



Strengthening Engagement in French as a Second Language

This resource was made possible through the participation of students, teachers, and school and school board leaders across Canada representing Core French, Intensive French and French immersion programs from elementary through secondary school. A number of the participants appear in the videos and many more shared personal experiences and insights about engagement, all of which have influenced the content of this resource.

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1. Introduction

“Engagement with learning is essential, because it is engagement that leads to sustained interaction and practice.”

– Irvin et al, 2007

Increasing engagement in learning French as a second language is a priority identified by the French as a Second Language Consortium of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada based on findings in the report [FSL in Canada: Potential for Collaboration \(2015\)](#)¹.

Strengthening Engagement in French as a Second Language presents a call to action for educators and other stakeholders to address this priority. This unique resource combines relevant research and authentic examples from classrooms across Canada to illustrate numerous practices that educators have found to be effective in increasing student and stakeholder engagement in French second-language education.

Whether you are a French-language teacher, a school administrator, a guidance counsellor, a system leader, or hold a special position of responsibility in your school, this resource is for you! It provides the inspiration and information needed to launch your journey of discovery into ways to successfully increase engagement in learning French.

This guide supports reflection on the ideas presented in six short video clips:

- Passionate about Learning French: Exploring the topic of engagement
- Leading Engagement of French-language Learners and Stakeholders: The critical role of school administrators
- Relationships are Key: Engaging French-language learners and stakeholders through personal connections and positive environments
- Nurturing a ‘Can-do’ Attitude: Engaging French-language learners by fostering success
- Meaningful Learning Experiences: Engaging French-language learners through relevance and authenticity
- Voices and Choices: Engaging French-language learners by encouraging student voice and autonomy

The videos include many student voices reflecting various levels of French proficiency typically observed in Core French and French immersion programs. Their valuable contributions illustrate the merit of taking risks to speak in an authentic situation, even if mistakes might be made.

¹Council of Ministers of Education, Canada https://www.cmec.ca/601/French_Second-Language_Learning.html

2. Support Material for Video Clips

Where To Start

You are encouraged to begin using this resource by first perusing this guide and then viewing the video clip *Passionate about Learning French: Exploring the topic of engagement*. The remainder of the video clips may be viewed in any order; however, as engagement is enhanced through a combination of factors, it is recommended that you plan to watch all six video clips.

The guide is organized into sections for each of the six video clips. These include:

- A brief synopsis
- Before, during and after viewing questions based on reflective practice
- Going deeper
- Participant and research quotes

A key component of this guide is the *Tools for Moving Forward* section. This section includes templates that will support educators in responding to the call to action to increase students and stakeholder engagement in French second-language learning.

Additional references and links to other resources pertaining to engagement are included in the *References/ Further Reading* section.

“Engagement is often misunderstood to be dependent on personal qualities of the student, such as motivation.”

– Nova Scotia School Boards Association (2014)

“When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

– Henderson (2002)



Passionate about Learning French:
Exploring the topic of engagement



Synopsis

Learn about three dimensions of engagement and how one school district/board has begun a process of transformation that is resulting in improved engagement in learning French.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. How would I define student engagement in learning French?
 2. What am I doing already that makes a positive impact on student engagement in learning French? How do I know?
 3. What have I noticed about the engagement of French-language learners in my class, school or district/board?
-



During Viewing

Making connections

1. Which key messages from the introductory comments would I share with my colleagues and other stakeholders?
 2. How does what students in the video share about their engagement in French compare to what students in my class, school or district/board have said or would say?
 3. Are students in my class, school or district/board motivated to learn by marks or because they want to improve their French? Why? How might engagement and learning be different if students were more focused on improving their French proficiency?
-



After Viewing

Moving forward

1. How can I find out what students in my class, school or district/board believe about the perspectives and ideas shared in this video clip? Would they say they are engaged in learning French socially, academically and/or intellectually? What are their ideas on how to increase all three dimensions of engagement in learning French?
2. How can I communicate to other stakeholders the sense of urgency to increase engagement of French-language learners and stakeholders? Consider the following actions:
 - Share key messages from this resource through social media channels or online forums.
 - Discuss questions in this guide with colleagues.
 - Meet with colleagues and other stakeholders and plan ways to increase engagement of French-language learners and stakeholders at the classroom, school and/or district/board level.

“When autonomy, self-efficacy, relatedness, and relevance are combined, they have a cumulative, synergistic effect.”

