

# A Comparison of Teacher Experiences between Course-Based and Immersion-Based FSL Teacher Education Program

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## *Abstract*

In recent years, there has been a push towards the development of teacher education programs which place an emphasis on both content and language. In Ontario, the need for more qualified French teachers has spurred the creation of immersion-based teacher education programs, where fostering the advancement of the language proficiency of its candidates is concomitant to the goal of the development of their pedagogical knowledge and skills. These programs stand in contrast to the course-based model which focuses primarily on language teaching methods. This small-scale study provides a comparison of teacher experiences between these two types of programs. One recent graduate from the Concurrent French Bachelor of Education program at Glendon College, York University, and two teacher candidates from the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education were recruited. The findings support that immersion-based teacher education offers in-depth second language theory and strategically timed practical experiences. It also supports the development of the language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and identity of the FSL teacher candidates. The findings indicate that the course-based model is deficient, suggesting that course-based programs need to develop more suitable means of supporting FSL teacher candidates in all these areas.

**Keywords:** Content and language integrated learning, French second language, language teacher education, French immersion

## Introduction

Over the past two decades, much research has addressed the French second language teacher (FSL) shortage across Canada: some studies have provided a national perspective (Lapkin, MacFarlane & Vandergrift, 2006), others have analyzed regional (Kitchenham & Chasteauneuf, 2010) and provincial factors (Carr, 2007; OPSBA, 2017). Factors affecting this shortage include a growing student enrollment in discretionary<sup>1</sup> FSL programs, a decline in the quantity of graduating teachers with FSL qualifications<sup>2</sup>, and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs that are not structured to sufficiently prepare teachers to be successful in all FSL

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<sup>1</sup> Discretionary FSL programs are non-obligatory French programs and include intensive, extended, and immersion French.

<sup>2</sup> There were 60% fewer graduates holding FSL qualifications between 2015 and 2016 (OPSBA, 2017).

contexts (Salvatori, 2009).

Canadian faculties of education offer one of two programs for prospective FSL teachers. Course-based models typically consist of a general second language (L2) methodology course “designed to prepare teachers for all FSL teaching settings” (Salvatori, 2009, p. 290). According to one study, less than half of the reporting faculties of education offered methodology courses delivered in French for other subjects (e.g. science), two-thirds offered language courses for improving language proficiency, and one-third had a provision for an optional immersion experience (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009). Despite having limited methodological education, graduates from course-based programs are often hired into discretionary FSL positions.

Researchers have suggested that during a time of shortage, such hiring practices can lead to a general decline in linguistic proficiency standards (Veilleux & Bournot- Trites, 2005). In contrast, immersion-based teacher education programs encourage the simultaneous development of the linguistic and pedagogical knowledge of pre-service teachers. These programs are based on the premise that “we should not expect teacher candidates to be fully formed linguistically, just as we do not expect them to be fully educated as teachers” (Salvatori, 2009, p. 291). Typically, they deliver subject courses in the L2 (e.g., science), provide optional immersion experiences, foster a second-language environment at the institution, as well as ensure exposure to the various FSL contexts (Day & Shapson, 1996). These programs help to develop high levels of linguistic proficiency upon graduation (Cenerelli, Lemaire & Mougeon, 2016) and their graduates have demonstrated higher retention rates in their first five years of the profession (Ewart, 2009).

Despite research highlighting the advantages of immersion ITE (Erben, 2005; Ewart, 2009), course-based models are more prevalent in Canada. This investigation aims to compare the two Ontario models in relation to the FSL Teacher Competency Profile (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009) to determine the impact on FSL pre-service teacher education.

## Literature Review

Canadian ITE policy relinquishes much flexibility to faculties of education who construct their own programs and typically administer proprietary language proficiency tests (Arnott et al., 2017). FSL teacher qualifications differ on a provincial basis: in Ontario, FSL teachers must hold an FSL special qualification, which they obtain during ITE or as an additional qualification after graduation. In British Columbia, no special qualification is required (Carr, 2007), whereas Manitoba mandates that French immersion teachers have preparation and/or in-service training in the immersion approach (Manitoba Education and Training, 1996). This flexibility leads to much variability between programs (Salvatori and MacFarlane, 2009) and produces FSL teachers with disparate language and pedagogical competencies at both the interprovincial and intraprovincial levels (Arnott et al., 2017).

To address this, Salvatori and MacFarlane (2009) developed an FSL teacher competency profile which categorizes knowledge and abilities into four broad competencies: General Teaching Methodology, Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge (hereinafter called *the competency profile*). It serves as a “voluntary frame of reference that policy makers and language teacher educators will be able to adapt to their existing programs and needs” (p. 5).

## The Competency Profile

Given that the knowledge base of language teachers is different than that of regular teachers (Cloud, 2005), the competency profile delineates three knowledge bases that are unique to FSL teachers: Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency, and Cultural Knowledge are particularly relevant to FSL ITE programming. They will be explored in the following section.

### *Second language pedagogy*

Canadian discretionary FSL programs are typically structured around content-based instruction (CBI) where the target language is used as the vehicle for delivering content (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012). The effective delivery of such a model requires teachers to be language experts as well as content experts in the target language (Snow, 2005). However, many FSL ITE programs only offer methodology courses and few offer subject-specific courses (e.g., science, math) delivered in French (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009). Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues that ITE programs that only feature methodology instruction do not prepare pre-service candidates to meet the challenges in everyday language teaching, who then must resort to “improvised eclecticism” (p. 170).

