To synthesize PLC's exploration of the CEFR and ELP
- To examine ways in which teachers build understanding of CEFR and ELP, and transform understanding into action

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers (n = 10)

- New Brunswick L2 Teachers

Program:

FSL (n = 5)

English (EAL) (n = 1)

Spanish & EAL (n = 1)

Maliseet (n = 2)

Mandarin (n = 1)

Core Group (n = 5):

- Participated actively and regularly in both teaching and research aspects of the project
- All female teachers
- Varied teaching experience (most = 5 to 10 years)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

PLC Discussions

- 6 formal meetings spanning the course of 2 years
- Field notes taken during day-long sessions
- Teachers created language portfolios based on ELPs, designed lesson plans, activities, posters based on “can-do” statements for teaching

Focus Groups

- 1-hour focus groups conducted during PLC meetings

Interviews

- Conducted during PLC meetings

Analysis

- Field notes and transcripts were analyzed for emergent themes
- Emergent themes were introduced to the group for further discussion at subsequent PLC meeting

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Two Actions Taken on by the PLC

Teacher Development of a Philosophical Stance

- Teachers reflected on what they were doing and why they were doing it (i.e., way in which CEFR and ELP principles compared to their beliefs/current practices)
- Did not always share the same pedagogical perspectives
- 3 emergent principles: (i) learner autonomy; (ii) intercultural awareness; (iii) democratic pedagogy

Teacher Development of an Action Plan

- Teachers linked philosophical stance to what was taking place in their classrooms (i.e., discussed how to put beliefs into action)
- Reported that this action plan helped them stay on track and reflect on its effectiveness

IMPLICATIONS

- Shared language emerged from framing PLC discussions around empirical literature
- Collaborative action research allowed for dynamic and reflective means to encourage inquiry and action

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2. Second Language Research Institute of Canada. (2010). *Extending the language portfolio to teacher education. L2RIC Notes*. University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB.

FOCUS

- To gauge reaction of student-teachers and instructors to language portfolio following field testing in 2009-2010 across eight Faculties of Education

PARTICIPANTS

B.Ed. Students (n = 94)

- FSL focus

B.Ed. Instructors (n = 7)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Survey

- No information provided

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Positive Reaction to Portfolio

(students and teachers)

- Could take control of language development
- Adequately reflected the language skills required of teachers
- Could adequately gauge their language development using the “I can” statements provided

Concerns

- Although the document was easy to follow, some reported concern about its length.

Point of Divergence

- Disagreed on whether the portfolio should be a compulsory component of the B.Ed. program (more so with students than instructors)

IMPLICATIONS

- Recommend creating an accompanying user guide
- Adjustments needed based on feedback (despite positive response)

.....

3. Dicks, J., & Culligan, K. (2010). *Le test de connaissance du français (TCF): A critical perspective*. Unpublished manuscript, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB.

FOCUS

- To address lack of formal reading and writing assessment at UNB
- To pilot use of new test; i.e., TCF
- To consider TCF oral component as replacement for existing oral test; i.e., Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

PARTICIPANTS

Students (n = 16)

- New Brunswick teacher candidates

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Survey

- 13 questions
- Perceptions about new TCF sections, how TCF relates to OPI

Tests (TCF and OPI)

TCF

- 4 language skills
- Grading = CEFR level scales
- TCF is one test that places students along continuum (DELFL = multiple tests of different levels)

OPI

- Individual interview
- Open-ended questions
- Simulate real-life conversations

Compare scores on both tests.

