

# Prologue

FOR FRENCH IMMERSION AND EXTENDED FRENCH EDUCATORS

A PUBLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS

## Assessment *for* learning and Assessment *as* learning

The focus of this publication is on the use of assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning to support student learning in entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes. Throughout, there are opportunities for educators to reflect individually or in professional learning communities on practices that promote student involvement in assessment.

In this publication you will read about integrating assessment with instruction to develop students' proficiency in French while nurturing success in all curriculum areas, involving students as active participants in the assessment process, and promoting positive attitudes to learning through constructive assessment practices.

*Prologue* is a professional learning publication for educators working in entry level French Immersion and Extended French programs. It includes an element of research, questions for reflection, and teacher voice, which are intended to inspire professional conversations. *Prologue* is available electronically in English and French on Curriculum Services Canada's website (<http://www.curriculum.org/fsl/en/resources/>).



## Integrating Assessment with Instruction

Integrating assessment and instruction throughout learning cycles is recognized as an essential aspect of teaching that is critical for nurturing student success. Educators are able to respond to their students' needs by carefully monitoring their progress throughout the entire learning cycle. Students become increasingly responsible for their learning when educators explicitly teach and encourage students to self-monitor and to provide feedback to their peers.

**“As an integral part of teaching and learning, assessment should be planned concurrently with instruction and integrated seamlessly into the learning cycle to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help educators and students monitor students’ progress towards achieving learning goals.”**

*Growing Success, p. 29*

Educators reflect on curriculum expectations to determine what students should know, say, and do as evidence that they have attained these expectations. In entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes, educators are mindful of the need to plan assessment and instruction to help students develop their proficiency in French as well as to meet curriculum expectations in other subject areas. By discussing plans with colleagues, educators can refine ideas and together develop a common understanding of the curriculum expectations and what proficiency in French looks and sounds like at this grade level.

*“We combine expectations from different subjects. Pre-planning makes everything so much clearer and students know exactly what they are learning. I have a hockey net with a puck in it on our whiteboard as a visual reminder of our learning goals.”*

Grade 4/5 French Immersion Educator

*Growing Success* articulates policies and practices which educators in Ontario's English language schools, including those in French Immersion and Extended French, use to plan assessment *for* learning, assessment *as* learning, and assessment *of* learning. Educators keep in mind that the purpose of both assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning is to improve student learning, while assessment *of* learning refers to the process of recording, evaluating, and reporting what students have learned.

By enhancing assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning practices, educators in entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes can support the provincial goals for French as a Second Language (FSL), which include to “increase student confidence, proficiency, and achievement in FSL” and to “increase

student, teacher, parent, and community engagement in FSL”  
(*A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, p. 12).

Although assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning are interrelated, there are important distinctions. Assessment *as* learning refers to the development of students’ metacognitive skills through peer and self-assessment for the purpose of improving learning. Educators encourage students to learn from each other, to support each other, and to assume greater responsibility for their learning. With practice, students are able to use success criteria to review their work or performance and to determine for themselves where they have been successful, which criteria, if any, they have not yet met, and what their next steps would be to improve.

Research indicates that strategies used in assessment *for* and *as* learning opportunities motivate students to become more engaged in the learning process and to experience “higher levels of achievement and self-efficacy.”

Harlen, Wynne. *Rethinking the teacher’s role in assessment*.  
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003775.htm>

*“For self-assessment to really work, students need to identify evidence of meeting the success criteria in their work, for example, « Je peux organiser mes idées et voici la preuve. » My students love asking the class for feedback. They always ask what their next steps for improvement are, and at the end they always say thank you.”*

Grade 5 Extended French Educator

*“You need to practise giving peer-assessment with students and start slowly. I will tell them they will give each other feedback on one part.”*

Grade 4/5 French Immersion Educator

Assessment *for* learning occurs when educators collect evidence of student learning, document and reflect on student progress, engage students in learning conversations, provide timely descriptive feedback, and allow time for students to implement feedback. On-going assessment *for* learning enables educators to plan instruction and adjust next steps to meet their students’ evolving needs.