– Ferlazzo (2017)

“More interaction, more creativity and more culture all are having a positive impact on engagement.”

– David Wood, Principal, Prince Edward Island



Going Deeper

Engagement of French-language learners can be viewed from the perspective of enrolment in optional French courses and programs, academic and intellectual engagement in learning French, and participation in extra-curricular opportunities in French. While enrolment in French immersion² continues to rise in a number of areas of Canada, attrition in all French programs is of concern to many stakeholders. In a pan Canadian study, researchers note that “focus-group discussions yielded one clear priority for research: finding answers to why students drop out of French in secondary school.”³

Engagement is complex and multifaceted, so educators look to the fields of psychology and educational research for a better understanding of how to engage students. According to the Canadian Education Association⁴, student engagement has three dimensions:

- Social engagement: A sense of belonging and participation in school life
- Academic engagement: Participation in the formal requirements of schooling
- Intellectual Engagement: A serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning

A number of researchers have written about the importance of paying attention to emotional and cognitive engagement as well as to behavioural engagement (Gardner, Lambert, etc.). Psychologists Ryan and Deci propose four key factors that contribute to these deeper levels of engagement:



A sense of relatedness – Students experience a feeling of belonging to a supportive learning environment characterized by positive relationships with teachers and peers. For French-language learners, providing opportunities for interactions with Francophones and other French-language learners can further enhance the sense of relatedness.

² Canadian Parents for French. (2017) *French as a Second Language Enrolment Statistics: 2011-2012 to 2015-2016*.

³ Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2015) *French as a Second Language in Canada: Potential for Collaboration*.

⁴ Willms, J.D., Friesen, S. & Milton, P. (2009). *What did you do in school today? Transforming classrooms through social, academic and intellectual engagement*. (First National Report) Toronto: Canadian Education Association.



A belief in competence or self-efficacy – Students understand what it takes to be successful on a daily basis. They recognize their own progress and believe in their ability to learn French. Educators maintain high expectations for students. They use evidence-based practices to develop students' proficiency in French and the ability to use a range of strategies independently.



A perception of relevance – Students see connections between what they are learning in class and their own lives. They understand the usefulness in real world applications of the French they are learning. Educators consider students' interests when planning tasks.



A sense of autonomy – Students make choices regarding what and how to learn, as well as when and how to demonstrate their learning. They feel that their ideas are valued. Educators provide appropriate options so students can exert increasing control over their learning while receiving the necessary support to make progress. Educators encourage students to set personal learning goals and to use strategies to solve problems.

The four key factors that contribute to deeper engagement are the subject of four different video clips in this resource. They are interconnected and mutually supportive. Listening to what students say about how they learn best, for example, enabling them to decide when and how they are ready to demonstrate their learning, supports student success. By encouraging this type of student input, educators not only promote a sense of autonomy, but also demonstrate to students that they value their opinions, thus strengthening their relationships. By acting upon students' suggestions, educators are able to offer interesting courses and plan relevant tasks.

“Learning that invites students to engage intellectually awakens the human spirit’s desire to know.”

– Friesen (2009)

“Si tu vis dans un pays bilingue, je crois que c’est important de parler cette autre langue, pour que tu puisses communiquer avec les autres personnes de ton pays.”

– Élève du niveau secondaire en immersion



Leading Engagement of French-language Learners and Stakeholders:

The critical role of school administrators



Synopsis

Discover specific ways in which some school administrators have successfully supported engagement of French-language learners and stakeholders.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

As a school administrator:

1. What impact do I have on engagement of French-language learners at the classroom level and at the school level?
 2. In what ways do I already collaborate with staff and stakeholders to enhance engagement of French-language learners?
-



During Viewing

Making connections

As a school administrator:

1. How is my support of student engagement in French reflected in the research quote in this video?
 2. School administrators in the video mention numerous ways in which they demonstrate that they value French-language learning. How do these practices compare with what I am already doing?
-



After Viewing

Moving forward

As a school administrator:

1. What opportunities do I provide staff to help them refine instructional practices unique to French second-language teaching?
2. How do I support staff in developing confidence in and the refinement of their own French-language skills?
3. How might I further support engagement of French-language learners and stakeholders in my school and district/board?

“The literature on block scheduling for second/foreign language instruction underlines the importance of the flexibility provided by longer instructional periods for optimal pedagogy, student achievement and attitudes.”

