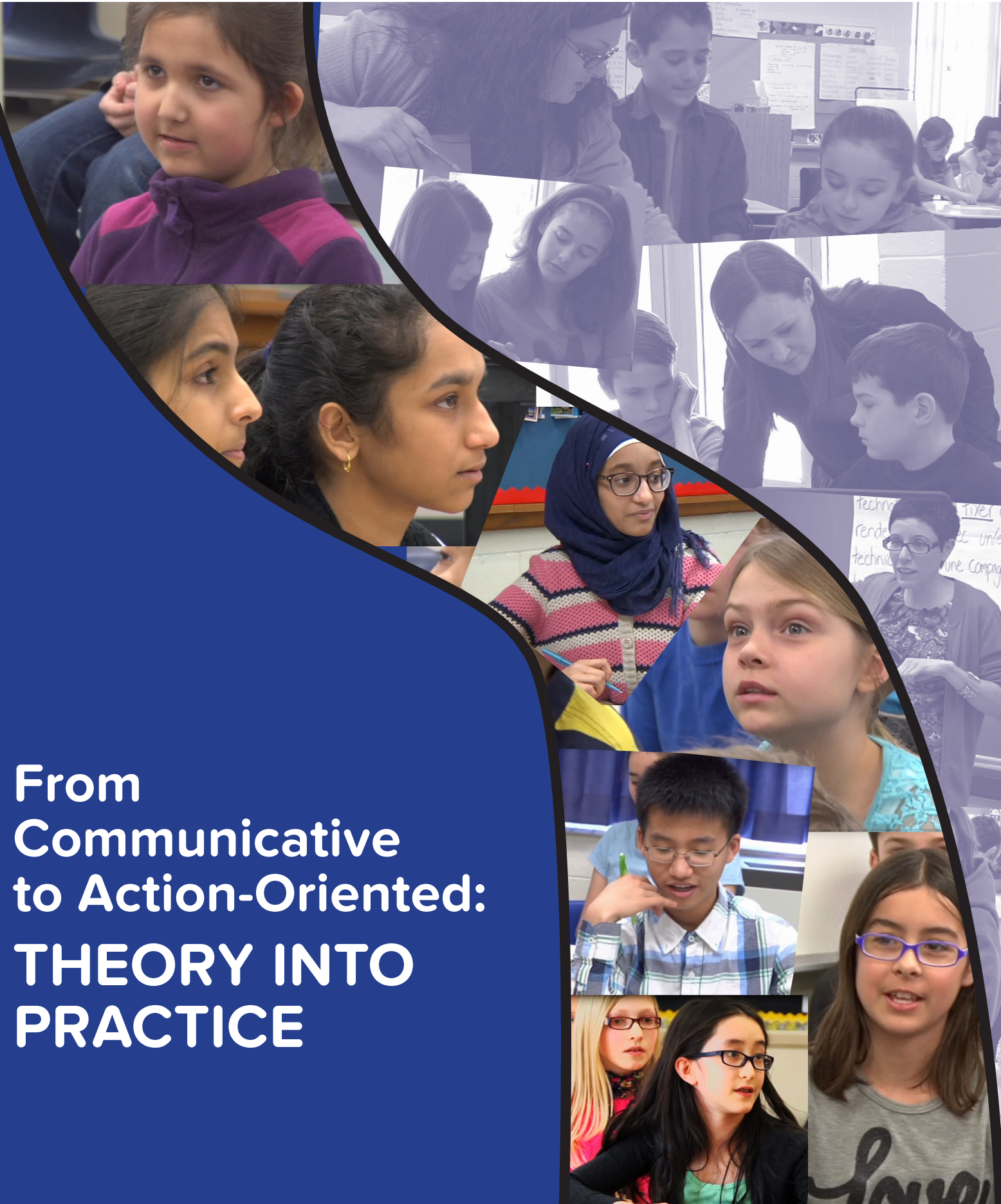
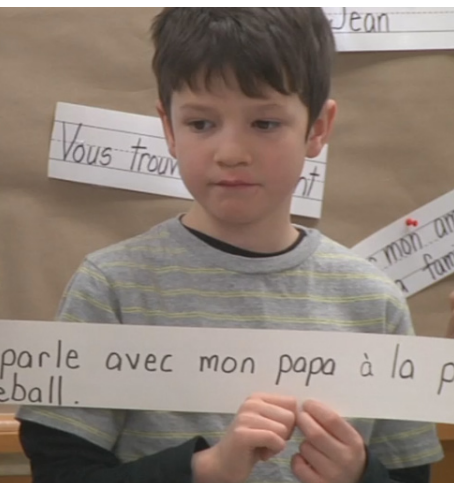


From
Communicative
to Action-Oriented:
**THEORY INTO
PRACTICE**





From Communicative to Action-Oriented: THEORY INTO PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

