

A Guide to Cultivating Community-Based Retention in FSL Teacher Education

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Introducing our guide



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Access online here.

Created by FSL teacher candidates for FSL teacher candidates and their supporting communities across Ontario.

Why community-based retention?

Calls have been made for Faculties of Education and partner school boards to work together to grow and retain the pool of French as a second language (FSL) teachers through the forging of relationships and meaningful collaboration.¹ Research suggests that such collaboration must prioritize community-based supports that foster retention from the beginning of pre-service FSL Teacher Education Programming and into their careers.²

Centering the FSL teacher candidate experience

The original intent of this work was to learn about the lived experiences of FSL teacher candidates from the University of Ottawa. We asked them: What have been the most significant FSL teaching and learning experiences so far? What are you noticing? What makes sense – and what doesn't? What are you questioning?

What started as a journey of validation and discovery evolved into an exploration of what a shared responsibility approach to retaining future FSL teachers could look like during their teacher education program.

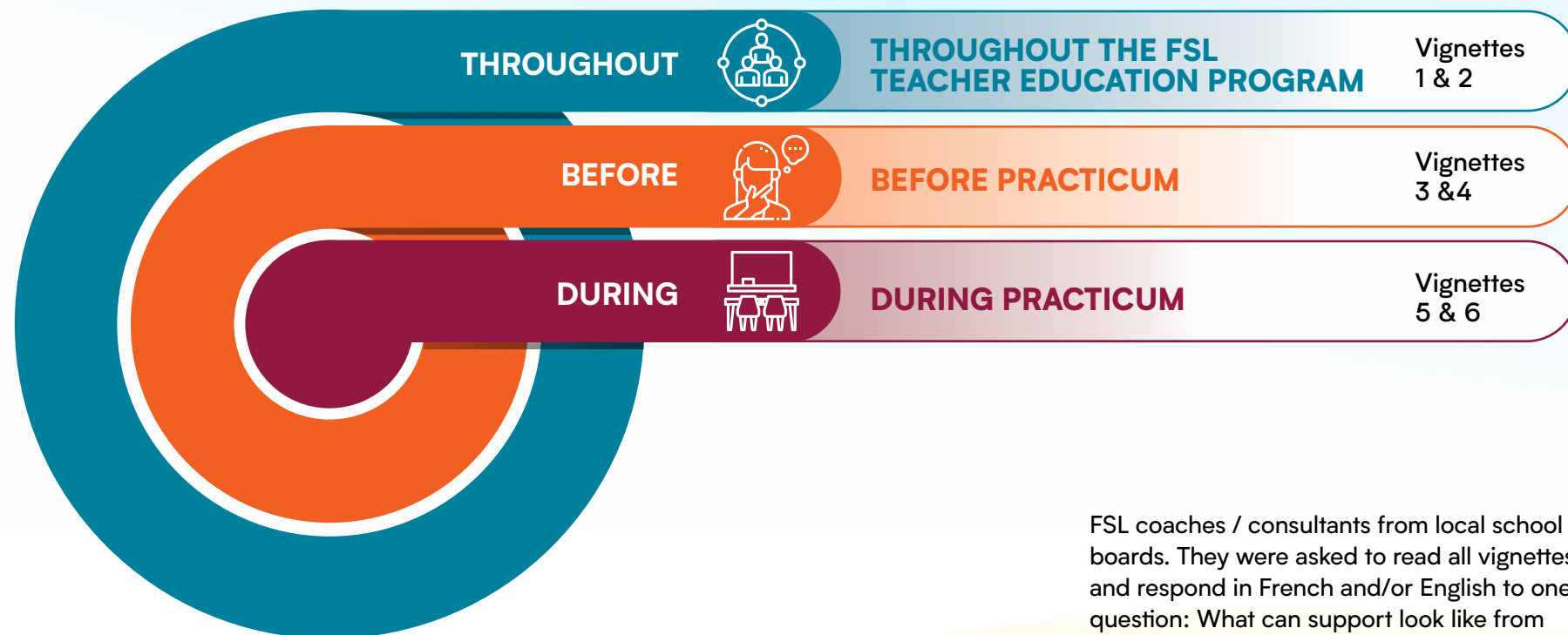
What does support look like?