RELEVANT FINDINGS

3 Major Findings

Positive Reaction to Reading and Writing Sections of TCF

- Progression of the test (easy to difficult)

Lack of Face Validity for OPI

- Reported OPI as being more valid oral measure than TCF (DESPITE data showing strong positive correlation between participants' TCF oral scores and OPI scores)

Concerns Regarding the TCF

- Tester fatigue because of length (esp. in listening section)
- Perceived cultural bias (esp. in listening section) (e.g., accent, vocabulary, unfamiliar cultural references, unfamiliar contexts, idiomatic expressions)

IMPLICATIONS

- TCF has potential for use in New Brunswick
- Authors propose that TCF and similar tests can be adapted for use in the Canadian context but must pay close attention to cultural context/bias

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD (EPSB)

1. Edmonton Public School Board. (2012). International French language examination and credentialing service. Unpublished manuscript, Edmonton, AB. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/funding/federal.aspx>

FOCUS

- To track student performance on DELF/DALF tests
- To gain perspective on FSL programming; i.e., student and teacher support for and access to CEFR/DELFL/DALF credentialing opportunities

PARTICIPANTS

No exact numbers of students taking tests; only percentages provided.

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Specific detail not provided in this report about data collection methods.

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Success rates (comparing 2011-2012 to previous years)

- Observed increase in proportion of successful candidates at the test level selected from 2010-2011
- Success rate still lower than 2009-2010
- Fewer students from registering for DELF compared to other FSL credentialing opportunities

Claim that encouraging such credentialing opportunities

- Verifies students' FSL proficiency
- Recognizes students' years in FSL programming
- Builds teacher, administrative, and public confidence in Alberta's FSL programs
- Helps retain more CF and FI students in high school
- Enhances program delivery (support offered to teachers)

Offering Training Sessions for FSL Teachers

- Familiarizes them with CEFR expectations and DELF/DALF accreditation levels
- Helps prepare students for the tests (in and out of class)

.....

2. Beaudoin, M. (2010). *European language portfolio in whole-school use*. Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education: Edmonton, AB.

FOCUS

- To track implementation of ELP in Whole-School Use (ELP-WSU) project

- To investigate the use of the ELP to support language learning and teaching on a whole-school basis; i.e., all languages, including English and French
- To produce a general guide for whole-school ELP implementation with case studies included

PARTICIPANTS

Global (n = 29 schools)

- From 29 different countries already involved in a whole-school ELP project

Canada (n = 1 school)

- Parents, staff, students

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Process and Product

Additional details about data collection are not provided in this report.

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Parents' English Language Proficiency

- Identified as a challenge by parents and staff
- Attempted to re-characterize common parent-helper tasks as language tasks
- Proposed using the CEFR to articulate what levels of English language proficiency would need to complete these tasks

Language Task Mapping

- Mapped common parent language tasks onto CEFR tasks/expectations
- Referred to as "correlations" in the report; however, the mappings do not correspond to the traditional definition of a correlation

- Report that new language for parent tasks are effective for parents to understand the level of English required to participate at school (even basic level enables participation in common tasks)
- Teachers attempting to make mapping more user-friendly to parents (e.g., created task cards to be completed)

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Investigate whether translating task cards into different languages affects parental engagement
- Need to approach parent community to examine perceptions of language proficiency in further detail
- Should find ways of sharing this initiative with community at large

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION (OISE)

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1. Piccardo, E. (in progress). Encouraging the culture of evaluation among professionals (ECEP). Unpublished manuscript, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), Toronto, Ontario, ON.

FOCUS

- To investigate feasibility and potentials of CEFR and ELP in Canadian contexts

PARTICIPANTS

L2 Teachers (n = 12)

Program:

ESL (n = 5)

FSL (n = 4)

Heritage Language (n = 2)

(one participant not specified)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

CEFR Training and Implementation (n = 12)

- Two day workshop on CEFR
- Teacher implementation of CEFR-related activities (one month)
- Teachers asked to provide feedback on CEFR activities (feasibility, strengths, weaknesses)

Focus Group (n = 7)

6 Questions Related to

- Perceived validity and reliability of different rubrics/checklists
- Feasibility of using different rubrics/checklists at different times and for different types of assessment (e.g., self-assessment, summative, formative, diagnostic)
- Perception of rubrics/checklists as tool to enhance student participation, facilitate goal-setting, and improve communication with students, parents, other teachers
- Reported supplementing or customization that occurred with use in L2 classroom

Individual Interviews (n = 1)

Same questions as focus group because could not attend focus group.

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Preliminary Findings

- CEFR can be used for various purposes such as curriculum development, classroom assessment, and funding for programs
- Potential of the CEFR depends on the particular educational setting in which it is used.