– Lapkin (2008)

“[M]agic happens when you create a culture of trust and a structure for feedback within classrooms. When these key pieces are in place, you can utilize the knowledge of the team to build expertise at the ground level where it counts.”

– Daelick (2017)



Going Deeper

School administrators support French-language learners, educators and other stakeholders whether or not they themselves have a background in French language or instructional practices relevant to second-language teaching. Understanding key factors that enhance engagement provides a focus for professional learning conversations between school administrators, staff and other stakeholders.

Nurturing positive relationships applies to the school level as well as within the classroom. As noted in *How leadership influences student learning* (Leithwood et al), “Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organizations.” Participants in this project commented on the importance of building a cohesive team. School administrators involved a variety of staff members, such as guidance counsellors, librarians and resource teachers, in supporting French-language learning. They encouraged these other stakeholders to take leadership roles and to collaborate in order to strengthen student engagement in French.

Several school administrators noted that nurturing strong relationships between French teachers and other staff members facilitates mutual sharing and appreciation of ideas to support language teaching and learning throughout the school. Positive relationships between French teachers and other staff results in a school culture in which learning French is valued by all.

School administrators also encouraged contacts beyond the school to enhance engagement in French. Several participants commented on the positive impact of strong relationships with post-secondary institutions. In one secondary school, students corresponded with first-year university students who were studying French. While the initial goal was to seek feedback on written productions, the influence extended beyond improved writing skills. The secondary school students became highly engaged in their interactions with the university students, inspiring many to continue learning French.

A number of participants found student engagement increased through interactions with Francophones in the community. School administrators supported collaboration with other stakeholders, for example, Francophone artists, French teachers at other schools, community organizations, pre-schools, and public institutions such as libraries, museums and art galleries.

School leaders play a key role in increasing engagement in the learning of French by supporting inclusion in French programs and student success for all. Administrators also noticed the positive impact on student engagement and success when French speaking resource teachers supported students in class and collaborated with French teachers. Administrators commented that they encourage all students to learn French and they support all staff in exploring different ways to engage students in learning, for example trying to speak in French to French learners.

Student success for all is fostered when school leaders take an active role in monitoring student progress in French. Principals included discussions about data on student achievement in French at school improvement team meetings, and collaborated with French teachers to set goals for improvement. One principal noted the positive impact on student and staff engagement that resulted from initiating a school-wide focus on strengthening oral language. A committee was formed, which included the principal and staff members, to evaluate the oral proficiency of every French-language learner on an annual basis.

Participants shared the importance of school administrators demonstrating that they value the French programs by scheduling longer blocks of time for French-language development, allocating resources, supporting opportunities for students to learn French in authentic situations, promoting professional development, supporting opportunities for teachers to refine their own French-language skills, and ensuring that French is visible throughout the school and in communications to families.

“Je parle beaucoup plus maintenant. C’est une classe de littératie [parce qu’ils ont les classes de soixante minutes].”

– Élèves du niveau élémentaire en français de base

“Les directions d’écoles exercent une influence favorable sur l’engagement des apprenants et des intervenants en favorisant l’attitude que le français est pour tout le monde.”

– Jennifer Rochon, Teacher, Ontario



Relationships are Key:

Engaging French-language learners and stakeholders through personal connections and positive environments



Synopsis

Discover what some researchers, teachers, students and administrators say about learning environments in which positive relationships strengthen student engagement. Find out how some educators nurture relationships with parents and other stakeholders.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. How do French-language learners in my class, school or district/board feel about their relationships with teachers and other school staff? How do I know?
 2. How have I created a learning environment that supports student engagement?
 3. What other relationships have I cultivated to enhance student engagement in learning French?
-



During Viewing

Making connections

1. Are the research findings presented from *Qu'as-tu fait à l'école aujourd'hui? / What did you do in school today?* (2012) applicable to French-language learners in my class, school or district/board?
 2. Which of the strategies mentioned would I like to incorporate into my practice to increase student engagement?
 3. How do the practices shared regarding stakeholder engagement compare with my own?
-



After Viewing

Moving forward

1. How could I help students develop a feeling of belonging to a community of French-language learners within the school? And also beyond the school?
2. How might I strengthen my relationships with students?
3. How might I strengthen relationships between students?



