

## Canadian French as an Additional Language Teacher Candidates' Proficiency and Confidence Pre- and Post-Francophone Home-Stay: Practicum Experience as Revealed through Questionnaire and Interviews

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**Abstract :** This study investigated the Canadian French as an additional language teacher candidates' confidence and language maintenance strategies by means of questionnaires and interviews pre- and post- a Francophone home-stay practicum experience. Teacher French language proficiency is one of the components of teacher knowledge that can influence students' French as an additional language acquisition. Although advantageous, seeking opportunities to use French in a French milieu comes with challenges. Teachers, for example, have been found to be hesitant to speak French with native speakers for fear of judgment. Another identified challenge to spending time in a French milieu is finances; while teachers have recognized the value of such an experience, cost is prohibitive. In recognition of the potential barriers and the need to maintain/improve the French proficiency of 'French as an additional language' teachers, this study provided a two-week home stay in a Francophone environment for teacher candidates of French as an additional language with financial subsidies for their participation. Through the post-experience interviews, the French as an additional language teacher candidates revealed an improvement in French proficiency. Similarly, the teacher candidates cited an increase in confidence in the interviews and through the questionnaire. They linked this increase in proficiency and confidence to their experiences with their host families and other Francophone members of the community. This study highlights the provision of immersion experiences as means to support teachers' language confidence and proficiency.

**Keywords :** French as an additional language education, teacher language confidence, teacher language maintenance, teacher language proficiency

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