Integrating second language pedagogical knowledge and skills in ITE is part of the new paradigm in language education (Byrnes, 2005):

What graduate students need to acquire then is not so much a way of applying particular skills in a given instructional setting as it is a broad understanding of interlanguage development, an awareness that can translate into attentive choices in their own instructional contexts [...] the proposed reorientation into content-oriented programs and instructional approaches is not an abstract or remote issue for graduate programs only. It is, instead, at the heart of the paradigm shift in FL education both in the K-12 environment and at the college level. (p. 146)

As the competency profile suggests, FSL teachers should “sequence language learning experiences to ensure that meaningful communication in the target language occurs” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p.25) and ensure these experiences are appropriate to the level and program of instruction (i.e., Core French [CF], Extended French [EF], French Immersion [FI]) in which they will be teaching.

### *Language proficiency*

Researchers have emphasized the importance of FSL teachers having high levels of language proficiency (Bayliss & Vignola, 2007; Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009). However, ambiguous descriptors reflect the ongoing problem faced by faculties of education and school boards regarding the standardization of minimum proficiency requirements both upon entrance and graduation. In Ontario, this problem has resulted in one in four applicants failing to meet school board language proficiency expectations (OPSBA, 2017).

Nevertheless, Salvatori (2009) calls for FSL ITE admission processes to place less emphasis on incoming proficiency levels of potential candidates, for a significant amount of language development can and should occur during the program.

For example, an exploratory research project at Glendon College York University (GCYU, forthcoming) used a questionnaire to have teacher candidates self-evaluate their

linguistic competencies during the FSL Concurrent Bachelor of Education program. The study revealed that, while one third of Year One students felt “neutral” about their ability to confidently use French in the classroom most/all of the time, all of Year Two and Year Three students (except one) felt confident with their L2 abilities. One Year One student stated:

I think the program is fantastic in ensuring that our French improves. My writing and oral communication skills seem to be improving on a daily basis. All the writing assignments required in Education are tremendously improving my written French. (p. 17)

Language courses and subject-specific courses delivered in the target language create opportunities for the candidates to improve their proficiency throughout the program.

### *Cultural knowledge*

Most ITE programs offer supports in the goal of improving pre-service candidates’ language proficiency and cultural knowledge. Salvatori and MacFarlane (2009) report that two-thirds of the institutions in their study offered additional language courses; however, opportunities to enhance cultural knowledge is often limited to coursework. As language and culture are intertwined (Fishman, 1991), other services like optional immersion experiences, drop-in language centres, community outreach programs and extended practicum in Francophone environments can simultaneously develop both of these competencies (Ewart, 2009; Cenerelli, Lemaire & Mougeon, 2016). As such, the competency profile stresses that FSL teachers “understand the target culture and language and how to link them with one another” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25).

According to Hornberger (2004), in addition to language expertise, bilingual educators need to acquire language affiliation, which refers to development of the educator’s identity in the L2. In her study, Wernicke (2016) demonstrated that Canadian FSL teachers link the authenticity of their identity to both native-like levels of language proficiency and the standard of European French. She suggests that ITE should help teachers challenge the hierarchy of French dialects and notions of ultimate attainment.

Fishman (1991) stresses the importance of socialization and community development to reinforce linguistic and cultural proficiency. As such, Cenerelli, Lemaire and Mougeon (2016) argue that in communities with a smaller francophone presence, it falls on the institution to recreate opportunities for the authentic use of French language and culture. Through these opportunities, teacher candidates are able to “experience one’s ability to negotiate and function in another language” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 16) which contributes to their identity formation as an FSL teacher.

In sum, the competency profile provides three competencies unique to FSL teachers: Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency, and Cultural Knowledge. By exploring how course-based and immersion-based ITE target these competencies, the advantages and disadvantages of each model will become apparent.

## Methodology

This qualitative research project applies a socio-constructivist perspective to its design and data collection. The purpose of this investigation is to explore the perspectives of teachers and teacher candidates in relation to their FSL pre-service education in order to compare and contrast the impact of course-based and immersion-based programs on FSL teacher candidate preparedness when entering the profession.

### *Background of the Study*

The study investigated the ITE programs offered to FSL teacher candidates at two sites, both located in Toronto, Ontario: the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and Glendon College at York University (GCYU). OISE/UT has one of the largest teacher education programs in Canada and is considered a top-tier program (Howe, 2013). The FSL-stream of the Masters of Teaching (MT) follows the course-based model. Before acceptance into the two-year program, applicants must successfully complete a linguistic proficiency test. Applicants can select between three different streams: Primary/Junior (P/J), Junior/Intermediate (J/I), and Intermediate/Senior (I/S). Graduate-level elective courses delivered in French are also available in second year. There is no provision for an optional immersion experience. In terms of practicum, at least 50% of the placements are guaranteed in an FSL setting, though the choice of program of instruction (i.e., CF, EF, FI) is not. Finally, students must also complete a research project.