Going Deeper

“Students who perceive their relationship with their teacher as positive, warm and close are motivated to be more engaged in school and to improve their academic achievement.” (Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999)

– Gallagher (2013)

“As soon as students are able to communicate, they understand the value of learning another language, develop a sense of identity, have a sense of belonging and see themselves as plurilingual individuals.” [loose translation] (Manitoba Education, n.d.-c)

– Bureau de l'Éducation et Enseignement supérieur Manitoba (2014)

Research indicates that a sense of belonging is a fundamental human need (Deci and Ryan).

Participants in this project create supportive learning environments by making an effort to really get to know their students, to take time to listen attentively, and to share personal stories so students get to know them. They use their tone of voice, sense of humour, caring facial expressions and welcoming body language to convey to students that they care about each one. A feeling of mutual respect between students and their French teacher, and students and their peers, enables learning to take place. Participants also emphasized that being passionate about learning French and communicating this passion helps engage students in learning.

Engaging learning environments are responsive to students' varying needs for structure or independence. Teachers' strategic use of routines and clear criteria for tasks can be combined with student choices (such as activity, grouping and mode of communication). Teaching and learning opportunities are organized in a way that ensures smooth transitions and ease of access to required materials. Educators also help students feel a sense of belonging to a community of French-language learners within the school and beyond. Participants shared how opportunities for students to use French in authentic situations, such as discussing books with the librarian, or interacting with community group members in French, helped students develop confidence and enhanced their engagement.

Through the use of technology, students are able to connect with other French-language learners and Francophones anywhere in the world. Real or virtual excursions help students understand that learning French enables them to develop relationships and to participate actively in Francophone cultures.

By involving families in planning and carrying out special cultural events for French-language learners, educators develop positive relationships beyond the classroom. Participants communicate regularly with parents in order to share ways in which families can support engagement in French, and to inform them about what students are learning in French class and about extra-curricular opportunities that exist to support engagement in French. Social activities in French, such as film screenings, provide opportunities to strengthen relationships between families and educators. Knowing their parents value learning French and have positive relationships with their French teachers enhances engagement for students.

Several participants discussed the benefits of cultivating partnerships with post-secondary institutions. Developing relationships between staff and students in secondary and post-secondary institutions facilitates professional learning, curriculum development, and meaningful, authentic interactions in French between students at both levels.

Students commented that they enjoyed learning French when their teachers encouraged them to work with their classmates, provided opportunities to interact with Francophones, and made them feel that it is acceptable to make errors.

“Au niveau du conseil scolaire, on organise des événements en partenariat avec Canadian Parents for French.”

– Julie Bertrand, Teacher and District French Facilitator, British Columbia

“Dans cette classe, on est plus à l’aise et on parle français plus facilement. Quand je suis dans ce cours et dans cette atmosphère je suis vraiment encouragé de continuer avec le français.”

– Élèves du niveau secondaire en immersion



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?
-



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?
-



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



Meaningful Learning Experiences:
Engaging French-language learners through
relevance and authenticity



Synopsis

Discover what some students say about relevant and authentic opportunities for learning French. Find out how some educators make connections between what students study in French class and the real world.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. How do I make learning relevant for my students?
 2. How do I provide authentic learning experiences?
-



During Viewing

Making connections

1. How well does the quote from *Qu'as-tu fait à l'école aujourd'hui?* / *What did you do in school today?* describe the tasks I plan for my students?
 2. Would my students agree with the opinion shared by the student regarding worksheets?
 3. Which of the technology applications mentioned am I already using to support student engagement in French?
 4. Which of the authentic learning opportunities mentioned would I like to adapt or incorporate into my program to increase student engagement in French?
-



After Viewing

Moving forward

1. How could I strengthen connections between student interests and tasks to heighten engagement in learning French?
2. How might I increase opportunities for students to use their French in authentic situations within and beyond the school?
3. What steps can I take to strengthen connections between what students do in class and the real world?



Going Deeper

A critical factor for engagement of all students is relevance. Educators use their understanding of the age group of students they are teaching to plan activities and tasks that they believe their students will find interesting and meaningful. They discuss students' leisure time activities and find out what students want to learn.

In addition to planning relevant tasks, educators endeavour to plan authentic situations in which students use French for a real purpose. Students are engaged when they know that the French they are learning will be useful to them in the world beyond the classroom. In order to be able to communicate in French on a daily basis, students need to learn the language of their outside interests, as well as the language of the classroom. They need to learn how to communicate about everyday life, their families and friends, and then to learn speech acts that enable them to gradually increase their functional repertoire, for example, to ask for help or give directions.