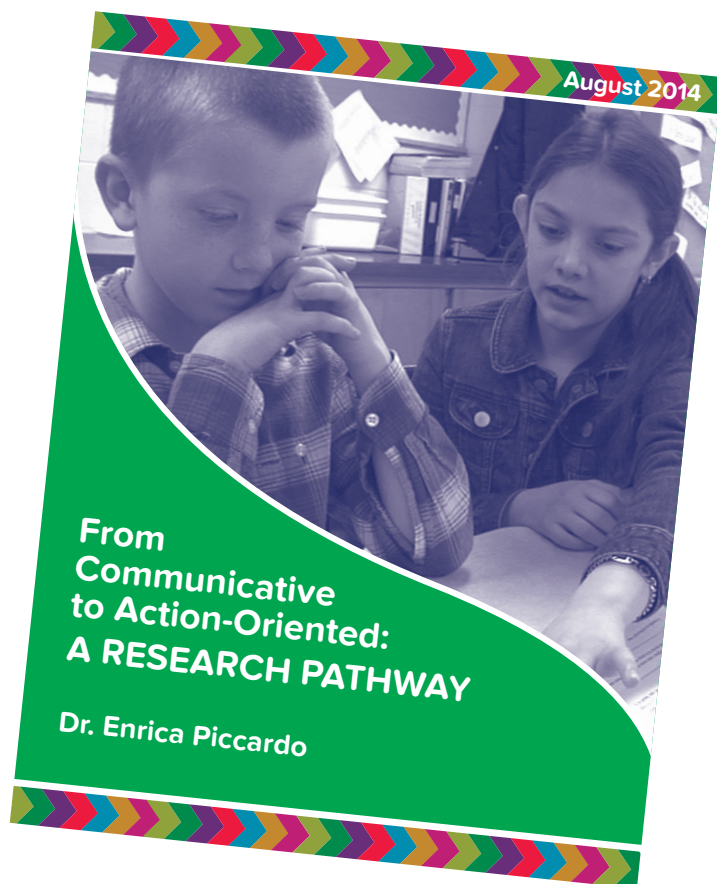
“Theory is splendid but until put into practice, it is valueless.” – James Cash Penney

“From Communicative to Action-Oriented” is a project that includes theoretical components (research pathway, poster), and a practical component (interactive lesson plans).

The intent of the project is to respond to the questions:

How are the communicative and action-oriented approaches to second language instruction similar and how are they different? How might these approaches be applied in the classroom?

The project resources include *From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway* by researcher and educator Dr. Enrica Piccardo, which describes the ever-evolving theoretical landscape of second language learning. Figure 1 (following page) outlines some of the “stepping stones” or elements of the communicative language approach, and demonstrates a progression towards the action-oriented approach as it brings further innovations to our understanding of how languages are learned.



FROM COMMUNICATIVE...

Learn the language,
not about the
language

Meaningful target
language use

Real-life situations

Communicative
functions

Authentic material

Four skills

Pair/Group work

...to ACTION-ORIENTED

Task-based

Linguistic
+ general
competences

Key role of positive
assessment

Communicative
activities
(of reception,
production,
interaction, mediation)

Strategic/process
oriented

Learner's
responsibility/autonomy

Intercultural
awareness

Plurilingualism

Figure 1

To put theory into practice, French as a Second Language teachers in the Greater Essex County District School Board engaged in lesson planning to apply their learning about the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the action-oriented approach. At a professional learning session, teachers worked in groups to plan a lesson for their students that would incorporate elements of the communicative and action-oriented approaches. The lessons were subsequently filmed to provide windows into classroom practice and implementation of these approaches in different FSL contexts.

A common lesson planning template was used to simultaneously plan instruction and assessment in three classrooms: Grade 3 French Immersion, Grade 6 French Immersion and Grade 9 Core French (Academic). The planning template frames the curriculum expectation(s), learning goal(s), success criteria and assessment tools at the beginning of the lesson plan, so that these elements consistently inform the task and the 3-part lesson that follows. Communicative language activities (oral production, listening, oral interaction, reading, writing or written interaction) are highlighted at the top of the lesson plan as a reminder of the skills being developed.

The 'Activités' section of each sample lesson begins with a description of a communicative or an action-oriented task. These tasks were planned to simulate authentic communication in a situation that is meaningful for each group of students to interact and use their French. The context of each lesson plan varies, and the samples include lessons that occur near the beginning, middle or end of a learning cycle. The Grade 3 lesson provides an example of sub-tasks that lead toward the accomplishment of a communicative task in a subsequent lesson. The Grade 9 lesson is an example of students engaging in elements of an action-oriented task. And finally, the Grade 6 lesson shows students engaged in peer-assessment as they finalize their product related to a (previously completed) action-oriented task.