This guide showcases what community-based support for FSL teacher retention can look like when it responds directly to the wonderings and lived experiences of current FSL teacher candidates. Whether you are an FSL teacher candidate (TC), an associate teacher (AT), a seconded course professor, a practicum supervisor, an FSL coach or consultant, or a member of the teacher education team at your faculty – this guide is for you! This is not a recipe to follow; rather, it is meant to be an authentic springboard for reflection, validation, and conversation among members of FSL teacher education communities who share the same or different roles.

1 Ontario Public School Boards Association (2023). FSL Teacher Recruitment Guide for English-Language School Boards.

2 Arnott, S., Smith, C. W., Battistuzzi, A., Culligan, K., Dicks, J., Kristmanson, P., Masson, M., Spiliotopoulos, V., & Wernicke, M. (2023). Identifying requirements and gaps in French as a second language (FSL) Teacher Education: Recommendations and guidelines (research report). Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. Zavelevsky, E., & Lishchinsky, O. S. (2020). An ecological perspective of teacher retention: An emergent model. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 88, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102965>

Touchpoints for Supporting Retention



During any Ontario FSL Teacher Education Program, opportunities to cultivate retention can occur at different times, in different spaces, and with different community members. We refer to these collectively as “touchpoints for supporting retention”. Six FSL teacher candidates (i.e., the co-authors of this report) were invited to write in French and/or English about significant experiences from their FSL

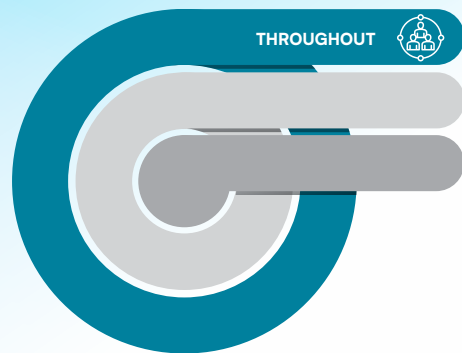
preparation journey. They worked in partners to transform their stories into the six vignettes in this guide, which highlight touchpoints for supporting retention that occurred throughout their FSL Teacher Education Program, before practicum, and during practicum. The vignettes were then shared with key members of our FSL community – our Teacher Education program team, ATs, seconded course professors, practicum supervisors and

FSL coaches / consultants from local school boards. They were asked to read all vignettes and respond in French and/or English to one question: What can support look like from you in your current role? Our FSL community members shared candid reflections and brainstormed possibilities for supporting the teacher candidate in the vignette and others who might share the same role as them.

We invite you to read this asynchronous written conversation, reflect on touchpoints for FSL teacher retention in your context, and ask yourself: *What could support look like from me in my current role?*

Normalizing FSL teacher learning

VIGNETTE 1



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Ces soutiens confirment l'essentiel : faire des erreurs, c'est normal quand on apprend une langue et en apprenant comment enseigner cette langue.

Despite being a graduate of the Ontario French Immersion program and having completed my undergraduate degree in French Studies – and even after passing the French proficiency test for admission to this program and others – je doutais de ma compétence. Je craignais que mon français ne se soit sérieusement dégradé, ou de n'avoir fait aucun progrès depuis le secondaire malgré mes études de premier cycle. I was wary of speaking in French at the Faculty, and I didn't trust myself to submit an assignment without re-reading my writing three, maybe four times first.

Three things helped me rebuild my confidence and trust in my linguistic ability: a secure environment during practicum to practice my French and receive helpful feedback, participating in the DELF Correcteur Training³, and time.

Having regular check-ins with my associate teacher made a huge difference. We had a positive working relationship, and I felt comfortable enough to voice my concerns to her. She affirmed my competence and gave me the feedback and gentle corrections that I needed until I learned to see that for

myself. Sa modélisation était excellente. Elle démontrait fréquemment qu'il ne faut pas avoir honte de nos erreurs de langue, car c'est ainsi qu'on apprend.

Deuxièmement, la formation pour devenir correcteur du DELF était super. The opportunity to dive into the CEFR clarified how languages are acquired and what a learner is capable of at each stage. It gave me a more realistic understanding of my level of French, and it further assuaged my earlier worries. It felt empowering to understand which skills to build in order to improve.

Understanding where I am on my journey as a French language learner helped me to extend the same patience and grace to myself that I extend to my students. Finally, time helped. The longer I spent in practicum, the more confident I began to feel. The more frequently that I used my French, the more I began to trust it.