GCYU was established in 1966 with the goal of supporting official bilingualism in Canada and all of the course offerings are in French and English. To date, the university is committed to establishing itself as the epicenter of bilingual university education in the region (Shoukri, 2016). GCYU developed the Concurrent Bachelor of Education (CBEd) in FSL in 2007 in response to the need for more qualified FI teachers in Ontario. The CBEd combines a Bachelor of Arts (BA) with a Bachelor of Education (BEEd) over a five- or six- year duration. Since 2014, applicants must complete a language proficiency test to track the linguistic development of the student throughout the program. Similar to the MT program at OISE/UT, applicants select the P/J, J/I, or I/S stream. All courses are offered in French and an optional immersion experience is available. Pre-service candidates complete two eight-month extended practica in FI classrooms, as well as one community service placement in a French environment. As both of these institutions are located in the same city, they were selected to compare how the two types of ITE programs respond to the educational needs of FSL teacher candidates in regions with a small Francophone presence.

### *Participants*

Participants were recruited through a sample of convenience: requests for participation were sent to teacher educators in the OISE/UT and GCYU programs who then distributed them among their students. Recruitment criteria for the study included: teacher-candidates or recent graduates from either a Course-based or Immersion-based ITE programs; MT participants in the second year of their program with at least one FSL practicum completed; no more than two years of foreign language teaching experiences; English as a first language and French as a second language (L2) (though knowledge of additional languages was permissible). Three participants,

who were all candidates at the J/I level, volunteered to take part in this study.

To ensure participant anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout this paper. Sarah and Emma were teacher candidates in the OISE/UT MT course-based teacher education program at the time of the study. Sarah studied in FI and continued her French studies as a minor at the undergraduate level. Emma also studied in FI and continued in an immersion-based FSL teacher preparation undergraduate program. Bianca was a recent graduate from GCYU and had been working as a core FSL teacher in an Ontario school board for four months. She was a student in core French from K-12.

### **Data Collection**

I established an interview protocol by adapting questions from Johnston, Pawan and Mahan-Taylor (2005) and reviewed them with an experienced teacher educator. Data was collected over a period of two months during one hour-long interviews with each participant. Additionally, OISE/UT and GCYU program websites and documentation were consulted.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis adopts a post-method perspective, meaning that “teacher education is treated not as the experience and interpretation of a predetermined, prescribed pedagogic practice, but rather as an ongoing, dialogically constructed entity involving critically reflective participants (Kumaravadivelu, 2006 p. 182). In line with this socio-constructivist framework, data was understood as a representation of the engagement of “interviewers and interviewees in a collaborative meaning-making experience that centers on the interviewee” (Wolgemoth et al., 2015, p. 354). The interviews were transcribed and coded using analytic memos (Saldaña, 2009).

Through the thematic analysis of the codes, many categories were established using a macro-strategic framework, which attempts to be method-neutral by synthesizing the various theories of language teaching and learning in order to offer “broad [guidelines], based on which teachers can generate their own situation-specific, need-based micro-strategies or classroom procedures” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 201).

These categories were then organized according to the three knowledge bases unique to language teachers outlined in the competency profile: Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge.

Program documents and websites were also analyzed to corroborate, or complete information provided by the participants. The information extracted from the documents was organized into the categories established through the interviews.

### **Findings**

This section outlines the findings from the study into the three categories of the competency profile addressed previously: Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency, and Cultural Knowledge.

#### *Second Language Pedagogy*

Ontario teachers holding FSL qualifications can work in any FSL program (i.e., CF, EF, FI).



Accordingly, ITE programs should provide both theoretical knowledge and practical experiences for their potential graduates to develop their second language pedagogy (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009).

<b>Masters of Teaching – J/I FSL Program – OISE/UT</b>		
	<i>Prerequisites:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 full year courses in French</li> <li>• Written and oral language proficiency test</li> </ul>	
	<b>Courses</b>	<b>School Practicum</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Literacy	November: 4 weeks
	Ethics & Law	
	Mathematics Educational Research	
	Child and Adolescent Development	
	Fundamentals	February: 4 weeks
	Science and Environmental Education	
	Mathematics Concepts for Elementary	
<b>Intercession, Summer, Year 2</b>	Anti-Discriminatory Education	November: 4 weeks
	Technology	
	Special Education and Mental Health	
	Arts in Education	
	Issues in Numeracy and Literacy	
	Educational Research 2	February: 4 weeks
	Supporting ELLs	
	Social Studies and Aboriginal Education	
	<b>Intermediate FSL Methodology</b>	
	2 Electives	

*Figure 1: The course and practicum program for the junior-intermediate stream of the Master of Teaching at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.*

As Figure 1 demonstrates, in order to select an FSL ‘teachable’, the MT program requires potential J/I teacher candidates take at least five full year courses in French. As there are no prescribed specifications regarding the course content, candidates immediately enter the course-based program with varying pedagogical competencies. In her French Studies minor, Sarah took “a couple of grammar courses, French poetry, French literature, and... a French phonetics course as well”. In contrast, Emma completed an immersion-based FSL teacher preparation undergraduate program:

Most of my degree was preparing me to teach French as a second language. So, I took some French linguistics classes, [...] French culture classes, [...] pedagogy classes [...]. I found that really interesting and really helpful because it was kind of the focus of four years and I felt so far that that experience has helped me prepare a lot more for my future as a French teacher than my normal teacher training has.