Please note that the sample lesson plans were developed with the purposes of this project in mind. In other teaching or professional learning contexts, FSL educators engaged in planning may wish to focus on additional components, such as supporting students with special education needs, or the explicit instruction of learning strategies.

The lesson plans are embedded with interactive media content. Video clips from the lesson in action, from teacher and student interviews, and photographs of anchor charts and other classroom materials can be accessed through selecting the circular icons in the lesson plan. Please read the annotated lesson plan template on page 4 for more information about the overall design and features of the lesson plans. On page 5, there is a description of how it might be used to support planning effective instruction and assessment. Following the annotated lesson plan template on pages 6, 7 and 8, there is a more detailed description of each of the three sample lessons in order to provide additional context about each class, and to provide opportunities to reflect on classroom practice.





PO



CO



IO



CÉ



PÉ



IÉ

Objectifs

Critères

Example icons link to documents of related content from the classroom. This icon would link to examples of success criteria used with students.



Exemples



Évaluation

Microphone icons link to video interviews. For example, in the Evaluation Interview, teachers describe their assessment strategies and tools. In the Context Interview, teachers describe the context of this learning cycle, including some of the learning activities before and after this lesson.



Contexte

Activités



Activer !

Activer ! Links to a classroom video clip of the first part in a 3-part lesson.



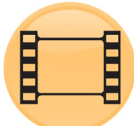
Acquérir !

Acquérir ! Links to a classroom video clip of the second part in a 3-part lesson.



Ancrer !

Ancrer ! Links to a classroom video clip of the third part in a 3-part lesson.



Exemples

Highlight or circle the relevant communicative activities for this lesson.

PO – production orale (speaking)

CO – compréhension orale (listening)

IO – interaction orale (oral interaction)

CÉ – compréhension de l'écrit (reading)

PÉ – production écrite (writing)

IE – interaction écrite (written interaction)

Identify the **specific curriculum expectation(s)** to be addressed in this lesson. As the strands and expectations of the curriculum are interrelated, a lesson may be connected to a large number of expectations. Rather than list them all, it may be helpful to select only 1 or 2 expectations that will be the focus for assessment and instruction during this lesson.

The **learning goal(s)** are based on the curriculum expectations and should describe in student-friendly language what students are learning to do in French. What is the main learning that students will demonstrate and receive feedback about before the end of this lesson?

Success criteria are created or shared with students to describe what successful attainment of the learning goals sounds like/looks like. In FSL, it is especially important to ensure that students understand the key vocabulary and concepts embedded in the learning goal and success criteria. It is helpful to plan an activity to create and clarify the criteria with students, such as analyzing a sample performance, applying the criteria to an anonymous sample, or brainstorming criteria after activating prior knowledge about the topic or skill.

Assessment tools may include tools to monitor and collect data from conversations, observations and/or products of learning. The tool should reflect the purpose of assessment, and should include the success criteria, the date, the names of students being assessed, the task, and a way to indicate the quality of work assessed (e.g., checklist, rubric, scoring guide, anecdotal comments).

Action-oriented tasks are effective tools to support increasing student proficiency because they provide a meaningful social context and purpose for students to use their French to accomplish a goal. Task-based planning does not require teachers to plan and assess a different task each lesson. FSL teachers carefully plan and scaffold action-oriented tasks. Students engage in a variety of communicative activities to gain confidence and skills in order to successfully engage in an action-oriented task, which may be in the middle or towards the end of a learning cycle. Completing the task engages students in the application of learning strategies, social skills and communicative language competencies that have been developed over a period of time.

Activer ! – In the first part of the lesson, the teacher designs a question, situation or activity to activate prior knowledge. Examples include: listening to or reading a relevant text, making personal connections, posing questions, and making predictions. These activities may provide assessment for learning data and serve to activate vocabulary, language structures, learning strategies, and/or content knowledge.

Acquérir ! – FSL students acquire second language proficiency by actively engaging in communication in French. FSL teachers plan for a variety of listening, speaking, interaction, reading and writing experiences based on students' needs and interests. These activities are actively monitored to check for understanding, provide feedback and make instructional decisions. FSL teachers differentiate instruction so that all learners can work towards achievement of the learning goal.

Ancrer ! – FSL teachers use a range of consolidation strategies to support assimilation of new learning. Metacognitive strategies are explicitly taught to help students reflect upon and 'anchor' their learning. Examples include: student reflections, comparing predictions to outcomes, identifying strategies that were effective, setting or revising language learning goals, and engaging in self- or peer-assessment.



Grade 3 French Immersion Lesson « Lettre formelle ou informelle? »

Context

The Grade 3 French Immersion classroom includes two classes of 20 students. Within a team-teaching approach, two teachers work within one large open classroom to meet the needs of these learners. Some lessons and activities are done as a whole group, others are by class, and frequently the students are learning in pairs or small groups.

