



Nurturing a 'Can-do' Attitude:
Engaging French-language learners by
fostering success



Synopsis

Discover what some students say helps them learn French and how they feel when they recognize the progress they are making. Learn how some educators help their students be successful and able to monitor their own progress.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. What might be the correlation between how my students and I define success and their level of engagement in learning French?
 2. What do I already do to support success for all French-language learners?
 3. How do I nurture a feeling of success regardless of the student's level of competency?
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During Viewing

Making connections

1. Students and educators mention a number of strategies and approaches that support student success in learning French. Which of these do I already implement? What else have I found to be effective?
 2. What strategy used in the video would I like to incorporate into my practice to help my students reflect on their progress in French?
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After Viewing

Moving forward

1. What other strategies or supports could I access to ensure every student experiences success in learning French?
2. Implement/refine a self-assessment system that helps students recognize and celebrate the development of their competencies in French.

“Students want and need work that enables them to demonstrate and improve their sense of themselves as competent and successful human beings. Before we can use success to motivate our students to produce high-quality work, we must meet three conditions:

1. We must clearly articulate the criteria for success and provide clear, immediate and constructive feedback.
2. We must show students that the skills they need to be successful are within their grasp by clearly and systematically modelling these skills.
3. We must help them see success as a valuable aspect of their personalities.”

– Strong et al. (1995)



Going Deeper

Ensuring students are successful begins with teachers’ beliefs that every student can succeed and entails:

- Using instructional strategies that meet students’ needs
- Developing appropriately challenging tasks
- Maintaining high expectations

Effective instruction and assessment practices are critical for student success and intellectual engagement. As researcher Douglas Willms noted in his presentation *Student Engagement in Canadian Schools*, quality instruction is characterized by “effective [use of] learning time, relevance and rigour.”

Project participants shared their experiences using various teaching approaches and strategies that they found effective in supporting student success and engagement, including:

- Backward design
- Gradual release of responsibility (modelling, shared, guided and independent practice)
- Chunking learning into manageable pieces
- Universal design for learning, inclusive practices, and differentiated instruction
- Restorative practices
- Whole group sharing circles
- Project-based learning
- Inquiry-based learning
- Competency-based instruction
- Personalized, student-centred learning
- Growth mindset
- Cooperative learning strategies
- Using teacher assessment, self-assessment and peer-assessment to improve intellectual engagement
- Neuro-linguistic approach to learning second languages

- Integrated approach to planning instruction
- Using technology for various purposes, for example, to facilitate student self-assessment by recording students and creating online portfolios; to connect students with Francophones and other French-language learners; to facilitate individual inquiry and research

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of effective methods, approaches and strategies, but rather it provides insight into the numerous ways in which educators support student success in French. Strategies that promote a positive mindset and help students recognize their developing proficiency in French promote feelings of competence and a belief in their ability to learn. Examples include:

- Self-assessment
- Personal goal-setting
- Self-monitoring and reflecting on progress over time
- Celebrating successes

Many of the practices shared by participants to support student success also contribute to increasing student engagement by nurturing positive relationships, enhancing relevance and authenticity, and developing learner autonomy.

“Madame sourit toujours et rit avec nous alors je me sens qu’elle nous aime beaucoup. On se sent bien quand on va dans sa classe parce qu’on sait qu’elle nous accepte tous.”

– Élève du niveau secondaire en immersion

“Je peux écouter les suggestions et les opinions de mes amis.”

– Élève du niveau élémentaire en français de base

“L’auto-évaluation m’encourage d’apprendre plus parce que je vais être plus consciente de ce que je veux savoir.”

– Élève du niveau secondaire en immersion

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