In the MT program, J/I candidates receive one FSL methodology course delivered in

French during the second year, providing a total of 36 mandatory instructional hours in French (Figure 1). In addition, candidates can select two graduate courses delivered in French from the *Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne* (CRÉFO) during second year as their electives. Both Sarah and Emma, who are attending course-based teacher education programs, noted that the only FSL preparation they received in the MT program was through this single methodology course offered during their second year. Emma commented that she did not feel prepared to work in discretionary contexts “because of the pre-service French course at the moment, feels like it’s geared towards core French...I know the program is only two years, but, only having one course about teaching French when that is your teachable subject...there’s so much to learn and so much to do”. Nevertheless, she recognizes that some of the knowledge gained may be transferable:

So what I think what the professor is trying to do is, kind of, teach skills...that can basically be adapted for any of the French programs. So they can be used in core, you can use them in extended, or you can *adapt* it, and use it in French immersion as well. But, in and of itself, it is not fully preparing me to teach FI.

As the competency profile suggests, FSL teachers should be able to “select, adapt, create and use appropriate resources to help meet the instructional and linguistic needs of their students” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25) and it is significant that Emma recognizes the transferability of skills. However, while she was exposed to certain skills, or “instructional strategies reflecting currently accepted methodology” (p. 25), the underlying theory driving both the methodology and the different programs was not exposed. The lack of in-depth theoretical knowledge about different L2 approaches is the root of teachers’ resorting to “improvised eclecticism” (p. 170) and why Kumaravadivelu (2006) supports that a sole methodology course is not sufficient for language teacher ITE.

Similarly, both Sarah and Emma reported that the course did not cover the structure of the different FSL programs. Emma explains that “I wasn’t really sure what to expect in a core French classroom because I never experienced junior core French classrooms...nor did we talk about it in pre-service at all”. This suggests that the FSL methodology course fails to meet the competency profile recommendation that FSL teachers need “knowledge and skills directly related to FSL teaching (i.e., core French, (CF) including intensive (core) French (IF); extended French; and French immersion (FI)” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25).

Moreover, because J/I teacher candidates take the methodology course during their second year, it is common for candidates to complete FSL placements during their first year before exposure to any theory or methodology. Sarah suggests that having “a teachable in your first year, would have been interesting, especially since, in our first year, for French pre-service teachers, we’re getting exposure to all the other teachables, except for our own”. ITE programs should schedule courses and practicum to align theoretical knowledge and practical experiences.

As Tedick (2009) summarizes, separating these results in “two misconceptions: that the foundation of language teacher education is transmitting knowledge about the language and pedagogical content and that this knowledge will naturally be applied in practice” (p. 265). Due to the misalignment, Sarah recognized gaps in her second language pedagogical knowledge during her FSL placement:

It was...a wake-up call. Because that was the first time I started correcting work...with the



context of core French, it was difficult to correct things, because a lot of the things that they wanted to say was beyond their proficiency level. It was something that you didn't want to introduce to them. Say, grade fours started first year core French, you don't really want them actually talking in the past...you wanted to just do simple sentences in the present tense. But when all of a sudden they wanted to say something in the past tense, you had to correct them, but say something different. So that was a bit of a wake-up call in like, that's a skill that's not like taught. That's a skill...correcting. Right? That's not a course I took in undergrad, how to correct French.

Through her practicum placement, Sarah began to understand the importance of FSL teachers having a "broad understanding of interlanguage development" (Byrnes, 2005, p. 146); in other words, she recognized the need to adjust her expectations and pedagogical interventions according to the level of her learners. Developing an understanding of the different phases of L2 acquisition, or interlanguage, is a crucial component of FSL ITE which helps teachers assess student language levels and structure their programming accordingly.

Finally, the participants in the course-based program also noted the absence of second language content courses. Sarah commented that she was consistently thinking about discretionary FSL contexts in her English subjects:

So how to teach science in French. Maybe there's no difference, but I think a lot of what I've learned in my other courses has been, hey these are some great resources for science and English, but I'm always wondering about, okay, how does this look in French? How am I going to get access to these materials in French, or how am I going to have time to transform these materials in English into French.

Finding and developing resources in French was a concern for Sarah during her pre-service education and this concern continues into the profession with 65% of new FSL teachers reporting access to suitable resources as a primary challenge (OPSBA, 2017). If the paradigm in language education has indeed shifted to content-oriented instruction (Byrnes, 2005), then subject courses, such as science, should be delivered in the L2. Emma summarized, "that's part of the issue...we don't have a course to help us teach science in French immersion. And in French immersion, you are going to be teaching content courses in French." Not only do content courses in the L2 provide more opportunities for FSL teacher candidates to practice in the target language, it provides a model for the CBI they are intended to deliver in discretionary programs (Snow, 2005).