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3 The DELF refers to the Diplôme d'Études en Langue Française. For more information on the DELF Correcteur Training and FSL teacher candidates, see <https://utppublishing.com/doi/abs/10.1558/slte.22643>

What can support look like from the FSL community?

Teacher Education Program Team

As a Teacher Education program, we should be asking ourselves difficult questions like: Do we reinforce or disrupt ideological standards of French language proficiency? In what ways do we cultivate development of linguistic confidence and competence during our program, and especially during practicum? Support requires critical reflection and concrete action – for example, can we collaborate with ATs to value linguistic risk-taking and confidence building as part of the practicum experience? Could we collaborate with school boards to offer DELF Correcteur Training and correction opportunities for our FSL teacher candidates?

FSL Coaches and Consultants

How can we normalize French language development beyond testing new FSL teachers at hiring? Perhaps normalizing collaboration between school boards and Faculties of Education is a place to start? After reading this vignette, we are going to invite FSL teacher candidates to join our FSL team of teachers, school leaders, and consultants/coaches during professional development sessions held in français. The DELF Correcteur Training is also paramount – it is not surprising that candidates identified this as being helpful for developing linguistic confidence and competence. It is one of the most valuable professional development sessions for FSL teachers in our board.

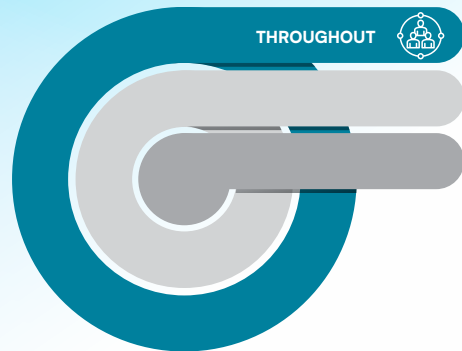
Associate Teachers

This vignette reminded me that I should speak more openly and candidly about my own language learning when welcoming an FSL teacher candidate into my class. No FSL teacher is a walking dictionary – we are all still on our lifelong language learning journey, some more advanced or confident than others. Nous devons montrer l'exemple et présenter aux stagiaires les ressources disponibles au sein de notre conseil scolaire et ailleurs pour l'apprentissage du français pour les enseignants.



Discovering where FSL “fits”

VIGNETTE 2



Au cours de ma formation d’enseignante en FLS, je me suis beaucoup interrogée sur la place du FLS dans les écoles et au sein de ma faculté. Au début de mon stage, j’ai tout de suite senti le double défi d’enseigner la langue française ainsi que des matières en français (la langue minoritaire de l’école) dans un contexte où l’anglais est la langue majoritaire. En plus, dans la salle du personnel, je parlais avec un enseignant de FLS qui disait qu’il ne recevait pas assez de formation professionnelle en français tel que les journées pédagogiques. Il m’a confié que la formation professionnelle était souvent dispensée en anglais, sans grand lien avec le français – il a même raconté avoir découvert un logiciel utilisé pour faciliter l’apprentissage de l’anglais, qui proposaient des applications

claires en français, mais que celles-ci n’étaient pas abordées dans son école. Il trouvait cette situation isolante et frustrante.

Cette situation me faisait réfléchir à ma préparation pour enseigner en immersion pendant mon stage. J’ai décidé de me tourner vers mes expériences à la faculté pour

chercher des explications, ce qui m’a amenée à réfléchir à la place du FLS dans mon propre programme:

- La plupart de mes cours étant en anglais – quand vient la formation plus adaptée au FLS? Est-ce que cela existe quelque part où je ne cherche pas?
- Pendant mon stage et même les devoirs de classe à l’université, je traduais souvent mes plans de leçon en anglais, et mes professeurs ajoutent parfois des éléments liés au FLS, mais cela semblait secondaire?

Mes questions et mes réflexions ont accru la confusion, et j’avais l’impression que personne n’abordait ces sujets. Je suis passionnée d’enseigner le français et c’est une spécialisation unique et demandée aujourd’hui. J’aimerais être préparée et soutenue pour réussir en tant qu’enseignante français langue seconde. Je veux conserver ma passion pour l’enseignement du FLS malgré tout cela, mais cela semble très difficile. Si c’est déjà difficile pour les profs de FLS qui enseignent actuellement dans les écoles et les facultés, et qui me supervisent en stage, en quoi cela sera-t-il différent pour moi?

