

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 4 Increasing Engagement in FSL at the School Level

IN THIS ISSUE

the focus is on practical suggestions for school administrators to increase student engagement in FSL.

Student Engagement in the FSL Classroom

Engaging students in learning is a goal for all educators. Students who are engaged in their learning demonstrate greater success and express interest in and take ownership of their learning. As in other subjects, student engagement in FSL takes many forms, but above all, the approach must be student centred. It begins with relevant, authentic tasks carried out in French and supported by meaningful materials.

Media accessed through technology facilitates exposure to French around the world. Topics of student interest can motivate student participation. The more engaging the topic, the more students practice speaking and become comfortable and confident in spontaneously using French for communication.

For all students to feel a sense of belonging and well-being, the learning environment for FSL should reflect the diversity of the learners within the classroom while promoting intercultural awareness and competence needed to make connections and relate to diverse French-speaking communities around the world. A physical space that promotes interaction and collaboration is also essential for second language learning. If the FSL teacher moves from classroom to classroom, school administrators can support the FSL teacher with dedicated space, where possible, to represent and communicate the value of French-language learning.

Connections beyond the classroom can also serve to engage students and promote the value of learning French. Guest speakers have the power to motivate and inspire students, while community partnerships can offer opportunities for French tours or career-day presentations. Overall, exposure to French-speaking individuals provides students with role models for the daily use of French and an insight into the value of French in their community and beyond.

Knowing the Learner

In any subject area, it is essential that teachers get to know their students in order to engage them in meaningful learning. For example, focusing on what students find interesting makes tasks such as learning new vocabulary engaging. Educators use a variety of diagnostic assessments to gauge the strengths and needs of their students to ensure students can engage in learning. Knowing the learner is essential in creating relevant and identity-affirming classrooms where students see themselves reflected in the resources and activities.

Resources

When selecting resources for the FSL classroom, it is important to ensure that students feel represented. Culturally relevant and responsive collections that use **authentic texts** will help students not only see their stories being told but offer opportunities to learn about other cultures as well. Choosing varied text forms and levels will ensure that all learners access engaging content. A **Universal Design for Learning** approach offers all students an equal opportunity to succeed, providing equal access to material as well as ways to demonstrate what they have learned.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

WHAT'S MY ROLE?

Opportunities to increase engagement in FSL

Focus on the role of instructional leader in FSL classrooms	Principals consider themselves an instructional leader in FSL classrooms in the same way they do across other areas of the curriculum. What the school administrator prioritizes sends a strong signal to everyone else in the school community.
School building	Bilingual school signs (e.g., Bureau [Office]) and bulletin boards that showcase student work in French provide opportunities for students to learn French during everyday life. French signage, morning announcements, and displays of student work motivate students and convey the message that French is valued in the school community.
School newsletters and websites	These can support and validate FSL programming through the inclusion of a section for FSL. Content may range from a description of the FSL program offered at the school to examples of current student work and links to articles about FSL and language learning. These materials also provide information to parents to show the benefits of second language learning while highlighting the vision and the goals of the FSL curriculum in parent-friendly language. This information increases parent and community engagement and highlights the importance that is placed on learning additional languages. When French is valued throughout the community, students are more likely to engage in the learning.
Modelling	Most staff have enough functional French to be able to greet one another and say the date. Trying to exchange a few sentences in French with a colleague demonstrates risk-taking for students and sends a positive message about learning French. Morning announcements can also include some French language, from stating the date to singing "O Canada." Modelling can also include promoting French culture by bringing in guest speakers and supporting French field trips.

“Much like physical classrooms, digital classrooms should also be organized and structured to provide students with a variety of authentic communication opportunities (both synchronous and asynchronous). Students should understand where materials are stored and how to access them in their digital classroom spaces.”

OMLTA Module 1 – Positive Classroom Environments



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

1. OMLTA Module 2-Engaging the learner This module focuses on the importance of knowing the FSL learners, planning for authentic and engaging tasks, UDL and how planning for student engagement reduces classroom management issues. [Engaging the Learner Viewer's Guide](#)
2. *At our school, we use the Student Success model of really getting to know our students and giving them manageable tasks. This way, they build on small successes. We have many students who, when the bell rings, say, “Do we have to leave [French class] now?” They feel successful because they are aware of what they can do. In our department, we work together to create a program that is relevant and interesting for our students.* Secondary Core French teacher. Transforming FSL website
3. **Frenchstreet.ca** – This website provides a list of opportunities across Canada for authentic field trips and guest speakers. Created by Canadian Parents for French, the platform allows users to search by location, rating, and grade level.