Educators make connections with Francophones or other French-language learners to provide students with real audiences and purposes for using their French. They facilitate real or virtual exchanges and trips to Francophone communities so students can experience authentic Francophone cultures and apply their French-language skills in real communicative situations.

As students progress in their French-language development, the increased use of written, oral and multimedia texts produced for Francophones enhances authenticity and interest.

“[L]es élèves qui estimaient que la matière enseignée et les activités prévues par leurs enseignants étaient significatives et liées à leurs propres aspirations étaient plus émotionnellement et cognitivement engagés que ne l'étaient leurs pairs.”

– Levesque (2013)

“Je parle aux élèves des liens entre la vie et ce qu'ils font. Plus ils ont des expériences en français hors de la salle de classe, plus ils veulent pratiquer.”

– Laura Stewart, Teacher, British Columbia

“Si tu peux faire ton projet sur un sujet que tu aimes, c'est plus amusant alors tu veux faire plus et mieux parce que tu veux apprendre le plus possible.”

– Élève d'école intermédiaire en immersion



Voices and Choices:

Engaging French-language learners by encouraging student voice and autonomy



Synopsis

Discover how some educators are increasing engagement in learning French by acting upon student input and nurturing student autonomy. Find out how some students feel when they have choices and know that their ideas are valued.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. In what ways do I develop student autonomy in my class?
 2. What is the connection between strategy use, learner autonomy and student engagement?
-



During Viewing

Making connections

1. How do the key messages in the quotes connect with my teaching practices?
 2. What elements of the classroom environments that we see support student autonomy? How do these elements compare with those found in my classroom?
 3. Which of the strategies that the participants mention do I find effective in developing student autonomy?
-



After Viewing

Moving forward

1. How might I further support my students in developing metacognitive skills such as setting goals, planning task completion, reflecting on progress and identifying next steps in developing proficiency in French?
2. What additional actions could I implement to encourage my students to independently use a range of effective strategies while speaking, reading, writing and listening to French?
3. How could I increase the choices my students have regarding what they learn in French and which resources they use, as well as how and when they demonstrate their learning?



Going Deeper

Developing student autonomy contributes to increasing engagement in a number of ways. Several participants in this project remarked that students were more productive when they were allowed to make choices, such as deciding what to discuss or write about, or which topics to research. This observation is supported by research findings that indicate students are more engaged when they feel they have some control over their learning (Deci, Ryan, et al.). A number of researchers support the notion that “providing students with choice stimulates natural curiosity and motivation to learn” (Cornelius-White, 2007; Harter, 2012; Lambert and McCombs, 1998; McCombs, 2012; McCombs & Miller, 2007, 2008; McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Robinson, 2011, 2013).⁵

Educators promote learner autonomy by valuing student voice. Participants provide frequent opportunities for students to express their ideas, opinions and preferences. Student surveys, exit slips, sharing circles, self-assessments, lesson reflections and discussions with students about personal learning goals are some of the ways in which educators can discover students’ perspectives in order to respond to their needs and interests when planning. Listening attentively to all students, and ensuring that even the less vocal students are heard, is a critical aspect of valuing student voice.

It is important to note that promoting student autonomy does not mean functioning without structure.⁶ Increasing students’ sense of autonomy is accomplished by providing a balance of structure and flexibility. For example, teachers present students with an open-ended task based on a specific learning goal and encourage students to be creative in how they find and present solutions.

⁵ McCombs, Barbara. (2018). *Developing Responsible and Autonomous Learners: A Key to Motivating Students*. American Psychological Association <http://www.apa.org/education/k12/learners.aspx>

⁶ Deci, Edward L., Hyungshim Jang and Johnmarshall Reeve. (2010). *Engaging Students in Learning Activities: It Is Not Autonomy Support or Structure but Autonomy Support and Structure*. *Journal of Educational Psychology* <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.472.887&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

“We know how to collect students’ ideas and opinions; now we need to get better at allowing their voices to guide us and honour the contribution that all students can make to deep meaningful change in education.”

– Cooke & Dunleavy (2010)

“While older students are expected to assume increasing responsibility for their schooling, young children need to be actively taught what it means to be engaged in school.”

– Bureau de l’Éducation et Enseignement supérieur Manitoba (2014)

“J'aime avoir le choix parce que je peux faire quelque chose qui m'intéresse personnellement.”