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J’ai décidé de tourner vers mes expériences à la faculté pour chercher des explications.



What can support look like from the FSL community?

FSL Coaches and Consultants

It is true that oftentimes we have to advocate to make room for FSL in the world of professional development (PD). But it is not impossible. For example, I have seen FSL School Leads work with other departments to ensure PD for FSL teachers is conducted in French. New Teacher Induction (NTIP) PD can be offered on multiple days with a specific day dedicated to FSL teachers with delivery of all of the PD en français. FSL Leads can also organize networking groups to connect FSL teachers across multiple schools. Perhaps these offerings could be extended to local FSL teacher candidates too? Boards are beginning to open PD to teacher candidates during pre-service teacher practica, but this is unique to each board – a lot has to do with feasibility of students coming to the board, or timing and funding for release of practicing teachers to go to the Faculty. Exploring what is possible is worth the effort!

Seconded Professors

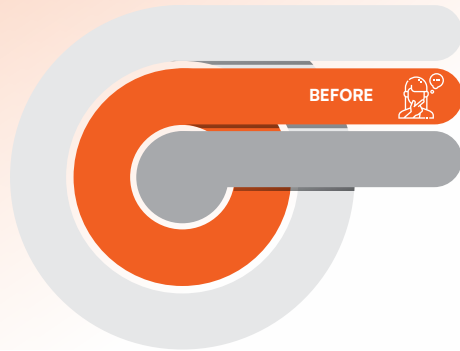
Cette vignette m'a conforté dans l'idée que ma contribution devait consister à parler des réalités de l'enseignement de FLS, tout en optimisant le soutien et la préparation spécifiques au FLS qu'ils ne pourraient peut-être obtenir que dans mon cours. Mon soutien devrait refléter ce que fait mon conseil scolaire en matière de partage des ressources FLS disponibles sur le terrain, tout en leur montrant comment les adapter et les mettre en œuvre pour leur groupe d'apprenant.e.s spécifique, afin qu'ils n'aient pas à traduire des ressources anglaises. Plusieurs enseignant.e.s de FLS expérimenté.e.s s'appuient sur des ressources toutes faites provenant de sources qui ne sont pas nécessairement alignées sur le programme scolaire, et paient de leur poche pour y avoir accès. Je ne veux pas que les candidat.e.s FLS aient l'impression qu'ils doivent faire de même, surtout quand des ressources de meilleure qualité sont disponibles !

Practicum Supervisors

The confusion described in this vignette is quite common in FSL Teacher Education Programs and continues on into professional learning opportunities in the profession! Although it can feel isolating and frustrating, this isolation can sometimes be motivating to practice advocating for FSL in non-FSL spaces. When I organize small group circles for students to share strengths and struggles they are having (or they had) during practicum, I make sure that FSL teacher candidates get a chance to be together and share about FSL as often as I can. They often say that hearing that their colleagues are in the same boat is incredibly validating. We also get a chance to learn about the uniqueness of the FSL context, which helps when I go to observe and support them in their practicum placements. At the same time, mixed groupings provide FSL teacher candidates with opportunities to demystify the FSL context for their colleagues. Learning how to advocate for yourself in this way is an excellent start to the type of advocacy FSL teachers need when they go to staff meetings and PD sessions, so it can be helpful to practice at the Faculty too!

Checking our expectations of FSL students

VIGNETTE 3



Heading into my first FSL practicum, I was not sure what to expect regarding students' level of French. I was placed in a French Immersion context where my associate teacher taught both language and content classes in French. When I met the students for the first time, I was surprised by their level of French. We had seen videos of FSL students speaking in French during our courses, but I was still surprised – many of these students had much more difficulty understanding and communicating in French than I had anticipated.

repeating the French), as the students would tend to wait for the English translation without trying to understand what had been said in French. However, it was difficult for me to experiment with that and try getting students to speak more French, as this was different from what my AT was doing. I was able to observe other French classes where the teacher had established French as the main language of their classroom. I could see a difference in the students' confidence and competence – they did their best to express themselves in French.

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À quoi ressemblent des attentes “réalistes” concernant les compétences des élèves en français?

