Assessment and Evaluation

Introduction

As of September 2010, assessment, evaluation and reporting in Ontario schools are based on the policies and practices described in *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2010),* hereafter referred to as Growing Success. French as a Second Language teachers must be familiar with the outlined policies and practices in this document as it pertains to all curricula taught in Ontario.

Assessment Growing Success

defines assessment as:

"… the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both "assessment *for* learning" and "assessment *as* learning". As part of assessment *for* learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment as learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning." (p. 28)

It continues to explain,

"As essential steps in assessment for learning and as learning, teachers need to:

- plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction;

- share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses;

- gather information about student learning before, during and at, or near the end of, a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tools;

- use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps and help students monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals;

- analyze and interpret evidence of learning;

- give and receive specific and timely descriptive feedback about student learning;

- help students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment." (pgs. 28-29)

Assessment for Learning Goals

"Learning goals are brief statements that describe, for students, what they should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction." *EduGAINS, Planning Assessment with Instruction Video Library*

"Learning goals clearly identify what students are expected to know and be able to do, in that language students can readily understand. Teachers develop learning goals based on the curriculum expectations and share them with students at or near the beginning of a

cycle of learning. Teachers and students come to a common understanding of the learning goals through discussion and clarification during instruction." _Growing Success_ (p. 33)

"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)

Based on the expectations of _The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8; Extended French, Grades 4-8; French Immersion, Grades 1-8, (revised) 2013_ and _The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion, Grades 9-12, (revised) 2014,_ teachers share with students the learning goals of the lesson(s). The expectations can be reworded or chunked into smaller goals. These learning goals should be in student-friendly language and can vary in length and number.

> **What do learning goals look like in a FSL classroom?**

Align learning goals with curriculum expectations. For example, expectation B1.2, _Grade Four Core French from The Revised FSL Curriculum_ states "Producing Oral Communications: using familiar words and expressions, produce planned and rehearsed messages in French containing information and ideas about themselves, family, friends, and their immediate environment, with contextual, auditory, and visual support," (p. 127)

As a learning goal, it may become, **«Nous apprenons/ On apprend à créer des messages en utilisant des outils appropriés.» "**

More information about learning goals in the FSL classroom maybe found in _A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 5 - Assessment and Evaluation._

Sample Success Criteria

The following curriculum expectations could be represented with the following can do statements.

> B1.2 Producing Oral Communications/B2.2 Interacting
>
> **Junior grades**
> _Je peux dire ce que je préfère et pourquoi._
>
> **Intermediate grades**
> _Je peux expliquer ce que je préfère et pourquoi, en ajoutant des détails importants._
>
> **Senior grades**
> _Je peux justifier mes préférences, et développer un argument pour convaincre les autres._

Success Criteria

"Success criteria are standards or rules which students use to make judgments about the quality of performance." _EduGAINS, Planning Assessment with Instruction Video Library_

"Success criteria describe in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like. When planning assessment and instruction, teachers, guided by the achievement chart for the particular subject or discipline (see Chapter 3), identify the criteria they will use to assess students' learning, as well as what evidence of learning students will provide to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The success criteria are used to develop an assessment tool, such as a checklist, a rubric, or an exit card (i.e., a student's self-assessment of learning." _Growing Success_ (p. 33)

Based on the learning goals, students and teachers co-construct clear success criteria in student-friendly language. Exemplars of student work and modelling of the success criteria are important to enhance understanding. Success criteria and exemplars should be posted in the classroom. The success criteria can be used to develop an assessment tool, such as a checklist, a rubric or an exit card.

To co-create success criteria, teachers start by brainstorming with students to establish a list of criteria that describe good quality work based on the assignment and learning goal. Some brainstorming ideas include:

> *Quels éléments dois-je considérer lorsque je présente mon opinion aux élèves de la classe?*
> - *parler en français*
> - *prouver mon opinion*
> - *regarder les élèves*
> - *parler assez fort*
> - *ne pas parler trop vite*
> - *avoir une bonne introduction*
> - *utiliser les mots français que je connais*
> - *bien organiser mes idées*
> - *ne pas regarder mes pages*
>
> The teacher may decide to regroup the criteria that are similar and establish one criteria with supporting details.

- regarder les élèves de la classe - je ne regarde pas mes pages	Je garde contact avec mon auditoire.
- parler assez fort - je ne parle pas trop vite	Je parle clairement.
- je prouve mon opinion	Je justifie mon opinion.
- utiliser les expressions pour indiquer une opinionutiliser les mots français que je connais - mes idées sont organisées - je parle en français	J'exprime et organise mes idées en français.