<b>Concurrent B.Ed – J/I FSL Program – Glendon College</b>			
	<i>Prerequisites</i> (non-francophone): Bachelor of Arts in French Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 full year courses in language + 1 full year course in literature or linguistics</li> <li>• 1 full year course in FSL at the 2000 or higher level + written language proficiency test</li> <li>• 2 full year courses in francophone culture or one-year study in Francophone context</li> </ul>		
	<b>Courses</b>	<b>School Practicum</b>	<b>Community Practicum</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Foundations of Education	1 day/week          ↓	1 day/week          ↓
	Theory into Practice		
	Language & Literacy		
	Mathematics		
	Child Development		
	Inquiries into Learning		
	Inclusive Education		
	Science & Technology		
	<b>Teaching and Learning in French Immersion contexts</b>		
	Elective		
<b>Year 2</b>	Teaching for Diverse and Equitable Classrooms in Ontario	2 days/week  ↓  December: 2 weeks  February: 6 days  March/April: 5 weeks	
	Content into Practice		
	Research into Practice		
	Social Studies and Culture		
	Physical Education		
	Integration through Arts		
	<b>Teaching and Learning in Core French contexts</b>		

Figure 2: The course and practicum program for the junior-intermediate stream of the FSL Concurrent Bachelor of Education at the Glendon Campus of York University.

As illustrated by Figure 2, the Concurrent Bachelor of Education (CBEd) in FSL at GCYU combines two degrees: a BA in French Studies that candidates complete during their undergraduate years, followed by a BEd. York University policy explains that “the best preparation for teaching French at the Primary-Junior certification level is a BA degree in French Studies. Junior-Intermediate and Intermediate-Senior certification levels must declare French Studies as their major and “first teachable” (York University, 2018). Expectations for completing the BA include three full-year courses in French language studies and one full-year course in literature or linguistics.

By prescribing a set of courses for entrance into the FSL ITE, GCYU has control over the knowledge and skills that their teacher candidates have and is able to align certain concepts

between the BA and the BEd. Bianca reveals that,

...with that program I do remember discussing sociolinguistics and pronunciation and different aspects of language and how to integrate that explicitly and implicitly into our teaching...I learned it through my BA, like the facts of, like for example, the phonetic alphabet, so I learned that through my BA, and then my BEd.

Bianca then explains how the sociolinguistics course has benefitted her FSL practice: As a teacher, that's something we're always focusing on, when to use *tu* and when to use *vous*. Moreso implicitly than explicitly, that's something that we focus on, and since so many of my students, French is their third or fourth language, we relate it...many of our students know that in their other language.

The sociolinguistic knowledge that Bianca obtained during the BA reflects several details of the competency profile. By understanding how language works, she is able to validate her students' linguistic and cultural baggage to make parallels between their home languages and French.

Extended practicum has been deemed a strength in immersion-based ITE (Ewart, 2009) and features in the CBEd program. In contrast to block practicum, students complete an extended placement simultaneously with their courses throughout the year. At GCYU, students attend placement one day a week in the first year and two days a week in the first semester of the second year. Then, students complete their second-year placements with a two-week block practicum in December, six more days in February, and a five-week block practicum after their courses have finished in March.

Students in the CBEd must take two methodology courses: *Teaching and Learning in Core French Contexts* and *Teaching and Learning in French Immersion Contexts*. During her second-year placement, because Bianca was taking an FSL methodology course it allowed her to experiment with action-oriented, transdisciplinary pedagogy:

So during that placement, I was taking, I think it was an FSL course like how to teach French, specifically language, and also how to teach that. So what I did was integrated language and math together...We were focusing on fractions and we did recipes with fractions and...they decided, based on the price of ingredients, how much...it cost to make cookies, they decided on the cost per cookie. So we could make money out of it.

Bianca was also able to make connections between the theory and practice. In order to limit the consequences that arise when these are misaligned (Tedick, 2009), extended practicum provides opportunities to synchronously apply the theoretical knowledge in the classroom.

Finally, all of the courses in the CBEd at GCYU are delivered in French. Because the program is modified from the mainstream BEd offered at York University, many of the articles and course materials are in English. Nevertheless, emphasis is placed on FSL contexts in relation to subject matter. Bianca stated,

Second year...that's when we started to teach math in an FSL setting. Teaching literacy in an FSL setting. Teaching science, that was our third year, teaching health and phys ed learning through all the different curriculum that we would be exposed to as teachers, and what I loved is that we always connected that to FSL.

By placing the emphasis on FSL contexts in all subjects, the CBEd delivers content-oriented instruction to their teacher candidates. This, along with specific CF and FI methodology courses, provides to them the knowledge and skills that are directly related to any FSL program.

### Language Proficiency

Developing linguistic proficiency throughout the ITE program can be accomplished through a variety of complementary means, such as optional immersion experiences, drop-in language centres, second language courses, proficiency tests, and extended practicum/community service placements in Francophone environments.

Prior to entrance to the course-based MT program, potential candidates must complete a proficiency test for their written and oral communication skills. This entails a mark of at least 75% in each section (i.e., listening, speaking and writing). Essentially, the program is searching for candidates that can “demonstrate that [they] have mastered the French language at a level high enough to teach students at any level of proficiency.” (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2018). This reflects the competency profile, which states that FSL teachers should be able to “confidently use the target language in the classroom most/all of the time” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25). However, with testing used as a barrier-to-entry, this seems contrary to the recommendations made in the competency profile to view FSL teacher candidates as ongoing life-long learners who continue to make language gains during their ITE program.