– Élève du niveau secondaire en immersion

“J'aime avoir les choix parce que je peux montrer mes intérêts.”

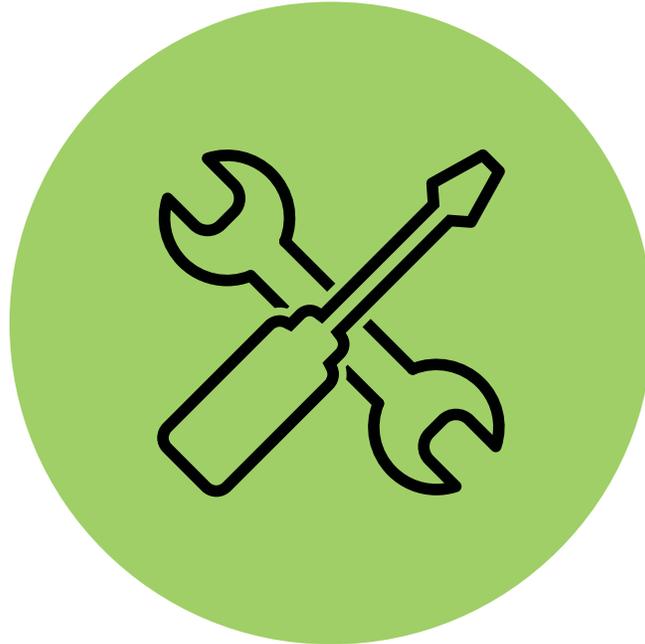
– Élève du niveau élémentaire en français de base

Learner autonomy is enhanced when teachers ensure that learning is meaningful, enjoyable and appropriately challenging (neither too challenging nor too easy). This motivates students to embrace learning and complete tasks because they want to, not primarily for incentives such as marks, points, and rewards.

Teaching students a wide range of learning strategies and encouraging them to use those they personally find most effective develops learner autonomy. Students become increasingly aware of their own learning processes and what steps they need to take to achieve their goals.

Students from different French programs and grade levels demonstrated autonomy in assessing their own oral or written productions. They were highly engaged in reflecting on their progress, noting areas for improvement and planning which strategies to use. Teachers provided clear success criteria, templates for tracking personal learning goals, specific and timely feedback, and access to technology for recording and self-assessing oral productions.

Developing the necessary skills to learn independently is also related to long-term French learning engagement. In primary grades, students develop skills that contribute to learner autonomy, such as choosing reading material that is appropriately challenging. As students progress, they learn to take increased responsibility for their learning, for example, they plan steps to strengthen their skills, take initiative to apply and reflect on learning strategies, and independently use reference tools to correct their written productions.



Tools for Moving Forward

Supporting Student and Stakeholder
Engagement

Engagement in French: Self-Assessments

Engagement in French:

A self-assessment for French second-language teachers

	Yes	How do I know?	Not yet	Next steps
I know which of my students are engaged socially, academically and intellectually in learning French.				
I know which of my students want to continue learning French beyond compulsory courses.				
I collaborate with school administrators to support engagement of French-language learners.				
I collaborate with school administrators to support engagement of stakeholders.				
I have a positive relationship with every student I teach.				
I have an inclusive classroom environment in which students interact and support each other to learn French.				
I develop relationships beyond the classroom, which support student engagement in learning French.				
I help all students experience success in learning French.				
I help all students recognize and appreciate their progress in French.				
I help students understand the relevance and importance of what they are learning.				
I help students set their own goals and use strategies to improve.				
I provide students with options regarding what and how they will learn.				
I provide students with flexibility regarding when and how they will demonstrate their learning.				

Engagement in French:

A self-assessment for school administrators

	Yes	How do I know?	Not yet	Next steps
I know which students are disengaged or at risk for becoming disengaged in French class, and I take an active role in checking in on these students, meeting with families, establishing a plan to re-engage students.				
I communicate that student engagement in French is a priority for the school and discuss evidence of key factors (positive relationships, student success, relevance and authenticity, student autonomy) with staff.				
I work with teachers to identify what student engagement in French looks like.				
I involve other teaching staff in supporting student engagement in French (guidance counsellors, resource staff, library-media specialists, teachers of other subjects, etc.).				
I support extra-curricular activities that provide students with opportunities to hear and use French beyond the classroom.				
I ensure that French is visible throughout the school.				
I monitor the progress of students at risk of becoming disengaged and brainstorm strategies to increase engagement in learning French.				
I support teacher engagement by providing opportunities for professional development with other literacy teachers and French teachers.				
I support teacher engagement by encouraging risk-taking and new initiatives.				