- CEFR training led participants to reflect upon their teaching/assessment practices as well as the CEFR itself, thus enriching their understanding of it
- Reported benefits of using the CEFR:
 - Motivating students to see future learning paths and set higher goals
 - Starting point for communicating with students, teachers, and parents
- Reported challenges of using the CEFR:
 - Contextualizing the principles of the CEFR
 - Understanding and combining different grids of the CEFR for assessment

IMPLICATIONS

- Educators, policy makers, and curriculum developer, all need to contextualize the CEFR by considering their educational realities and goals
- Findings show need for more workshops or seminars in order to adopt the CEFR successfully at the local level

FUTURE RESEARCH

- Need to compare and contrast the perspectives of teachers across a variety of educational contexts

.....

2. Mison, S., & Jang, I. (2011). Canadian FSL teachers' assessment practices and needs: Implications for the adoption of the CEFR in a Canadian context. *Synergies Europe*, 6, 99–108.

FOCUS

- To examine FSL teachers' existing knowledge, experiences, and needs related to classroom assessment
- To respond to need for research into school-based use of CEFR and existing teacher beliefs related to assessment

PARTICIPANTS

Teachers (n = 12)

Ontario FSL Teachers

Program:	Grade Level:
CF (n = 10)	Elementary (n = 4)
FI (n = 2)	Secondary (n = 8)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Focus Groups

- Sample of convenience
- All participants had little to no knowledge of the CEFR
- Questions focused on who, what, where, when, and how of French assessment practices (both teacher- and school-based)

Focus Group A (n = 4)

- Public elementary school
- CF (n = 2) and FI (n = 2)

Focus Group B (n = 4)

- Independent high school
- All CF teachers

Focus Group C (n = 4)

- Catholic high school
- All CF teachers

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Commonalities/Differences Across Focus Groups in Terms of:

Assessment transparency

- Variable degree to which students are informed of the structure of their assessment (e.g., sharing rubrics, transparent assessment methods)

Consistency of Assessment Within and Across Groups

- Despite same Ontario curriculum, reports of inconsistent content, and assessment
- Teachers struggle with Ministry levels; need exemplars

Plurilingualism

- Participants generally uneasy about idea of integrating a student's L1 as a tool in FSL education

IMPLICATIONS

- Varying teacher beliefs and experiences result in different cultures of teaching and assessment in each school environment
- FSL teacher concerns must be considered if Canada is to encourage teacher support of and participation in the potential adoption and adaptation of CEFR
- Should use teachers' current practices and needs as a starting point to encourage their support of and participation in any kind of movement made towards adapting the CEFR in Canada

OTHER STUDIES

1. Ragoonaden, K. O. (2011). La compétence interculturelle et la formation initiale: Le point sur le CECR et l'IDI. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 86–105.

FOCUS

- To examine intercultural competence of FSL teacher candidates

PARTICIPANTS

B.Ed. Students (n = 12)

- British Columbia FSL teacher candidates
- Mostly women
- Majority between 20–30 years old
- More immigrants than Canadian residents

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaire

- Completed by all participants before their practicum
- Intercultural Development Index
- Distinguished between participants' declared/perceived and real intercultural orientations
- Placed along 5-point continuum:
 1. Denial
 2. Defensive
 3. Minimization
 4. Acceptance
 5. Adaptation

5 = highest level of sensitivity

4 and under = progressive lack of intercultural sensitivity

3 and under = do not accept cultural difference (lack sensitivity)

Interview (n = 3)

- Questions invited at the end of practicum;
 - Have you received any training related to intercultural communication during your B.Ed.?
 - Do you consider your IDI questionnaire categorization representative of your intercultural competence?