Sarah commented that she did not find the test to be fair, “because there’s a lot of professional development that can still be done within these two years...so if someone really wanted it they could...easily do their best to get up to proficiency by the end of two years...”. She suggested that she would have liked a grammar test, “to give me those specific [details of] ‘what do I need to work on’. Because, in my head, when I’m writing, I’m writing correctly...But if someone told me, oh, you need to look for XYZ, then I’m like okay, now I can really work on that”. Sarah’s commentary echoes Salvatori (2009), who suggests that faculties of education should provide the means for FSL candidates to improve their language proficiency during the program.

However, Sarah and Emma both felt that their proficiency did not improve during their pre-service education. They attributed this primarily to the fact that they only had one course in French over the two years: this methodology course required all assignments be submitted in French, but the language ability of the candidates was not evaluated. Sarah elaborates, “We’ve written one...[pause]...kinda paper, not even a paper, I wouldn’t call it that. We’ve written three pages in French, umm, and we got a little bit of feedback on that. And that’s all the writing I’ve had to do in French. And I’ve had to speak French in our French class, but, that’s it”. Both Sarah and Emma explained that there were no other language support services available.

Practicum in the MT program, of which only 50% of the placements are guaranteed in an FSL setting, offer an opportunity for candidates to improve their language proficiency. This was the case for Emma:

French practicum was my second practicum of last year...where the first few days I was a little nervous after, because at that point it had been a few months of being in this... completely English speaking environment. But, I...became accustomed to it again. So I’m really glad we can have some French practica, because that was helpful, and I wish we could have more.

Sarah similarly explained that, “I understand if one of our [placements] had to be English, but half of those, doesn’t feel like the best use of my time”. The competency profile suggests that candidates have “practical experiences that provide opportunities to utilize the target language” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25) and increasing the quantity of FSL placements will lead to candidates spending more time using the L2.

For entrance into the CBEd, applicants must complete a written proficiency test. Then, during the BA degree, candidates must complete one full-year FSL language course at the 2000 level or higher. At this level, students must be able to successfully engage in group discussions related to education and write a *compte-rendu*, which is comprehensive summary, critical analysis, and evaluation of a French journal article (Cenerelli, Lemaire & Mougeon, 2016). For all courses in the BA, evaluations examine candidates’ language skills. Completion of the FSL language courses, along with the BA, assumes the candidate has reached the required language proficiency to be successful in the BEd, and thus no further proficiency tests are administered prior to the start of the ITE. The courses in the BEd do not evaluate the language skills of the candidates.

Bianca switched into the CBEd in her second year at GCYU after the successful completion of a written proficiency test. During the BA component of the program, she recalled taking the required language courses and how this prepared her for the BEd. She stated,

When I did my Bachelor of Education, most people were on the same level as me...we had to reach a certain level of proficiency...in the sense of...all of our communication was in French with professors, colleagues; we should talk to one another in French; all of the papers were in French; so in other words, we had to be able to read articles, so scholarly articles written in French and be able to summarize them, link them to our professional experiences in the target language.

Bianca also cited other language support services available to her to support the development of her language proficiency, including the *Explore*<sup>3</sup> immersion experience in Quebec and drop-in language centres:

We also had lots of help throughout the program. For our BEd program, we had that special support I had mentioned with a room we can meet in to talk about education in French, and they would have prompts for us, so we could go there and have a discussion. Also, another room, where, for anyone at Glendon to just pop in just for practice speaking to Francophones, and that’s called Salon Francophone. When you go to Salon Francophone you can just walk in and...just start speaking in French, and there’s Francophones who are ready to talk to you and to help you with homework as well. So all these different programs and supports really helped.

Bianca frequented these drop-in centres throughout her degree. Finally, when asked whether practicum contributed to her language proficiency, she said,

Absolutely...That was the first time I had ever seen what a FI placement was, and it was

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<sup>3</sup> *Explore* is an immersion experience sponsored by the Canadian government that participants complete in Francophone cities across the country.

great in the sense that I was able to speak 100% French with my students and with my mentor teacher, I would say about 50%, we would kind of switch back and forth.

In the CBEd, candidates complete two extended practica in FI contexts. These offer ample opportunity for candidates to “confidently use the target language in the classroom most/all of the time” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25).

### Cultural Knowledge

Developing the cultural knowledge of candidates during an ITE program can be accomplished through the provision of culture courses, optional immersion experiences, and outreach programs with local Francophone communities.

In the MT program, there are no specific culture classes prescribed to the candidates. For their electives during second-year, candidates may select graduate-level courses offered by CRÉFO, which, depending on the year, may relate to French culture. For example, courses available in 2018-2019 included *Identité collective et éducation minoritaire de langue française* and *Éducation, francophonies et diversité*. Neither Sarah nor Emma had selected such elective courses.

Sarah participated in the *Explore* and *CLIC*<sup>4</sup> program during her undergraduate program. She enjoyed this experience because “there were moments there that were just, amazing to connect with these children, these students, who had such a strong French culture in Canada, not just in Quebec”. When asked if she brought these experiences into her practicum, she responded, I would like to do the program again to really reinforce that, because I don’t think I have enough exposure to...I did the program and I stayed for the *Work for Explore* part as well, but I still feel like I don’t have enough, enough of the history, enough of that to really be able to teach it, but it’s definitely something I really want to explore myself.