My AT had to speak to students in English most of the time, and I was not sure what to do. I ended up doing the same. My FSL methodology professor at university had advised us to try and avoid using the “sandwich” method in class (that is, speaking in French, then translating into English, then

En tant que candidate à l'enseignement du français langue seconde, j'avais du mal à m'y retrouver face à ces deux réalités. Devais-je avoir des attentes élevées? À quoi ressemblent des attentes « réalistes » concernant les compétences des élèves en français? Et quelles sont les mesures jugées acceptables ou recommandées pour un candidate FLS afin d'expérimenter et d'apprendre tout en donnant la priorité à la réussite dans ce type de stage?

What can support look like from the FSL community?

Associate Teachers

Les profs de FLS ont recours à diverses méthodes pour encourager l'expression orale en français dans leur classe, allant de l'accompagnement stratégique aux systèmes de récompenses. Il peut être difficile d'enseigner le FLS exclusivement en français : s'il existait une « méthode universelle », nous l'appliquerions toutes ! En tant qu'AT, il est important d'encourager les stagiaires FLS à observer diverses méthodes d'enseignement du FLS mises en pratique à l'école. Il faut montrer explicitement aux stagiaires FLS les techniques générales qui nous sont utiles pour aider les élèves à comprendre ce que nous disons et/ou pour les encourager à parler en français pendant les cours. De mon côté, je fournis un guide simple à mon

candidat FLS détaillant ma prise de décision vis-à-vis l'utilisation de la langue française – des cas où j'utilise le français (e.x., donner des consignes, montrer un exemple de vocabulaire), et d'autres cas où je fais preuve de flexibilité (e.x., aider les élèves en difficulté; gérer les comportements). Ceci peut donner une liberté d'action en fournissant une structure ce qui pourrait réduire un sentiment d'insécurité. Cette vignette m'a rappelé qu'en tant qu'AT, nous devons également rester curieuses et curieux quant aux techniques que les stagiaires FLS apprennent à la Faculté : leur offrir un espace pour partager et expérimenter ne peut que profiter à notre apprentissage professionnel collectif.

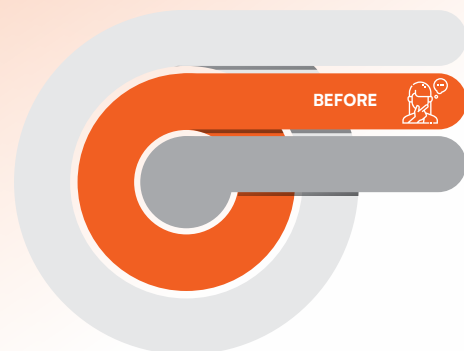
Practicum Supervisors

Navigating our expectations of student language level and the reality is a common and a challenging experience to face as an FSL teacher candidate! Analyzing case studies like the ones described in this vignette are helpful to do prior to entering practicum. Modeling and simulating conversations between teacher candidates and ATs is also a key support I can provide for navigating this kind of situation in real time. How do you broach the topic of wanting to know about your AT's rationale for their approach? How do you request carving out time so that you can try out different strategies that you have learned in your courses? As a practicum supervisor, I can attend these conversations between you and your AT as a form of support! The other thing to keep in mind is that we are guests in our AT's classroom, so such conversations need to acknowledge that there are established routines and approaches that are ours to observe and learn from (and not to criticize).



Unpacking the presence of English in FSL

VIGNETTE 4



When I think back, learning French in my English-language school board felt like I was learning a cool kind of code that nobody else knew. My favorite teachers pushed me to try speaking in French as much as possible. But other times, it felt like I could not be myself because I didn't know how to say what I wanted to say in French. I could do so in English, but that was not allowed. In my FSL learning, I had understood that English was a thing that the teacher had to control and keep out of the FSL classroom in order for French learning to happen.

I did not think much more about the role of English in FSL until I arrived at my B.Ed. program, where maximum use of French was promoted as the way to teach French in contexts where it is not spoken in the wider community. This made sense to me in theory – and I was prepared to approach my practicum placements with a “French only” approach. But it became confusing and challenging to navigate this as an FSL teacher candidate during practicum.

For example – connecting with students had been presented as a top priority for classroom management, but I struggled with doing this in French during my short practicum placements, where I needed to connect quickly with students in a language that they were not strong in. I worried if I would be penalized for making connections with students in both languages, or mainly in English to start. What role does English play in the FSL classroom? Is it something to control? Something to leverage? Should I expect to teach French using English?