The teacher may pose some further questions to clarify success criteria such as **«avoir une bonne introduction»** – **«Quels sont les caractéristiques d'une bonne introduction?**

Practical tips about co-creating success criteria may also be found in *A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 5 - Assessment and Evaluation.*

Descriptive Feedback

Feedback provides students with a description of their learning in order to reduce the gap between a student's current level of knowledge and skills and the learning goals. Descriptive feedback helps students learn by providing them with precise information about what they are doing well, what needs improvement and what specific steps they can take to improve. "Ongoing descriptive feedback linked specifically to the learning goals and success criteria is a powerful tool for improving student learning and is fundamental to building a culture of learning within the classroom. The focus of the feedback is to encourage students to produce their best work by improving upon their previous work and, at the same time, to teach them the language and skills of assessment, so they are able to assess their own learning and that of their peers" *Growing Success* (p. 34)

> **What does descriptive feedback look like in the FSL classroom?**

Linked to the learning goals and success criteria: Descriptive feedback should provide students with specific information about their progress on attaining the learning goal(s) and related success criteria. Effective feedback uses the success criteria to help students understand how they are progressing in their learning.

Timely: Descriptive feedback should be given immediately or as soon as possible while the students are still - learning and have time to respond to the feedback to make improvements. One example of timely descriptive feedback is giving an immediate oral response to student misconceptions while they are working on a task, so that they can make improvements. Students can also use feedback received from

summative assessments, such as a test to assignment, if the knowledge and skills will be assessed again at a later stage in the learning.

Appropriate amount: Students should receive enough feedback to understand what to do but not so much as to overwhelm them. Teachers should comment on at least as many strengths as weaknesses when possible. Here is an example of an appropriate amount of feedback: *Tu as bien établi un contact avec tes amis de classe. Tu as bien organisé tes idées en ordre logique. Pourrais-tu développer ton deuxième point de vue d'avantage avec d'autres raisons?*

Varied types: Feedback can be given orally or in written form. Some assignments lend themselves better to written feedback such as student written work and some to oral such as commenting on students working together while problem solving. However, some of the best feedback can come from conversations with students as teachers pose appropriate questions to students that lead them to notice strength and weaknesses in their work.

Developing Student Self-Assessment and Peer-Assessment Skills and Individual Goal Setting

The emphasis on student self-assessment represents a fundamental shift in the teacher-student relationship, placing the primary responsibility for learning with the student. Once students, with the ongoing support of the teacher, have learned to recognize, describe, and apply success criteria related to particular learning goals, they can use this information to assess their own and others' learning and set goals for themselves. Teachers help students develop their self-assessment skills by modelling the application of success criteria and the provision of descriptive feedback, by planning multiple opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment, and by providing descriptive feedback to students about the quality of their feedback to peers.

Assessment *of* Learning

Assessment of learning, or evaluation, refers to the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Assessment

of learning accurately summarizes and communicates to parents, other teachers, employers, institutions of further education and students themselves what students know and can do with respect to the overall curriculum expectations. Assessment of learning is based on evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course, often at the end of a period of learning.

"For Grades 1 to 12, all curriculum expectations must be accounted for in instruction and assessment, but evaluation focuses on students' achievement of the overall expectations." *Growing Success* (p. 38)

Differentiating Assessment of Learning

On the Ministry of Education's *EduGAINS* website, a variety of resources about differentiated instruction are available including *The Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook (2010).*

It includes several differentiation structures that are appropriate in a FSL classroom. Some of these include:

Choice Board: provides students a variety of ways or tasks to demonstrate their learning of the knowledge and skills set out in the curriculum expectations. The teacher can choose to have students select one task or more than one task to complete. A choice board may have up to nine squares. Each square contains an activity related to students' multiple intelligences varying the products, the processes, the readiness and interests.

R.A.F.T.: stands for ROLE, AUDIENCE, FORMAT and TOPIC. This strategy is often used to help students in a writing task as they are asked to consider the:

ROLE they are going to assume, 'Who are you?'

AUDIENCE they will address 'Who is this for?'

FORMAT of the work that they will produce 'What form will this take?'

TOPIC that they are going to explore.

Students can choose an option or one can be chosen for them. RAFTs can address student interests (especially in the selection of TOPIC and ROLE), student learning preferences (through the selections of FORMAT) and various degrees of readiness (through altering the difficulty of some of the choices).

Tiering: involves creating more than one version of a task or assignment. Different versions of the same assignment will allow the teacher to respond to various levels of student readiness. Readiness refers to the starting point in a student's understanding and familiarity with a particular concept or topic. When evaluating student learning, teachers will base their judgments using the same criteria, and the levels of the achievement chart.