**REFLECTION** How might I incorporate more assessment *as* learning opportunities into my practice?

*“I provide feedback on written productions using technology that allows me to add audio comments. I find that when the students hear my voice the feedback is more effective.”*

Grade 4/5 French Immersion Educator

*“We construct portfolios with our children and we often sit down with them to talk about their work. Our questions are very open-ended because we want to know what the children want to say so we ask questions such as « Qu’est-ce que tu as fait ici ? », « Est-ce que tu as d’autres idées sur ce sujet ? », and « Comment est-ce que tes amis peuvent apprendre la même chose ? »”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

In entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes, educators use assessment for learning opportunities to monitor students’ proficiency in French. By analyzing evidence of their students’ proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, educators plan instruction and differentiate to meet the needs of individual and small groups of students.

Educators consider:

- how their assessment and instruction practices promote the development of second language learning strategies so that students can increasingly understand oral French expressions without relying on translation
- how their assessment practices encourage students to take risks to communicate using the French they are learning
- what factors impact their decisions regarding when and how to provide feedback on aspects of proficiency, such as pronunciation, word choice, or sentence structure
- how their assessment practices help students understand their role in learning French

*“We have developed an assessment booklet that has sections for listening, speaking, reading, and writing so we are able to capture what is important for the children to know and be able to do in French. It includes things like basic skills, understanding of classroom instructions, and story retell.”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

*“When students start doing oral productions we give feedback as a group. Early in the year, I ask students to practise greeting each other and exchange basic information. I will then ask questions that contain the success criteria and together we will build an anchor chart that I post so that later I can point out success criteria when I need to.”*

Grade 5 Extended French Educator

Students in French Immersion and Extended French programs learn French as they engage in inquiries and tasks related to the content of subjects taught in French. Clear learning goals make explicit connections between what the students are learning and curriculum expectations. Effective assessment practice involves the articulation of learning goals, as well as determining how the students will come to understand the goals. When educators make connections among the learning goal and the daily tasks, activities, and conversations that students experience, this helps deepen student understanding of what they are learning. They enable students to answer the question, « Qu'est-ce que tu apprends ? » rather than simply « Qu'est-ce que tu fais ? ».

*“Part of our daily process is to highlight what we learned yesterday and what our goal is today. Although I don't use terms like «critères» and «objectifs» with the children, our days always begin with what we learned and what we are going to learn. The children know we always go back to ideas so they can extend their thinking and learning. For example, after one child had noticed that our snail has a mouth, someone asked if snails have teeth. I said, « On ne peut pas les voir. Comment est-ce qu'on va savoir ? »”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

Educators progressively develop student proficiency in French by setting learning goals related to specific aspects of early language acquisition, such as comprehension of a range of French expressions, production of simple messages to express ideas using familiar vocabulary, and applying strategies to communicate during brief interactions. Learning goals are expressed from the students' point of view and articulated in French using simple, clear terms that students understand or are able to understand when supported by educator-led discussion, modeling, and examples.

Educators distinguish among learning goals related to proficiency in French, to curriculum content in areas other than French, and to learning skills and work habits. While learning goals may be interrelated, educators assess them separately so that students can better understand their strengths and areas for improvement. For example, a student might struggle to communicate accurately in French, but still demonstrate effective attainment of curriculum expectations in other subjects that are taught in French.

**“The opportunity to respond to comments is essential, for learners need to see that the teacher really wants the work improved and that improvement is being monitored.”**

*Formative assessment and the learning and teaching of MFL: sharing the language learning road map with the learners,  
Paul Black and Jane Jones*

**“Learning goals are brief statements that describe for a student what he or she should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction. The goals represent subsets or clusters of knowledge and skills that the student must master to successfully achieve the overall curriculum expectations.”**

*Growing Success, p. 148*

*“I use my observations of when the students are using French orally, what they understand, what they are reading in French, what they are able to write in French, and then plan how to help them develop their proficiency. For example, I would do a small group writing workshop focusing on specific skills with those students who are ready.”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

## Examples of Possible Learning Goals

### KINDERGARTEN FRENCH IMMERSION OR EXTENDED FRENCH

« *J'apprends à créer des suites* » is a learning goal related to a program expectation for Mathematics – Overall expectation 18 – *The Kindergarten Program* (2016).