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What can support look like from the FSL community?

Associate Teachers

I agree that connecting with students and promoting French is like walking a tightrope. Outside of the classroom period I tend to switch up both languages, I find it helps make the connection, and reminds them that using two languages is a unique skill. An FSL teacher candidate once used both French and English when they introduced themselves to my students. They openly explained to students why they were using English as part of their introduction (connection), why French was important to them (expressing a passion is motivating), and why they planned to focus on using mostly French in future lessons (expectations and belief that students can understand). They also asked if students spoke languages other than English or French, so they could make reference to those whenever possible. Cela ne convient peut-être pas à tout le monde, mais cela a permis de valider le répertoire linguistique du stagiaire ainsi que celui des élèves de ma classe! Si la création d'un esprit de communauté leur semble plus naturelle en anglais, il faudrait leur permettre d'essayer cette méthode tout en leur montrant d'autres méthodes possibles pour les aider à développer cette compétence en français.

Practicum Supervisors

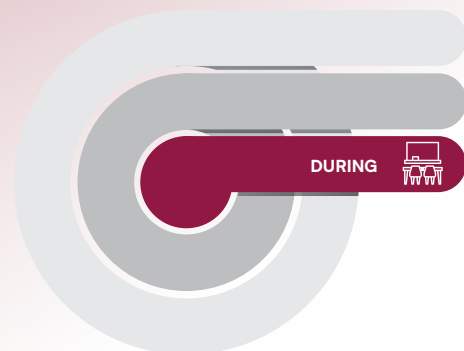
J'ai observé de nombreux environnements d'apprentissage de FLS différents et je suis conscient de la variabilité dans l'utilisation de la langue française qui existe entre eux. Comme le montre cette vignette, il est tout aussi important de démystifier le fait que les élèves peuvent avoir tendance à parler entre eux en anglais ou dans d'autres langues parlées à la maison. Bien que cela soit une possibilité, cela ne doit pas nécessairement être considéré comme un fait accompli. En tant que superviseur de stage, j'encourage les stagiaires en FLS à essayer différentes approches pendant leur stage. Peut-être que dans certaines classes, une approche exclusivement en français fonctionne très bien, tandis que dans d'autres, établir un contact avec certain.e.s élèves en anglais ou dans une autre langue peut constituer une première étape importante. Avant mon arrivée ou pendant ma visite, je m'assure que chaque stagiaire me parle de sa classe et de ses élèves, ainsi que de la manière dont il ou elle intègre le français, afin d'avoir une meilleure idée de ce que je recherche et du soutien que je peux lui apporter. Je ne suis pas là pour pénaliser les stagiaires, mais plutôt pour travailler ensemble afin de trouver des moyens d'atteindre leurs objectifs.

FSL Coaches and Consultants

Building connections in a practicum is tricky because of the short timeline – FSL school leaders can share best practices with ATs and teacher candidates alike for establishing community and connection with students, all while maintaining French as the language of instruction. We should also encourage ATs to provide explicit advice as to their students' interests, because our FSL curriculum allows us to teach about anything, as long as it is in French! Consider modes of sharing – gamify instruction, use concrete materials, take advantage of different environments, provide a task to work toward – for example Monday to Thursday, we could learn all about basketball in French, we watch videos and read about it, we write out rules for the playground, we discuss, etc. Then, on Friday, we get to go outside and play basketball! When it comes to a student being sick, scared or hurt – use their stronger language if you can. If a student is confiding something, use their language if you can. Go with your gut.

Building relationships to promote confidence and risk-taking

VIGNETTE 5



In my first practicum, my AT encouraged me to visit a different French Immersion class to experience different teaching styles. During that observation, a student raised their hand in front of everyone to ask a question about the time. They used the word “cloche” to refer to the “clock”, which is understandable since the word sounds similar to the word they know in English. I knew they meant “horloge” and I was curious to see how the teacher would respond to the student. I remember the teacher’s excited and supportive expression – they answered the student’s question, showing that they understood the student, and then said “Je pense que tu voulais dire “horloge”, pointing to the clock. The student agreed and nodded, but was not embarrassed. The teacher continued by saying “Ce qui est important est que je t’ai compris!”.