	Yes	How do I know?	Not yet	Next steps
I value French teachers as literacy and second-language teaching specialists.				
I monitor French students' perceptions regarding key factors that impact engagement (positive relationships, student success, relevance and authenticity, student autonomy).				
I lead teachers in learning more about student engagement by sharing articles, recommending book studies and through professional conversations.				
I arrange for students who are struggling in French to receive extra support.				
I ensure French classes are inclusive and collaborate with staff to arrange for students to receive appropriate support.				
I involve stakeholders in decision-making processes regarding French programs, courses, cultural events and extra-curricular activities.				
I ensure information about French programs, courses and events is widely available in the languages of my community.				

Engagement in French:

A self-assessment for students

Reflect on the statements below and explain your thinking in the right-hand column:

I feel that I have a positive relationship with my French teacher.	
I enjoy French class.	
The students in my French class respect and support each other in learning.	
I have opportunities to share what I want to learn with my French teacher.	
I try to always speak French in class.	
I know I can learn French.	
I make sure I understand learning goals.	
I make sure I know what the success criteria mean.	
I use different strategies to help me understand, speak and write French.	
I like to track my progress in French.	
I use feedback to improve my French.	
I think that what I am learning in French is useful.	
I set my own goals to improve my French.	
I like using my French outside of class.	
I am proud of my progress in French.	
I feel fortunate to be able to take French.	
I look for opportunities to learn more French.	
I want to keep studying French.	

Engagement in French:

Student reflection slips

The following examples of reflection slips serve to heighten students' awareness of what it means to be engaged in learning, and enable them to monitor their own engagement at different times.

Date:	Name:
I like to celebrate my progress in French.	I can ...
Student's reflection:	Comments from others:

Date:	Name:
I like to share my learning in French with family members or others in the school.	I am sharing my ...
Student's reflection:	Comments from others:

Date:	Name:
I can set my own learning goals and plan next steps to improve my French.	My goal is ... To reach this goal I will ...
Student's reflection:	Comments from others:

Date:	Name:
I make positive contributions during group work.	During today's group work I ...
Student's reflection:	Comments from others:

Collecting evidence of student engagement

You may wish to use or adapt the following chart to collect evidence of student engagement at various times. The statements below represent examples of the different types of engagement but may not apply in every situation or be relevant for all students. Educators are encouraged to discuss engagement with the students themselves in order to develop a thorough understanding of their perspectives.

The student:		Not usually	Sometimes	Yes
Social Engagement	Participates in extracurricular French programs			
	Participates in French excursions			
	Participates in French events			
	Interacts willingly with peers in French class			
Academic Engagement	Participates actively in French in teacher-led activities			
	Participates actively in French in small group/partner activities			
	Focuses intently on tasks			
	Perseveres to meet learning goals			
	Uses success criteria			
	Seeks feedback			
	Implements feedback			
	Completes tasks, homework, assignments			
Prepares thoroughly for assessments				

The student:		Not usually	Sometimes	Yes
Intellectual Engagement	Sets personal goals for improvement of French skills			
	Independently uses tools to complete tasks and improve French			
	Seeks opportunities to practise French skills			
	Attempts to extend French skills			
	Takes initiative to read independently in French			
	Takes initiative to view/listen to French outside of class			
	Asks questions and shows curiosity about Francophone cultures			
	Practises French skills independently (using apps, etc.)			
	Enjoys a challenge and perseveres			
	Eagerly enrolls in optional French courses			

Planning Templates

Planning template: Increasing student engagement

The following planning template is intended to support school administrators, system leaders and other educators who hold a special position of responsibility, in their work to increase student engagement in French.

What opportunities and strategies can I use for ongoing monitoring of student engagement? (For example, discussions with students, exit slips, reflection slips, journals, student self-assessments.)

When are my students most engaged in learning French? What evidence could I collect of social, academic and intellectual engagement?

How can I determine my students' perspectives regarding:

- Their personal level of engagement in French?
- Their perception of how much learning French is valued in our school?
- The quality of their relationships in French class?
- Their feeling of competency and belief that they can learn French?
- Relevance and authenticity of tasks?
- Their sense of autonomy?

How might I further engage my students in learning French?