Despite participating in the *Explore* immersion program, Sarah did not take any culture courses to complement the experiences she gained there. She believes she needs more cultural knowledge before she can relate these experiences to the classroom.

In her immersion-based undergraduate program, Emma took some French culture courses. These were beneficial to her practice during the MT. She mentioned: I have been able to take a lot of that, the examples that I’ve learned in courses about French countries all around the world... in my second practicum, I was doing a lesson on the intercultural awareness part of the curriculum, and so I was showing...the student a whole bunch of songs by French Ontarian people and they...had no idea that people actually lived and spoke French in Ontario.

The competency profile suggests that FSL teachers should be able to “welcome diverse learners and value the benefits of intercultural awareness and understanding within the language program” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25). While it is significant that Emma was able to make these connections, this knowledge was gained outside of the MT.

Contrary to the course-based OISE/UT program, GCYU has specific policy regarding the cultural competency of its teacher candidates. Documentation states that Considerable emphasis in the Bachelor of Education (French) program on Glendon campus is placed on ensuring excellent French language proficiency and a deep understanding of

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<sup>4</sup> *Destination CLIC* is a parallel program to *Explore* where French first language students spend time in French immersive environments. People employed by *Work for Explore* act as counsellors to these students.



francophone cultures. To satisfy the francophone cultural component of the program, prior to entering the BEd program, Glendon students will have participated in either a one-year study program in a francophone context or they will have completed 12 credits in courses related to francophone culture (York University, 2018).

Bianca took these courses during her BA. During the ITE part of the program, the courses built on this knowledge; for instance, during one of her courses, she “focused on teaching French, with reference to linguistic conventions and intercultural understanding”, in line with the recommendations made in the competency profile (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009).

In addition to this, the policy also states that the community practicum contributes to the cultural experiences of the candidates. During the first year of the BEd, students attend a community placement one day a week along with their school placement. Bianca explained how the role of the community was integrated into her education:

the first year of the concurrent program was focused on community and what the community’s role is in education. So our first placement wasn’t like being in the classroom, as a student-teacher, it was a placement in the sense that I did an after-school tutoring program. People worked at or volunteered really at different community centres or homeless shelters, in the sense that we could see how impactful community is in people’s lives.

Bianca’s community placement was English tutoring; whether this placement was in a Francophone context is unclear. Nevertheless, this particular focus helped Bianca understand the importance of developing community, as recommended by the Language Proficiency competency of the profile.

While candidates begin to understand the connection between community and education through these placements, they also experience the language community that GCYU fosters on campus. Being a bilingual campus, GCYU provides a unique opportunity for FSL candidates to interact with other Francophone students which, in turn, allows them to develop cultural knowledge and their FSL identity. Bianca commented that the interactions allowed her to use her second language more freely: “we just had to [be comfortable] ...our courses were in French and there were quite a few Francophone in the program as well, which was awesome because for the Anglophones like me, it was great to work on assignments together in French in their native language and learn”. Social interactions outside the classroom also occurred in French, where translanguaging strategies were used:

We would translanguage a lot. So it would be like « qu’est-ce que tu as fait yesterday avec uh... » Umm, that’s just what Glendon’s like, you’ll see someone and you’ll be like, « Oh hey, salut, how are you, je viens d’aller à la cafétéria and j’ai mangé... » it’s just a mixture of stuff and...since we’re bilingual we all understood each other.

Through these experiences, as well as other services such as the *Salon Francophone*, GCYU is recreating authentic opportunities for their candidates to practice using the target language. The program instills in the candidates the importance of developing community to reinforce language and cultural proficiency, both through external and internal experiences (Fishman, 1991).

Moreover, these experiences contribute to the development of the candidates’ language affiliation (Hornberger, 2004). Bianca’s interactions in French with both Francophones and FSL

students on campus reinforce her professional and social network in the L2. Beyond her experiences in the classroom, these opportunities to function and make meaning in the L2 “[authenticate] language expertise and thereby [substantiate] the legitimacy of a position as FSL teacher” (Wernicke, 2016, p. 16). Through the development of this language community on campus, the immersion-based program affords Bianca an identity.

## Discussion

In this section, the findings will be considered for both programs as they relate to the competency profile to determine where the advantages and disadvantages lie for each. Based on the program documents and commentary of the participants, it appears that the structure of course-based FSL ITE is not in line with the competency profile. The methodology course is limited to providing “currently accepted methodology” (Salvatori & MacFarlane, 2009, p. 25) and does not delve into the L2 acquisition theory or provide program specific knowledge (i.e., CF, EF, IF) to its candidates. There are no subject-specific courses delivered in the target language. The restricted number of placements in FSL contexts limit practical experiences. Block practica lead to a misalignment between the theory and practice. A proficiency test serves as a barrier-to-entry. In courses and in practicum, candidates find limited opportunities to practice using the target language and no services are available to contribute to the development of their language proficiency otherwise. Finally, no opportunities to expand their cultural knowledge are available.

The immersion-based program appears to cover all three competencies under review in this study. Teacher candidates have program-specific (CF, FI) and subject-specific (science) methodology courses delivered in the L2. They also gain practical experiences through extended practica, which are synchronized with the coursework. Candidates develop their linguistic proficiency through coursework in the program and engage with additional services, such as drop-in centres and immersion experiences, to strengthen academic and social language learning in the L2. Through these courses and immersion experiences, candidates are also required to gain cultural knowledge. Finally, the immersion-based program fosters an L2 community on campus which contributes to the development of the FSL identity of its candidates.