Seeing this in real life simplified big concepts I had read about in my faculty courses about attitudes towards learning and believing in what students can do. The teacher modelled that speaking French was not about perfection and accuracy, but about communicating meaning and building confidence. By immediately responding to the student’s question, they normalized errors during attempts to speak French. They also circled back to teach the correct word afterwards, showing me the importance of consistently maintaining high standards of what students can do. In this class, risk-taking was no big deal; it was a normal, commonplace occurrence. What surprised me was the effect this had on the teacher-student relationship. The teacher’s cheerful demeanor allowed students to feel safe and comfortable in their class. This learning culture has carried over to my own risk-taking and confidence as a student teacher, as the errors I made in my teaching during practicum were met with similar positivity. My takeaway for my teaching and my own learning as a professional? – Every error is a relationship-building opportunity.

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My takeaway for my teaching and my own learning as a professional? – Every error is a relationship-building opportunity.



What can support look like from the FSL community?

Associate Teachers

Creating a safe environment for language learning can and should extend to your relationship with your student teacher. We are all on our own language learning journey, which in my opinion is a life-long journey. Therefore, as this vignette reminds me, if we model strategies to create a positive learning environment for our students, then we should do the same with our TCs. It's okay if TCs make linguistic mistakes, especially as they are learning. Sometimes there are specialized vocabulary that student teachers may not have encountered prior to their practicum, so this is a perfect opportunity for them to learn in a supportive and safe environment.

De plus, cette vignette me rappelle que je peux aider les futur.e.s enseignant.e.s en les encourageant à observer différents styles d'enseignement au sein de mon école. Aucun.e enseignant.e ne peut prétendre être expert.e en tout ; en tant qu'enseignant.e associé.e, tirer parti de la communauté qui m'entoure peut aider les futur.e.s enseignant.e.s à observer, à réfléchir et, au final, à développer leur propre style d'enseignement, celui qui correspond le mieux à leur personnalité et à leur philosophie.

Seconded Professors

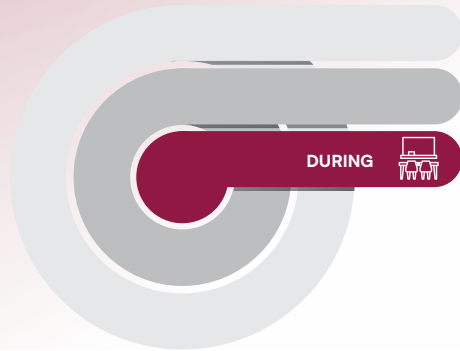
This vignette compelled me to model the kind of risk-taking that is part of my own teaching. Another seconded professor and I brainstormed scenarios from our FSL teaching experiences and converted them into case studies to share and analyze together with our TCs. I felt vulnerable, but I figured that if I expected them to be vulnerable and take risks, then I should too! This activity evolved throughout the semester to me allotting the first 5-10 minutes of each class to reflection of what TCs had observed in their own FSL teaching and learning – anything they had seen, heard, taught or experienced. Some questions were about how behaviours were handled, some were about lessons that had or had not worked out as planned – anything was up for discussion. Not only did this exercise help me build relationships with the TCs in my class, but my risk-taking also fostered relationships between them. What I loved most was the comfort and confidence that TCs built with their classmates, which showed most when they shared their thoughts and suggestions with each other rather than just me sharing my advice.

FSL Coaches and Consultants

Après avoir lu cette vignette, quelques thèmes majeurs m'ont marqué en tant que FLS coach. Elle démontre l'impact que peut avoir une correction intentionnelle des erreurs sur l'établissement d'une relation positive avec nos élèves et sur la création d'un environnement linguistique riche. Je n'ai cessé de me demander comment nous valorisons la prise de risque des enseignant.e.s de la même manière que celle des élèves est mise en avant dans cette vignette? Cette prise de risque a eu un effet positif sur de nombreuses relations, y compris entre l'enseignant.e associé.e et le stagiaire! Like practicing teachers, teacher candidates can be told how to create the environment, but without the practical examples to demonstrate what it actually could look and sound like, it is hard to understand the impact and how to think critically about one's own teaching space. I will share this vignette with my FLS teachers as an example of how these practices can impact future FSL teacher confidence and normalize risk-taking for all.

Navigating multi-level FSL classes

VIGNETTE 6



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Maybe differentiating for language is the most accessible first move for FSL teacher candidates?