« *J'apprends à décrire des suites en français* » is a learning goal related to a Language specific expectation (1.7) and a Mathematics specific expectation (4.2). *The Kindergarten Program* (2016).

« *J'apprends à coopérer avec les autres* » is a learning goal related to personal and social development based on Emotional Development specific expectation (2.5). *The Kindergarten Program* (2016).

### GRADE 4 EXTENDED FRENCH

« *J'apprends à analyser mes choix alimentaires* » is a learning goal related to a curriculum expectation for healthy living (C2.1), *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education* (2015), p. 142.

« *J'apprends à discuter de mes choix alimentaires en employant des mots précis et variés* » is a learning goal related to proficiency in French based on Speaking to Communicate expectation (B1.3). *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8, Extended French, Grades 4-8, French Immersion, Grades 1-8* (2013), p. 127.

« *J'apprends à établir des buts pour améliorer mon travail* » is a learning goal related to learning skills and work habits based on the sample behaviours in the learning skills and work habits chart in *Growing Success*, p. 11.

“For subjects other than FSL that are taught in French in an Extended French or French Immersion program, the expectations in each grade are those outlined in the English-language curriculum policy documents. It is recognized that expectations in these subjects may need to be adapted to meet the needs of students who are studying the subjects in French instead of in English.”

*The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8, Extended French, Grades 4-8, French Immersion, Grades 1-8* (2013), p.16

**REFLECTION** How do I integrate learning goals related to developing students' proficiency in French while they are learning content related to other curriculum areas?

When planning a learning cycle, educators consider a variety of instructional approaches and learning experiences and different types of assessment. Throughout the learning cycle, they monitor alignment of instruction and assessment to maintain a focus on the selected curriculum expectations. Some ways of accomplishing this include focussing learning conversations and feedback on the success criteria previously discussed and providing frequent self-assessment activities. These activities help students identify gaps in their learning and areas of mastery related to specific learning goals. Inquiries and explicit instruction in large and small groups provide opportunities for developing students' ability to discuss in French their learning related to the learning goals and success criteria.

**REFLECTION** When students are engaged in inquiry, how can we direct their learning toward the curriculum expectations that we would like to be able to assess?

*“Sometimes the learning goes in a different direction than what I had planned but there are always connections to the curriculum. I might ask students how what we did relates to our question. « Est-ce que c’est la même chose ? Est-ce qu’il y a un lien ? Est-ce qu’il y a quelque chose qu’on peut faire ? »”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

## Engaging Students in Assessment

Educators engage students as active participants in the assessment process from the beginning of the year. They explicitly teach students how to recognize successful attainment of learning goals. By introducing and discussing simple, concrete learning goals at the beginning of the year, educators familiarize students with goal-setting and co-construction of success criteria.

Discussion and co-construction of success criteria is an on-going process. As the learning cycle progresses, educators and students revisit success criteria to clarify them, as needed. Students may suggest additional ideas, provide examples, or improve the wording as their vocabulary develops. In entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes, students may benefit by focussing on one success criterion at a time. As well, educators use their professional judgement in determining how to respond to individual student needs and readiness to learn by differentiating the success criteria.

**“The emphasis on student self-assessment represents a fundamental shift in the teacher-student relationship, placing the primary responsibility for learning with the student.”**

*Growing Success, p.35*

*“When we first discuss our new learning goals, I post them and remind students of their reading strategies. I ask questions such as « Qu’est-ce que nous lisons ? » and « Quels mots est-ce que nous connaissons ? » and we do a shared reading. From the beginning of the year, the students know it is their responsibility to understand the learning goals.”*

Grade 5 Extended French Educator

**REFLECTION** What strategies do I use to develop students’ understanding of learning goals and success criteria?

Scaffolding the language of assessment is integral to the learning process as it enables students to talk about their goals and their progress in meaningful ways, and to exchange suggestions for improvement. Initially, most students talk about their learning mainly in English, so educators model the French language expressions students need to have conversations in French about their progress. During these conversations, students reflect on their proficiency in French, set goals for improvement, or provide feedback to peers. Educators provide sentence starters such as « Je peux », « Je veux », and « Tu peux » for students to use with specific success criteria. As well, educators use concrete examples such as sample written productions and video clips of oral interactions to help students see and hear what successful learning looks and sounds like.