Assessing Learning in the FSL Classroom

In order to adjust instruction and provide feedback, the FSL teacher needs to assess student learning regularly, using a variety of assessment strategies and providing multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning. It is imperative that all teachers use "triangulation" when eliciting information about student learning. Triangulation refers to the "use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings". (Bryman http://www.referenceworld.com/sage/socialscience/triangulation.pdf)

One example of triangulation is the use of three sources of information to gather data about student learning: observation, student-teacher conversations and student products.

"Teachers can gather information about learning by:

- designing tasks that provide students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning;

- observing students as they perform tasks;

- posing questions to help students make their thinking explicit;

- engineering classroom and small-group conversations that encourage students to articulate what they are thinking and further develop their thinking."

Growing Success (p. 34)

Conversations
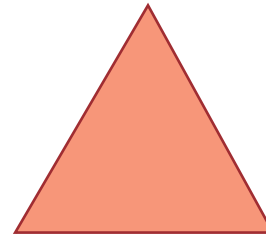
Products   **Observations**

> **What does assessment "*for*" and "*as*" learning look like in the FSL classroom?**

Assessment as Learning: "The process of developing and supporting student metacognition. Students are actively engaged in this assessment process: that is, they monitor their own learning; use assessment feedback from teacher, self, and peers learning to determine next steps; and set individual goals." *Growing Success* (p. 143)

Assessment for Learning: "The ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. *Growing Success* (p. 144)

Diagnostic Assessment Tools: Teacher or publisher-created diagnostic tools provide teachers with detailed information on students' strengths and weaknesses; this information, in turn, guides instruction.

Developing Metacognition Skills: These skills help students reflect on how they learn and help students see the next steps in their language learning development. In order to be metacognitive, students need to know and understand learning goals and success criteria.

Accountable Talk: This focused discussion provides many opportunities for teachers to assess students' achievement of oral communication expectations, as well as their knowledge and understanding of content in all curriculum subject areas. Teachers observe students' participation and interaction in focused discussion and listen to what they say, using checklists and anecdotal notes to record observations. More information about accountable talk may be found in *Grand Conversations in the Junior Classroom, Capacity Building Series (2011).*

Student-Teacher Conferences: These are face-to-face conversations in which teacher and student share their knowledge and understanding of a topic or a problem. The conferences may be used by the teacher to explore the student's thinking, assess the student's level of understanding of a concept or procedure and gather information, provide feedback, obtain clarification, determine positions and probe for motivations. The conferences may be used by the student to self-assess their progress on achieving their learning goals, using the success criteria to guide their thinking.

Digital Documentation: With various technologies such as iPods, cameras and tablets, teachers can gather authentic records of the learning that takes place in the classroom. The evidence gathered such as photographs, audio recordings and video, provides the teacher and the student with a view of the students' learning process and learning strategies. As a formative tool, documentation allows teachers and students to reflect on students' knowledge, understanding and skills.

Portfolio: his document, regardless of the format, supports teachers and, more importantly, students in assessing progress and proficiency in their second language acquisition by using descriptors and competencies that are linked to the curriculum expectations as well as the criteria and categories of the achievement chart.

Continuums and Exemplars: These allow teachers and students to see where the learners' work or skills fall in a continuum of development. Using exemplars and success criteria, teachers are able to show the students, and students are able to identify for themselves, examples of work that resemble their own or one notch beyond what they are producing. Using the success criteria assigned to each stage in the continuum, the teacher and student can articulate what is already being done well and discuss the next steps by providing an example of what the next step in learning looks like.

Observation Checklists: The following suggestions are tips for the effective use of observation checklists in the FSL classroom:

- decide what to look for. Note the success criteria or evidence that indicates that the student is demonstrating the curriculum expectation;

- ensure students participate in the development of the success criteria so that they know and understand what it takes to be successful and so that they can use this to monitor their own learning;

- target observation by selecting four to five students per class and one or two specific outcomes to observe;

- develop a data gathering system, such as a clipboard or an audio/video recorder;

- have students use the checklists in peer and self-assessment. Students' assessments demonstrate their understanding of learning goals and success criteria;

- collect observations over a number of classes during a reporting period and look for patterns of performance;

- date all observations;

- share observations with students, both individually and in a group. Make the observations specific and describe how this demonstrates or promotes thinking and learning;

- use the information gathered from observation to enhance or modify future instruction.

Learning Logs: Also known as learning journals, allow students to reflect on their learning and inform the teacher of their own progress and understanding in order to guide instruction.

> **Possible prompts for learning logs**
>
> *Cette semaine j'ai appris …*
>
> *La semaine prochaine je viserai …*
>
> *Je sais que je fais du progrès quand …*
>
> *Je comprends plus quand …*

Exit and Entry Cards: These are written students' responses to questions posed at the beginning or the end of a class, a learning activity or a day. Questions should be short and only take a few minutes to answer as a quick check to guide the teacher instruction for the next lesson, activity or day.