When starting my practicum I quickly learned how challenging it can be to meet the diverse language needs of all learners within one FSL classroom. Roughly a quarter of my students had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) – Plan d’enseignement individualisé (PEI), with needs ranging from behavioral and emotional to academic and intellectual. Talking to fellow teacher candidates in other divisions and disciplines, this situation seemed to be the norm – what we had learned in courses about differentiated instruction seemed to be what was needed in all classrooms.

What became even clearer, however, was the impact of differentiating for language in the FSL context, as I started seeing right away how French was often a hurdle for the learning of IEP and non-IEP students alike. One experience that stood out to me was with a Grade 4 student who had significant difficulty with written French and phonological processing. They regularly demonstrated a strong understanding of the content in FSL and content courses like science and social studies, but struggled to express their ideas in French. I observed my AT support by scribing or grouping them with other students who had strengths in writing French. This helped me to see that increased

access to learning and success was possible for this student, with differentiated support. One day during a science quiz, the student became overwhelmed as they were trying to remember the French vocabulary to answer the questions and experienced a panic attack. It was clear that the issue was not with their understanding of science, but with their ability to access the French language. When they were given the chance to explain their thinking orally and using some English words, they demonstrated a clear understanding.

The experience showed me that differentiating for language as an FSL teacher candidate makes sense as an empowering foray into the world of differentiated instruction more broadly. We cannot learn everything there is to know about differentiated instruction during our short practicum placements – but maybe differentiating for language is the most accessible first move for FSL teacher candidates? This seems logical with the increase of multilingual learners in all of our classrooms – maybe our expertise could be shared with our English counterparts to support multilingual learners in their classrooms?

What can support look like from the FSL community?

Practicum Supervisors

These kinds of reflections are what we enjoy hearing about as practicum supervisors. Trying to find ways to support all students through differentiation can feel unsustainable at times, but this is not something that we expect teacher candidates to master by the time they finish the program. Learning to differentiate activities and expectations for some students is a great start, and we are happy to provide advice for additional strategies to try with other students as well. If you find yourself in an emotionally-charged situation during practicum, like with this student having a panic attack, these moments can feel overwhelming and it may not feel like we are doing enough. Talking about and reflecting on these situations with your practicum supervisor, AT, course professors, and/or other teacher candidates is a great way to gain some perspective about the frequency of such moments and to feel supported that you are doing the best you can.

Teacher Education Program Team

This vignette is a reminder that we should be doing more to connect English and French teacher expertise across all disciplines and divisions during their teacher education program. The theme of differentiating for language could be one that brings English and French teachers together during foundational courses they take together – like ones focused on inclusive practices! Imagine framing such differentiation for language as being language independent? Could the same strategies for supporting multilingual learners be presented and investigated as being relevant across English and French contexts? Could FSL teacher candidates' developing knowledge in this regard be leveraged so that English teacher candidates could see the importance of what FSL teacher candidates do and plan for as part of their everyday practice? This could do wonders to break down silos between French and English in favour of a shared expertise approach to initial teacher preparation.

Associate Teachers

Comme le mentionne cette vignette, la clé d'un enseignement efficace du FLS réside dans la différenciation pédagogique. Je constate que dans les cours de FLS, nous utilisons déjà une telle variété de stratégies de différenciation que lorsque j'ai des élèves bénéficiant d'un PEI dans ma classe, de nombreuses stratégies sont déjà en place ! Cela dit, il est essentiel de permettre aux stagiaires de se documenter sur le sujet, de le voir en action, puis d'élaborer leurs propres cours/évaluations de manière différenciée. Il est important d'aider les stagiaires à comprendre comment différencier une tâche en leur fournissant des explications directes et explicites. Nous utilisons souvent le "buzz word" de différenciation, sans décrire à quoi cela ressemble dans la pratique.



This guide represents the candid and demanding dialogue that is needed to address longstanding issues and challenges in FSL education that continue to impact retention. Let's cultivate community-based retention across Ontario FSL Teacher Education Programs!

SHARE this
guide with your
FSL community
– especially
teacher
candidates!

INITIATE
conversations about
these vignettes with
colleagues who
share the same role
– or with others in
different roles!

LISTEN to
each other's
wonderings and
experiences!

DISCUSS what
support for
retention looks
like in your FSL
community!



Ontario Public School
Boards' Association



Ontario Catholic School
Trustees' Association



Faculté d'éducation
Faculty of Education



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