- Share my passion for French language and culture
- Nurture positive relationships with students
- Cultivate a supportive, respectful, inclusive learning environment
- Use evidence-based teaching and assessment strategies to support learning for all
- Enable all students to recognize and value their progress in French
- Plan learning opportunities that are relevant and authentic
- Invite students to provide input and make choices regarding what and how they learn in French
- Provide tools and guidance to enable students to set personal goals and plan how to attain goals
- Provide tools and guidance to enable students to track and reflect on their own progress in French
- Teach students how to effectively assess their own written and oral productions as well as their receptive language skills
- Provide tools and guidance for students to support each other through strategies such as cooperative learning and peer-assessment

Where are we now?

Describe the current level of student engagement in learning French in qualitative and quantitative terms.

What evidence do we currently have of student engagement in French?

Source/results

(For example: Student perception survey on teacher-student relationships indicates 75% of students feel they have a positive supportive relationship with their French teacher.)

What are our goals?

A. What is our goal for student engagement in French classes?

B. What is our goal for student engagement in French programs?

What is our plan?

Goal A:

Goal B:

Timeframe:

Planning template: Increasing stakeholder engagement

The following planning template is intended to support school administrators, system leaders and other educators who hold a special position of responsibility, in their work to increase stakeholder engagement in French.

Who are our current stakeholders in French-language learning?
How are they involved?
How does current stakeholder involvement impact student engagement in French?
How else could they be involved?
Who else might like to be involved? How?
How might potential stakeholder involvement positively impact student engagement in French?
How could we share our success stories with others?

Creating your own case studies

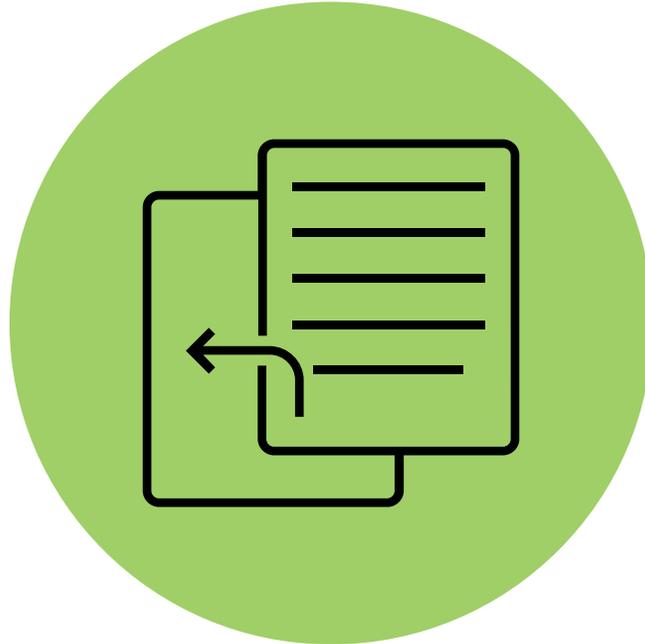
Creating your own case studies based on the students and stakeholders you know is a reminder of the impact of your actions on the children and adults in your communities. These case studies are often used as professional conversation starters. A suggested method follows:

Choose a French-language learner for whom you would like to improve engagement.

- Briefly describe evidence of the student's level of engagement (socially, academically and intellectually).
- Provide evidence of the student's level of achievement in French.
- Decide on a plan of action to increase student engagement that includes the key factors discussed in this resource:
 - Nurture a positive relationship with the student and between the student and classmates so the student develops a strong sense of belonging to a community of French-language learners
 - Ensure the student experiences success and celebrates progress
 - Ensure the student finds relevance and authenticity in classroom activities and tasks
 - Foster learner autonomy through a focus on goal setting, use of strategies, etc.
 - Provide options regarding how and what the student will learn as well as when and how the student will demonstrate learning
- Implement the plan over a period of time.
- At regular intervals, record evidence of the student's level of engagement and achievement.
- If possible, discuss your case study with colleagues, inviting feedback on actions and input on next steps.

Choose a stakeholder for whom you would like to increase engagement.

- Briefly describe the stakeholder's role.
- Briefly describe current level of engagement in French.
- State desired goal.
- Decide on a plan of action to increase engagement.
- Implement the plan over a period of time.
- At regular intervals, record evidence of the stakeholder's engagement.
- If possible, discuss your case study with colleagues, inviting feedback on actions and input on next steps.



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