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Questionnaire

- All participants overestimated their level of intercultural sensitivity

Declared/Perceived

- 10 of 12 participants declared themselves at Stage 4
Want to explore difference; do not perceive cultural difference as threatening.
- 1 participant at Stage 5
- 1 participant at Stage 3

Real/Actual

- 7 of 12 participants = Stage 3
Ethnocentric point of view where difference is perceived as being neutral and common across all cultures.
- 3 participants = Stage 2
- 1 participant = Stage 1
- 1 participant = Stage 4

Interview

- All participants reported that they had not received any training on intercultural communication
- None were disturbed by their categorizations based on the questionnaire data

IMPLICATIONS

- Intercultural profiles can serve as the basis for discussions about intercultural competence in teacher education programs
- CEFR descriptors related to intercultural competence can serve as an effective starting point for supporting the development of intercultural competence
- Teacher training should be seen as an ideal “initial stage” opportunity for reflection on intercultural competence

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2. Rehorick, S., Jóhannsdóttir, K., Parent, M., & Patterson, D. (2011). *Using the Common European Framework of Reference for evaluating language volunteers for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic winter games.* Vancouver, BC. Retrieved from <http://www.ecml.at/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=th5EFNLwtXU=&tabid=643&language=en-GB>

FOCUS

- To track use of a modified version of the CEFR for self-assessment and placement of language services volunteers at Vancouver 2010 Olympics

PARTICIPANTS

Simultaneous Translators

- Applicants and those eventually hired
- 13 different languages represented

Applicants (n = 1200)
Candidates (n = 200)
Hired Translators (n = 100)

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

Self-Assessment Grid

- CEFR assessment grid sent to 1200 applicants
- Used to attain more informative indication of language competence (along with a qualitative Language Background Questionnaire)
- CEFR scales adapted to include only listening, spoken production, spoken interaction
- Used as primary means by which candidates were reduced to 200
- Candidates reduced again to 100 based on non-linguistic criteria

Language Proficiency Test

- Online test administered following analysis of self-assessment data (CEFR grid and Background Questionnaire)
- Components = spoken production, memory, Olympic terminology, map exercise, role playing

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Self-Assessment (CEFR) vs. Language Proficiency Test

- Weak, but statistically significant correlation between scores on two language proficiency assessment tools

Initial Volunteer Application vs. Self-Assessment (CEFR)

- Strong, but not statistically significant correlation between scores on the two self-assessment tools

IMPLICATIONS

- CEFR appears easy to adapt and administer outside of the classroom environment
- Potential for CEFR to provide useful self-assessment of language competence in the working world

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3. Tang, M. (2010). Le DELF et l'avenir de l'apprentissage du français en Colombie-Britannique. *Journal de l'Immersion*, 32(2), 20–24.

FOCUS

- To observe and reflect on first administration of DELF test following evaluator training in France

PARTICIPANTS

- British Columbia

Students

- Grade 10 FI students
- Exact number of students not provided.

Teacher (n = 1)

- FI teacher

METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

DELF Training

- Teacher participated in DELF evaluator training in France

DELF Testing

- Administered B1 DELF test to Grade 10 FI students

RELEVANT FINDINGS

Teacher Reflections Following DELF Training

- Recognition that students possess a range of tools and skills that learners need to communicate (i.e., beyond only grammar)
- Developed a clearer sense of what it really means to be able to communicate in a second language

Student Performance on DELF

- All students were successful at B1 level
- Most successful on written comprehension; least successful on oral comprehension (attributed to accent and speed of speech in recording)

Teacher Observations/Reflections

- Observed increase in teacher motivation and solidarity related to French instruction following DELF training
- Students were most nervous about oral production

- Teacher noticed specific activities (e.g., oral interaction, oral comprehension) that were not practised often in their class
- Described subsequent additions to teaching practice that were implemented to fill this gap (e.g., conversations following a book study; simulated interactions with more stress/conflict; exposure to authentic French language resources)
- Perceived benefit of DELF training (e.g., realignment of French programming toward a common goal)

IMPLICATIONS

- Desire for long-term commitment to DELF (e.g., as replacement for provincial Grade 12 exam) and a DELF testing centre in BC
- Uncertainty about whether it would be better to have a tiered testing schedule starting in Gr. 8, or have students select the level they would like to be tested at
- Responds to BC Ministry of Education push to align L2 curriculum with CEFR