At a glance, all of the disadvantages of the course-based ITE with respect to the competency profile appear to be the relative strengths of its immersion-based equivalent. However, one of the limitations of comparing the MT at OISE to the CBEd at GCYU is the duration of the programs. While both offer a two-year FSL ITE program, students begin the CBEd during their undergraduate years in the BA. The program appears to spread different facets of Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency, and Cultural Knowledge across 5 or 6 years and connections are made between the two different degrees. As Bianca had attested, the knowledge she gained in BA was “enhanced” in the BEd. Given the combined nature of the degree, it is important to question whether FSL ITE programs are feasibly able to address, in a two-year timeframe, all of the knowledge bases detailed in the competency profile.

By mandating the completion of the BA as the prerequisite, GCYU is able to regulate the knowledge and skills with which their candidates enter the BEd. For example, neither the MT nor the BEd mandate culture classes during the ITE; however, by setting these as the prerequisite, GCYU ensures their candidates have already acquired some form of cultural knowledge. The course-based MT program has no such jurisdiction. Nevertheless, candidates like Emma who have completed immersion-based undergraduate programs, arrive in course-

based ITE with knowledge across the competency profile. Perhaps the specification and/or expansion of prerequisites is one way that course-based programs can address certain knowledge areas.

In regard to Language Proficiency, by mandating the completion of the language courses during the undergraduate, the CBEd eliminates the need for a comprehensive proficiency test prior to the start of the ITE. The immersion-based program is able to specifically support the development of their candidates' linguistic proficiency during the program and ensure a desired level has been achieved before graduation. It is also important to note that, similar to the MT, the students' language skills are not evaluated in the classes during the ITE component. Although Bianca's commentary and the results in GCYU (forthcoming) suggest that the courses delivered in French and the drop-in centres continue to contribute to the improving language proficiency of their candidates, there is no exit exam (Cenerelli, Lemaire and Mougeon, 2016). At *Campus Saint-Jean* at the University of Alberta, the faculty of education sets the language proficiency requirement against an international standard by requiring their candidates to obtain a B2 on the DELF<sup>5</sup> examination during their final year. Implementing such a requirement in all FSL ITE programs may help to standardize the language proficiency with which candidates graduate (Arnott et al., 2017).

Finally, through the support provided with Cultural Knowledge, the immersion-based program transcends the recommendations presented by the competency profile, allowing candidates to develop their identity as French-speakers. Through courses and placements, the candidates learn about the intersection of community and education. This value is upheld by the campus itself: the bilingual nature of GCYU, the courses delivered in the L2, and the drop-in language centres foster the French language community at the university. Through this community, the candidates find opportunities to gain experiences and make meaning in their second language, which authenticate their language proficiency, and thus legitimize their FSL teacher identity. If such an identity is indeed bound to one's perceived notion of language expertise (Wernicke, 2016), then language courses alone are not sufficient for the preparation of FSL teachers. FSL ITE should provide opportunities to their candidates for authentic experiences in the target language. Ultimately, these findings suggest the competency profile needs to be expanded to include the establishment of an FSL identity for teacher candidates in ITE.

## Limitations

There are two limitations for the research presented in this study. First, due to the small sample size, the data collected is not necessarily representative of the competencies or experiences of all FSL teacher candidates at OISE/UT or GCYU. Moreover, due to the variability of ITE, the data may not reflect the realities of other course-based or immersion-based programs.

It is also important to note that this study is intended as a preliminary exploratory comparison of the two types of ITE programs offered to FSL teachers in Canada. Additional supplementary research, initiated on a larger scale, with more participants and across more faculties of education in Ontario is needed to fully grasp the potential benefits and shortcomings of course-based versus immersion-based ITE programs for FSL teachers.

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<sup>5</sup> The *Diplôme d'étude en langue française* (DELF) is a test used to ascertain the language proficiency of a French additional-language learner at A1 to B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The CEFR is a framework used to describe the different levels of additional-language proficiency.

## Conclusion

This investigation aimed to study the experiences of teachers throughout their pre-service education to compare and contrast course-based and immersion-based FSL ITE. Across all three of these components, Second Language Pedagogy, Language Proficiency and Cultural Knowledge, the course-based program presented multiple limitations. In contrast, the immersion-based program excelled at providing the necessary knowledge and skills that FSL teachers will need in order to be successful in the classroom.

Given the current rise of enrollment in discretionary FSL programs (Canadian Parents for French, 2016)<sup>6</sup>, the need for FSL teachers with subject-specific knowledge, higher levels of language proficiency, and intercultural sensitivity is equally increasing. Immersion-based FSL ITE responds to this urgent need. In essence, this investigation suggests that faculties of education with course-based programs should reevaluate the type of FSL teacher they want to prepare for the market and adjust their programming accordingly. Course-based programs should evolve to include some or all the features of the immersion-based model which make it particularly effective in the preparation of FSL teachers.

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<sup>6</sup> Ontario experienced a rise in enrollment in FI by 2.8% between 2011 and 2016.

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