*“When we are having learning conversations we listen to the students’ comments and we always repeat what they say in French. Depending on the child, we would then ask them to repeat their comment, or part of it, in French. For example, if the child said “I think that I built it this way because...” We would say: « Peux-tu dire » « Je pense que... »”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

*“Before we write a text we look at different models and students identify parts. For example, if they say in English “It has a catchy title,” I reply « Oui, un titre accrocheur ». Then I ask « C’est quoi, un titre accrocheur ? » Together we complete a chart with the success criteria in the first column and details or examples in the second column. I send this document electronically to the students so they can write their text in the third column. It really helps them to have the success criteria and the examples right on their page.”*

Grade 4/5 French Immersion Educator

Students in entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes benefit by participating in learning conversations that focus specifically on French-language skills. By using strategies such as demonstration, explicit teaching, and the gradual release of responsibility, educators help students understand success criteria related to developing proficiency in French. For example, « Je peux comprendre quand la personne parle lentement. », « Je peux interagir oralement avec aisance », « Je peux lire avec fluidité et comprendre. » or « Je peux organiser mes idées quand j'écris un court texte. »

**“Assessment plays a critical role in teaching and learning and should have as its goal the development of students as independent and autonomous learners.”**

*Growing Success, p. 29*

*“When students are just beginning to use French orally, one-on-one encouragement is helpful, but peer feedback and support is really important. In activities such as ‘turn and talk,’ their friends may remind them that they know the words in French, or children will notice that their friends are speaking French so they will, too.”*

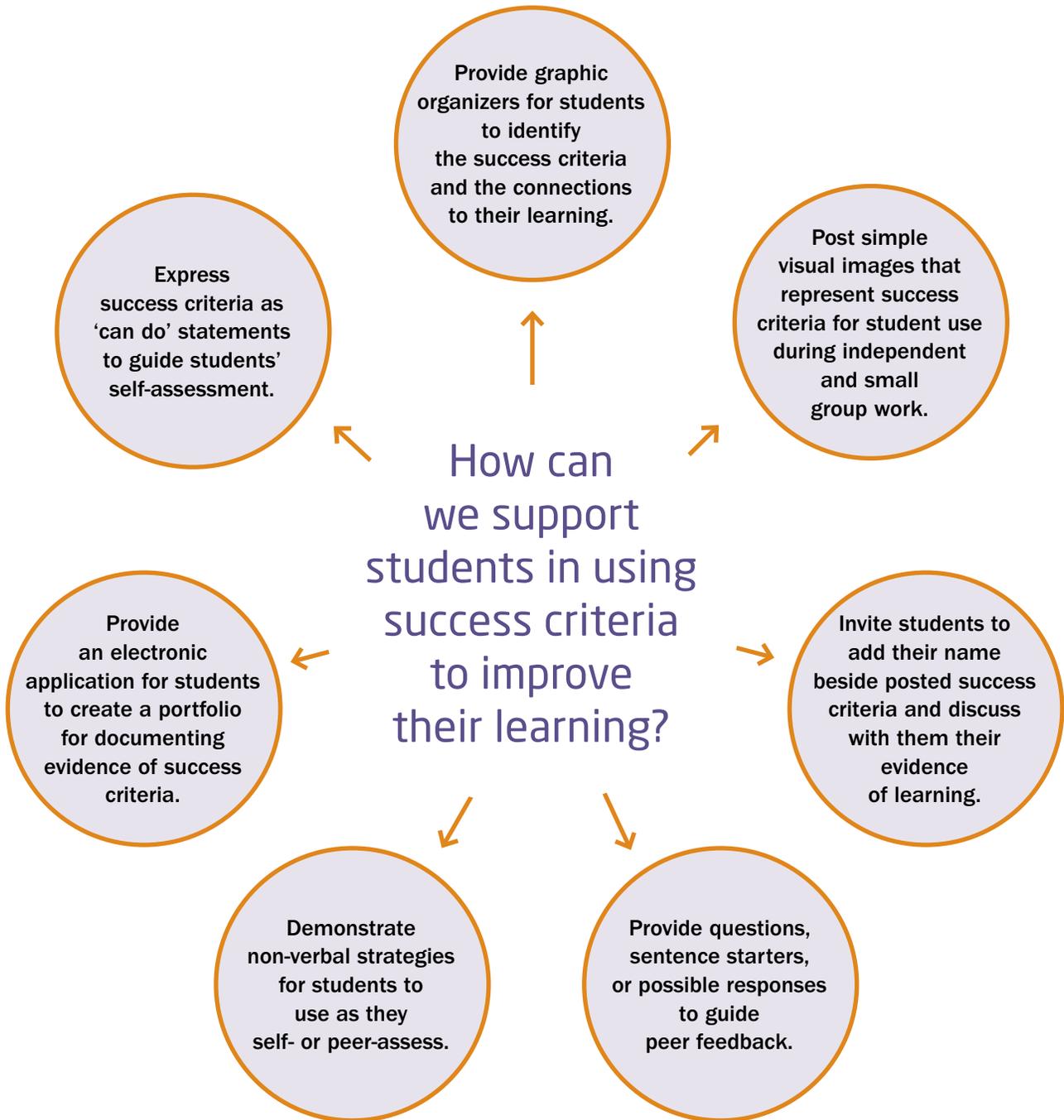
French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