Red-Yellow-Green Traffic Lights: Using this strategy, the teacher and students can assess progress toward achieving learning goals. It is used by teachers to obtain immediate feedback on student understanding during instruction. Students assess their achievement of a learning goal by placing a colored dot on their work—

green to indicate confidence in achievement ("I've got it"), amber to indicate partial mastery or understanding ("I'm not quite sure; I have some questions") or red to indicate little or no understanding ("I don't understand this"). Teachers scan traffic lights and respond to the feedback by making instructional adjustments (for example, pair up greens and yellows to clear up areas of misunderstanding or misconceptions or work with the reds to help them in a small group setting).

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down: Students demonstrate their understanding by showing thumbs up or thumbs down so that the teacher can then adjust the instruction.

Five Fingers: Students hold up fingers to indicate their level of comprehension. This is posted in the classroom.

> **Closed fist means "I have no idea";**
>
> **One finger means "I barely understand";**
>
> **Two fingers mean "I understand parts of it but I need help";**
>
> **Three fingers mean "I understand most of it but I am not sure I can explain it well enough to others";**
>
> **Four fingers mean "I understand it and can do an adequate job of explaining it";**
>
> **Five fingers mean "I understand it completely and can easily explain it to someone else".**

The Achievement Chart

As we move forward with the new FSL curriculum, FSL teachers must understand the relationship between the achievement chart and the curriculum expectations. The curriculum expectations are the 'content standards' – they describe the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop and demonstrate in their class work, on tests, and in various other activities on which their achievement is assessed and evaluated.

The achievement chart outlines 'performance standards' using four categories of knowledge and skills, and providing criteria and descriptors of achievement of those criteria at four levels. Teachers assess students' achievement using the categories and levels of the achievement chart based on the established criteria.

The achievement chart has significant role at all stages of teaching and learning. It should be used to:

- Guide the development of high-quality assessment tasks and tools (including rubrics);

- Plan instruction for learning;

- Provide a basis for consistent and meaningful feedback to students;

- Establish categories and criteria with which to assess and evaluate students' learning. *Growing Success* (p. 16)

Teachers should use the achievement chart throughout the process of learning to monitor a balance of the four categories (Knowledge and Understanding, Thinking, Communication, Application) as they assess and evaluate student achievement of the expectations. The achievement chart provides a foundation for developing clear and specific criteria to give students feedback. The same achievement chart is used for Grades 1 to 12.

Writing Comments for the Report Card

The report card grade/mark should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence of achievement. Teachers must ensure that the assigned letter grade/percentage mark and comments work together to convey a clear and consistent message about the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations Report card comments should provide students and parents with personalized, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback. Comments should be connected directly to the curriculum (e.g., overall expectations, strands, fundamental concepts, big ideas, subject-specific processes and/or categories in the achievement chart). In writing anecdotal comments, teachers should focus

on what students have learned, describe significant strengths, and identify next steps for improvement. Teachers should strive to use language that parents will understand and should avoid language that simply repeats the wordings of the curriculum expectations or the achievement chart. When appropriate, teachers may make reference to particular strands. The comments should describe in overall terms what students know and can do and should provide parents with personalized, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback. Teachers should also strive to help parents understand how they can support their children at home. *Growing Success* (p. 64)

The Ontario Ministry of Education provides examples of report card comments in *Reporting Student Learning: Guidelines for Effective Teacher-Parent-Student Communication (2010)* (pgs. 8-12). Although they are not specific to FSL, they serve as a useful example of personalized and specific comments.

Resources

Curriculum Services Canada (2012). A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 2 - Positive Learning Environment

http://www.curriculum.org/fsl/projects/a-guide-to-reflective-practice-for-core-french-teachers

Curriculum Services Canada (2012 - present). Transforming FSL: Connecting, Engaging, Learning Together

http://www.curriculum.org/projects/professional-learning-for-french-as-a-second-language

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). Reporting Student Learning: Guidelines for Effective Teacher-Parent-Student Communication

http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesAER/PrintandOtherResources/ReportingStudentLearning_Engfinal.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). EduGAINS, Planning Assessment with Instruction Video Library

http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/aer/aervideo/planningassessmentwithinstruction.html

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). EduGAINS, The Differentiated Instruction Scrapbook

http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesDI/EducatorsPackages/DIEducatorsPackage2010/2010DIScrapbook.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2011). Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, Capacity Building Series. Grand Conversations in the Junior Classroom

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_Grand_Conversations_Junor.pdf