

FSL for School Administrators
FROM AWARENESS to ACTION

From Awareness to Action is a professional learning publication to support school administrators in the strengthening of French as a Second Language.



ISSUE 5

Supporting Conversations about Student Learning in FSL

IN THIS ISSUE

the focus is to highlight strategies for administrators to utilize when having conversations that support student learning in FSL.

Non-French speaking school administrators may perceive that they have limited knowledge and experience to engage their Core, Extended and French Immersion teachers in meaningful dialogue about instruction. Administrators are encouraged to remember that many evidence-based high yield strategies are effective in improving student achievement whether the language of instruction is English or French.

Inspired by the *Common European Framework of Reference*, or *CEFR*, (see **Issue #2**), FSL teachers have shifted their focus from a communicative approach concentrated on oral, aural, and speaking skills towards an action-oriented approach and the creation of learning contexts in which language acquisition is a function of a real-life task.

What might administrators look for in the CEFR-inspired classroom?

Learning in the CEFR-inspired classroom is focused on developing proficiency and confidence in reading, writing, oral production, and interaction, and listening, which is reflective of the strands of the Ontario FSL curriculum (2013). Educators recognize a continuum of language acquisition with defined descriptors that assist students in self-assessing their level of proficiency. These descriptors reflect the need for authentic and relevant tasks, which generate the demand for grammar, vocabulary, and structures taught within a context. These tasks require a problem to be solved or an objective to be achieved, taking into consideration the students' cognitive and language abilities. As a result, the teacher talks less and less within the CEFR-inspired classroom, and students speak with increasing spontaneity in a highly interactive learning environment. Learners are social agents in a milieu in which their voice is prioritized. Click on the link for an example of **action-oriented instruction**.

In the Ontario context, it is important for the resources and learning activities within a CEFR-inspired classroom to reflect students' identities, lived experiences, and abilities, incorporating a [culturally relevant and responsive instructional approach](#). Aligned with *Growing Success*, instructional strategies also include learning goals and success criteria which are visible and co-created with students. Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning and to respond to meaningful feedback. Progress monitoring using ongoing data collection informs the teacher's instruction and helps to ensure that instructional strategies are designed to meet the needs of students.



As students engage in relevant, authentic and purposeful higher-order thinking tasks, effective communication, regardless of the language of instruction, becomes the goal in addition to language acquisition.

Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
(2011), Capacity Building Series,
French immersion in Ontario, p. 3

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As non-French speaking administrators explore the elements of a CEFR-inspired classroom, they quickly realize that the key characteristics of effective second language instruction are relevant to the effective instruction of any subject and discipline. These elements focus on metacognition; assessment for, as, and of learning; differentiation; oracy; and inquiry-based learning. They describe how students are encouraged to own their learning by reflecting on their progression towards established learning goals. Teachers utilize student and class profiles when determining activities that are relevant and engaging, and which encourage students to use the target language to accomplish the defined task. All of these elements reflect a positive learning environment not only in a FSL classroom, but in any classroom setting regardless of the language of instruction.

WHAT'S MY ROLE?

The strategies and terminology that educators are utilizing in French instruction that is preparing students to do more than conjugate verbs and regurgitate memorized

phrases echoes the same approaches and lexicon used when discussing quality literacy instruction such as inquiry, metacognition, and purposeful talk. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are evident in the lesson design: Multiple means of Engagement; Multiple means of Representation; Multiple means of Action & Expression. When student voice, choice, and agency are valued, and the student is an active participant in the learning as described in [Universal Design for Learning](#) learners are supported in becoming purposeful and motivated, resourceful and knowledgeable, and strategic and goal-directed in their French-language learning.

As a result, school administrators do not need to change the strategies and language used to engage in meaningful discussions with FSL educators about quality instruction and CEFR-inspired classrooms. The elements of this approach represent sound teaching practice in any language.

Principals can support students' learning in FSL by promoting the value of learning French. They can foster an atmosphere of collegiality among all staff members and include FSL teachers / educators in school improvement and equity planning, and in professional learning communities concerning student learning and the use of evidence-based strategies.

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: French as a Second language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, 2014 (revised), p. 14.

When it comes to supporting educators as they learn and work to improve student achievement, nothing a principal does has a bigger payoff than learning visibly and publicly alongside staff in a school.

Katz & Dack (2013), [Intentional Interruption: Breaking down learning barriers to transform professional practice](#), p. 46.



One article to read, one quote to consider, one link to click...

1. [Ideas Into Action for School and System Leaders: Engaging in Courageous Conversations](#) (Winter 2013-14). This document focuses on one of the five Core Leadership Capacities derived from Ontario's Leadership Framework. It contains many practical suggestions for school administrators to engage in conversations that focus on student learning. [Engaging in Courageous Conversations](#)
2. "Principals have a lot of demands for their time and attention that aren't central to teaching and learning – but teachers say the more time they spend outside of their office and interacting with teachers and students, the easier it is to create an atmosphere of trust." [4 things principals can do to build relationships](#)
3. "Dare to Unmute FSL Series" – Module 1 – Reflecting on Identity, CRP and Intercultural Awareness. Question for Reflection: How do teachers provide instruction that takes into account their own and students' identities, lived experiences, and abilities? [OMLTA Dare to Unmute FSL](#)