As a learning cycle progresses, educators support students in increasing their ability to discuss their learning in French. Guided by the learning goals and success criteria, students can document evidence of their progress by selecting which records of their work and performance they would like to keep and share. Educators guide students in reviewing documentation of their learning (e.g., audio and visual recordings, portfolios) so they can determine their next steps. Students are encouraged to think about how they learn and to share their strategies.

**REFLECTION** How can my use of assessment for learning and assessment as learning support my students in developing a greater understanding of ways to improve their French skills?

*“We use an app for a digital portfolio that parents can access so students can document and share photos and text about what they are learning.”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator



Educators use a variety of means to engage students in assessment as learning. The suggestions in the diagram above serve as starting points for reflection and discussion.

## Promoting Positive Attitudes to Learning through Assessment Practices

Educators in entry level French Immersion and Extended French classes can nurture the development of positive attitudes towards learning, including learning French, through careful attention to their assessment practices. Students should view assessment as a means to identify their strengths and next steps in improving their learning. Directing students' attention to their progress through strategies such as keeping records of their « Je peux » statements along with evidence of learning in a portfolio promotes greater confidence and a desire to continue learning.

When educators demonstrate that questions are valued, students seek clarification and explore further inquiries. Students are more likely to take risks that extend and deepen their learning when they know that educators view mistakes as an important part of the learning process. During individual learning conversations, students are motivated to share their interests, understanding, and further questions related to the learning cycle.

Students can experience greater success when educators use different assessment practices to meet students' needs. By having choice in how and when they demonstrate their learning, students have opportunities to show their creativity and individuality.

Students experience the benefits of working together and develop healthy peer relationships through frequent opportunities for teamwork that involves giving and receiving meaningful, descriptive feedback. Through peer assessment activities, they have opportunities to lead the learning, to develop a better understanding of the content, to experience other perspectives, and to share different ways of learning.

*“At the beginning of the year I put an emphasis on collaboration. My students take pictures around the school that show collaboration and we do an activity that involves working together to move cups without touching them using only pencils and elastics. We talk about how they are going to collaborate and we discuss success criteria so we learn to talk together openly and develop a community of collaborators who give feedback to each other.”*

**Students' interest in learning and their belief that they can learn are critical to their success.**

*Growing Success, p. 29*

**REFLECTION** How do I integrate learning goals related to developing students' proficiency in French while they are learning content related to other curriculum areas?

**REFLECTION** How might I provide students with more choices for presenting evidence of their learning?

Assessment practices that include discussions of learning goals and co-construction of success criteria foster positive attitudes towards learning. Students have a clear picture of what they are expected to learn and what success looks and sounds like. Parents welcome transparency in assessment practices, clear communication of learning expectations, and opportunities to review and discuss evidence of their child's learning.

*“Sharing what they know is really a joyful moment for most children. We invite them to share when they feel they have attained a level of confidence and have had enough experience to be successful. ... I think the whole idea of nurturing curiosity is important so we are really listening and reacting to their awe and wonder.”*

French Immersion Kindergarten Educator

## Professional Resources

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