The Grade 3 sample lesson is situated towards the end of a learning cycle connected to Olympic sports. Students were very interested in watching, discussing and playing sports related to the Winter Olympic Games. Students used a variety of equipment to create their own unique winter sports and games, and then wrote about their sport to explain to other students how to play. In this lesson about formal and informal letter writing, students are building their repertoire of formal letter language structures so that they can participate in a shared formal writing task in a subsequent lesson.

From Theory into Practice

Elements of the communicative approach are immediately evident in this lesson. There is an emphasis on communicative functions (through letter writing), the students are frequently collaborating in a variety of small groupings, and they are constantly using the target language in activities connected to what is happening in their daily lives (e.g. watching the Olympics).

This lesson plan is beginning to incorporate the action-oriented approach as the teachers adopt a task-based approach to their planning, organizing and scaffolding language activities so that students will be able to successfully accomplish a task.

Questions for Further Reflection

As you reflect, consider the implications on your planning, instruction, and assessment practices.

- What are some of the personal, social, and school-related situations that young learners face? How might they use their French to communicate in these situations?
- What are some ways that young learners can learn to participate in setting and monitoring language learning goals?
- Chapter 3 of *From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway* is about learners as social agents. On page 17, there is a chart demonstrating how the same act of speech may be performed differently in an informal or formal situation. How would you complete such a chart for your own students?





Grade 6 French Immersion Lesson — « Le commerce équitable — évaluer les présentations multimédias »

Context

The Grade 6 French Immersion students are refining their communication skills in French at the same time as they are learning about the big idea “Canada’s Interactions in the Global Community” from the Social Studies curriculum. Prior to this lesson, students had completed a draft multimedia presentation — a persuasive text lobbying for more fair trade items to be sold at the local supermarket.

Through a structured peer-assessment process, students are practicing and refining their language skills as they learn to apply the success criteria in order to give descriptive feedback to their peers.

From Theory into Practice

This lesson highlights the development of learner autonomy, and the many communicative language competencies that students put into action in order to accomplish a rich task. Throughout the lesson, we see examples of the teacher inviting students to articulate the learning goal and success criteria in their own words and in relation to examples of student work. This assessment as learning focus promotes learner autonomy as the students internalize and personalize the learning goal, and they are increasingly able to independently interpret the success criteria and provide specific, relevant feedback. Students reflect at the end of the lesson that peer assessment helps them to better understand the feedback process and to make improvements to their own work before submitting their final product to the teacher.

The assessment criteria used in this lesson also serve to remind students that to communicate effectively in French, not only do they need specific vocabulary and language structures (demonstrating linguistic competences), but they also need to keep in mind their audience (demonstrating sociolinguistic competence) and the persuasive intent of their message (demonstrating pragmatic competence).

Questions for Further Reflection

As you reflect, consider the implications on your planning, instruction, and assessment practices.

- How does the integration of subjects and clustering of curriculum expectations support deep learning?
- What do FSL teachers need to keep in mind when integrating content areas with language expectations?
- If you were teaching this unit, what opportunities might you use to teach intercultural awareness?
How do FSL teachers address culture in various curricula (e.g., the Arts, Social Studies, Healthy Living)?





Grade 9 Core French (Academic) Lesson « Conversations avec *Intello-en-Auto* »

Context

The Grade 9 class is in a non-semestered school; therefore, scheduled periods are 40 minutes per day for the entire school year. Students in this class have been building their confidence and ability to interact in increasingly authentic and spontaneous situations.

Prior to this lesson, students had learned and practiced a variety of vocabulary related to technology (computers, phones, and media).

They had also simulated phone conversations in different social situations. In this lesson, students are simulating a phone call to a company that provides technical support. Their task is to communicate about a technical issue related to one of their devices, and book an appointment for repair.

From Theory into Practice

This lesson builds on elements of the communicative approach, such as meaningful use of the target language, and work in partners. The teacher explicitly teaches language learning strategies, and students become increasingly autonomous as they select and reflect upon strategies that increase their effectiveness in different communicative situations. This task also reflects characteristics of the action-oriented approach, as it creates a need for students to communicate in order to accomplish a goal or to resolve a problem. The students are putting their skills and strategies into action in a context that is relevant and familiar to them.

Questions for Further Reflection

As you reflect, consider the implications on your planning, instruction, and assessment practices.

- Why might it be important to explicitly address confidence (i.e. in goal setting or student reflection) in the Core French context?
- Why is it important for adolescent learners to understand the learning goal in terms of its purpose or its connection to ‘real life’?
- Refer to the sample tasks in Chapter 5, *From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway*. How can action-oriented tasks be used to plan learning pathways in your classroom?



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This resource has been made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage.