

Classroom Management



Introduction

What classroom conditions are beneficial for allowing our students to strive for and achieve success in French? Consider the analogy of a swan – it appears to swim effortlessly, peacefully and graciously along the smooth surface of the water. In reality, the swan is constantly working to move itself forward against subtle currents, maintain an acceptable speed, build stamina, navigate obstacles and redirect its course accordingly. Similarly, an effective teacher appears to manage his or her classroom seamlessly and effortlessly, yet we realize this is the result of skillful and constant intentional efforts. Classroom management is foundational.

Creating effective French as a second language learning environments is both an art and a science. Many criteria are similar to those of any effective classroom elements that are tangible and easy to describe. Yet teaching FSL can pose unique opportunities and challenges. Supporting FSL learning requires a creative combination of teaching skills, linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, attitudes, ability to promote the value of French, all while being a passionate role model for French language learning.

Preventing negative behaviours is about being proactive. We can minimize challenging behaviours by creating rich and caring learning environments. The following suggestions are to help teachers construct an environment conducive to FSL learning.

Please note: this module includes suggested Internet resources. Teachers must review their Board's policies for acceptable use of Internet and ICT as well as preview all Internet resources before sharing them with their students.

Safe and Inclusive Classrooms

First and foremost, we must develop safe and inclusive classrooms. As stated on page 39 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 on page 42 of *The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion, Grades 9-12, (revised) 2014* (hereafter referred to as the Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula), “Students thrive in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment that nurtures their self-confidence while they are receiving focused literacy instruction.” Students must sense the freedom to try to express themselves in French without fear of failure or of constant error correction. A positive, asset-based approach can build student confidence and success. Effective sentence starters such as ***Je suis capable de ... Je peux dire ... Je peux m'exprimer en français ... Je me sens fier/ fière de moi-même quand ... Je me sens fier/ fière de moi-même parce que ...*** will support student conversations and learning reflections.

The social, emotional and academic aspects of classrooms have a direct impact on learning. Trust, a sense of belonging and active engagement create an environment that engenders success. This substantiates what all educators know – that student social and emotional engagement and academic success are intertwined. The common saying, “I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care” speaks to the importance of the strong teacher-student relationships that underlie academic success.”

Finding Common Ground - Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12, 2008 (p.18)

Classroom Norms

“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.” – James A. Baldwin

Teachers need to establish clear standards of practice in their classrooms from the start. It is important to model the behaviours we want to observe among our students. We need to arrive in class prepared to stimulate learning, present tasks respectful of student ability and interests, use respectful language, listen when others speak, demonstrate a genuine interest in individual student development, be open-minded and subtly intervene when required to reinforce a positive learning environment. And, of course, teachers of FSL need to speak in French!

Students need to have a clear sense of the behaviours and attitudes that are expected of them. As explained in [Finding Common Ground - Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12, 2008](#), “Excellence in education includes character development.” (p.19) Every school board is required to have a character development plan based on the fundamental principles found in this document. Consistency is required. Students need to be reminded regularly what appropriate behaviours and attitudes look like and sound like **dans la classe de français**. These behaviours should be tied to learning skills within the context of the French class. Student self-assessment reflective checklists could support metacognition.

Pour avoir du succès dans la classe de français, je dois:

- faire de mon mieux de parler en français en phrases complètes;
- écouter et respecter les idées des autres;
- utiliser mes stratégies d'apprentissage;
- travailler dans un milieu de respect mutuel;
- participer pour partager mes idées;
- écouter attentivement au professeur et à mes amis/amies;
- prendre la responsabilité de travailler en groupe;
- prendre la responsabilité de compléter mes travaux.

Simple Truths

- We tend not to remember what someone told us but how they made us feel.
- Treat people the way you'd like to be treated. Establish a tone of respect based on positive assumptions. (**Quel plaisir de te voir! J'ai hâte d'entendre tes idées.**)
- Teachers need to gain their students' attention before instruction can occur. Establish a clear signal to regain attention during group work or conversational activities. Consider a strategy to reinforce a language structure (**répétez après moi**) or use a mathematical sequence structure in French (**cinq – quatre – trois – deux – un, for older students quatre-vingt – soixante-dix-neuf – soixante-dix-huit – soixante-dix-sept ... or répétez les nombres en ordre croissant**). The results are three-fold; an effective classroom strategy is established, students practise attentive listening and French language structures are reinforced.
- Teachers should provide clear learning goals and co-create success criteria with students so they understand the learning objective and required behaviours (**Aujourd'hui, nous apprenons ... Pour avoir du succès, nous devons ...**). More information about learning goals and success criteria may be found in the [Assessment and Evaluation](#) module.

Organization is Key

Organization is critical for classroom management. Ensure that you have all required materials at your fingertips. These items might include a variety of texts, music, anchor charts, visual prompts, student portfolios to organize work samples, assessment checklists, lesson materials organized by class, access to the Internet, digital resources, laptop, LCD projector and speakers.

Planning is essential. Students will be more on-task when three-part lessons are organized to provide a combination of clear authentic learning opportunities on subjects relevant to their interests. Students will most likely recognize the professional efforts we have invested to creatively plan their learning. When observing our dedication, they may be more inclined to respect the subject matter, engage in learning activities and return the effort.

Time is Precious

Every minute counts to maximize the opportunities for your students to develop their French language skills. Establish tight timelines that reflect your students' abilities to have spontaneous conversations. Too much time will allow them to head off-topic so it is important to observe and ensure activities occur in a timely fashion. Check in with students for feedback on progress and provide a warning when time is almost over. For example, "**Vous avez trois minutes pour vos conversations en groupes.**" Student conversations in French will build confidence and success, reduce frustrations, which in turn should reduce classroom management challenges.



Authentic and Engaging Tasks

We are reminded in [The Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula for elementary](#) and [secondary](#) that, "A focus on developing strategies that help students understand, talk, and write about texts that are authentic, interesting, challenging, and age appropriate yet linguistically accessible will increase student engagement, motivation, and success in FSL." (elementary, p. 45 and secondary, p. 48) If we ask students to learn French through topics and activities that do not interest them or are seen as having no value, we are asking for trouble! Boredom triggers off-task behaviours, designing lessons that reflect students' interests and learning styles, increases their engagement and potential learning. Plan to avoid problems before they occur by featuring current texts, a variety of text types, real-world issues, topics relevant to student lives, the use of technology, including the Arts and action-oriented tasks. More information about how to plan authentic and engaging tasks may be found in the [Instructional Strategies](#) module. Additional instructional strategies are also outlined in [Caring and Safe Schools](#)

[in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs through Progressive Discipline Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2010](#), hereafter referred to as [Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010](#). (p.40) These strategies include cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, the tiered approach and universal design for learning.

Know Your Learners

While FSL curriculum expectations are our foundation, there is great flexibility of subject matter and lesson design options as a means to achieving those expectations. Knowing student interests can help tailor lessons to build success. Capitalize on current events. The Internet provides a great variety of authentic and engaging materials to support many areas. More information about the use of technology may be found in the [Information and Communication Technology](#) module.

Should students in your class be interested in hockey, consider using the [Sydney Crosby French Tim Horton's](#) [®] *commercial* encourage spontaneous and authentic conversations).

If students in your class enjoy canoeing and kayaking, consider using the video [Canot kayak rivière rouge eau vive](#) to stimulate student conversations about personal experiences, hopes, dreams and fears. **Remember to vet the entire content of any text before using it with your students.**

Many of our students are kinesthetic learners and have high energy. Build in learning strategies that allow students to walk, stand and move while having conversational opportunities to consolidate their thinking, such as Four Corners (*les quatre coins*), Inside Outside Circle (*le cercle intérieur/extérieur*), Milling to Music (*le promenade en musique*), Value Line (*la ligne de valeurs*) and Gallery Walk (*la marche autour de la galerie*).

High Standards

In all French programs the language of instruction and communication should be French. As [A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers](#) (p. 2) reminds us, "The Core French teacher establishes French as the language of communication. Students must be immersed in French to become truly proficient."

Through daily opportunities to interact in French, students will learn to communicate for real purposes in French with growing confidence and fluency. High expectations for behaviour and academic performance demonstrate our respect for the learner's ability. Together, we and the students share responsibility for the classroom learning environment and the French language content.

These high standards need to reflect the reality that second language acquisition occurs as a continuum of learning. Fluency builds each year. Students may use key French phrases and vocabulary interspersed with English at the beginning of their language journey to negotiate meaning. Grammatical errors are part of that journey as students experiment with the French language. We can support students to move towards more precise language usage by modelling correct structures, repetition, providing feedback, or creating mini-lessons based on student needs. Multiple opportunities to communicate in French will help build student fluency and confidence.

Scaffold Learning

When students are able to interact in French with growing confidence, fluency and independence, frustration that could result in negative behaviours should diminish. Scaffolded learning supports are key to success. Some examples are anchor charts, visual supports, word walls, sentence starters, sample questions, a choice of possible responses and appropriate texts chosen at an appropriate level. A core foundation of vocabulary and language structures can be established. Students can learn to talk around missing vocabulary. This safe learning environment can decrease anxiety and diffuse possible disruptive behaviours. Success breeds success.

Private Time Before Going Public

All learners need time to process new information. Intentionally build in think time or wait time to reduce stress, increase student confidence,



participation and build success. Think, pair, share (**Réfléchissez! Discutez! Partagez!**) is a strategy to scaffold language learning. Moving from individual to partner to small group before large group sharing allows for repeated practice of language structures and vocabulary before going public. This model allows for multiple opportunities and repetition to build fluency and confidence while reducing anxiety and possible negative behaviours.

Student Accountability

As stated in the front matter of *The Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula for elementary and secondary*, "Learning to take responsibility for their improvement and achievement is an important part of every student's education." (p.11) All educators can be assured that, "With appropriate instruction and with experience, students come to see how applied effort can enhance learning and improve achievement." *The Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula for elementary and secondary* (p.11) Revisiting the classroom norms should help establish the standard of accountability. When learning tasks are assigned, a clear goal, time frame and end product should be shared.

Vous avez cinq minutes pour accomplir votre tâche en groupe.

Après cinq minutes, je vais choisir quelqu'un pour partager un sommaire de vos idées.

We strive to create classrooms where all students are engaged in their learning. Having students know they may be called upon to share the learning could make a positive difference. Class sets of named popsicle sticks allow the teacher to randomly select the name of a student who then shares back to the group. Assign a number or letter to each member of a group and then call on a specific number from each group to share with the class or complete a task.

Using popsicle sticks in a small group discussion is another way of ensuring that all students have an equal chance to participate. If every student receives 3 popsicle sticks that they must put down each time they participate during an activity, students will know they are required to contribute three times, and those who may tend to overpower a discussion will know when their turns are over.

Each member of a group must have a clearly defined role, responsibilities and product outcomes. Some examples would be: sharing an idea - ***J'ai entendu que ___ pense que ..., Dans l'opinion de ___ ..., ___ n'est pas d'accord avec ta position parce que ..., completing a section of a graphic organizer – signe ton nom dans ton coin de l'organigramme s'il te plaît,*** or completing a specific task. Individual responsibilities for each group member may be assigned, for example: ***tu es responsable pour respecter le temps, encourager les opinions de chaque personne, poser des questions pour continuer les conversations, enregistrer les idées de ton groupe.*** These roles could be rotated during future group work, building student responsibility as a learner and co-learner. These strategies could help shift the tone of the class from teacher-directed discipline to student self-discipline as a disposition for learning.

Reinforce Positive Behaviours

Focus on the desired behaviour, not the misbehaviour. When you observe good behaviour, acknowledge and praise it, both verbally and non-verbally. A nod, a smile or a thumbs-up reinforce positive behaviours without distracting others. If students gain a sense of accomplishment, they will likely take pride in their French language abilities and be motivated to continue their learning. Positive reinforcement is a great tool to highlight success:

- Je me sens fier/fière de ... parce qu'il/elle ...
- Je me sens fier/fière de ... quand il/elle ...
- J'apprécie que ... a ...
- J'aime beaucoup comment ... reflète nos critères d'évaluation de ...
- ..., je respecte ton habilité de recevoir la rétroaction avec la politesse
- et un esprit ouvert.

Fair and Transparent Assessment

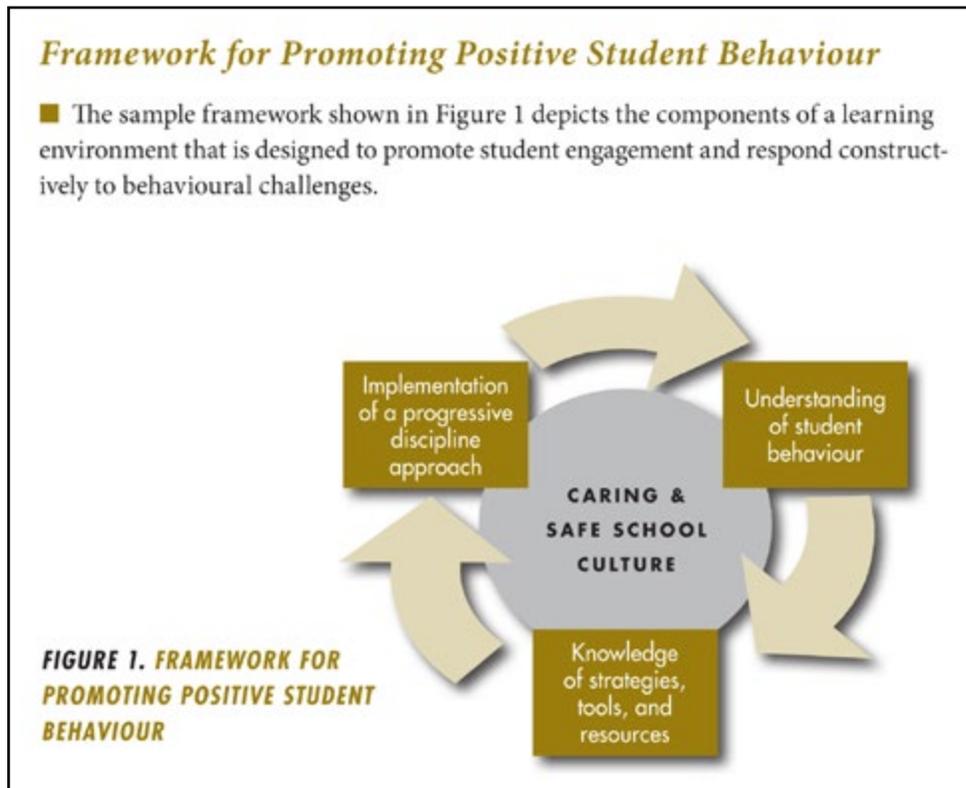
Did you ever feel unfairly judged as a learner? How did that impact your behaviour as a student? Establishing sound assessment practices builds safety, reduces anxiety and can eliminate much negative behaviour.

Co-create clear learning goals and success criteria. Use student-friendly language so they have a clear sense of what is being asked of them. Provide ongoing, descriptive feedback, using an asset model. Acknowledge two positive features of student learning before making a suggestion for improvement (***deux étoiles et une suggestion***). Plan multiple opportunities for students to master language skills before evaluating them. Explain assessment tools. Encourage self-assessment and student pride in their developing French language skills. The following sentence starters could be provided to support student reflections, oral and/or written self-assessment:

- Je me sens fier/fière de moi-même quand je ...
- Je me sens fier/fière de moi-même parce que je ...
- Pour renforcer mes succès en français, je veux ...



Responding to Negative Behaviours



Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010 (p.7)

*“The art of being wise is knowing what to overlook.”
– William James*

When challenging behaviours surface, it’s worth the time to consider what lies beneath. Why is this student misbehaving? Is he bored? Is she disconnected to the topic of discussion? Is he restless because he has been sitting too long? Is she frustrated because she is not feeling successful? Is he afraid of being embarrassed in front of his peers? Does she want attention from you or from her peers? Is this behaviour related to his perception of the value of learning French? Did something happen at home or in a previous class that was upsetting? How serious is the behaviour? Is it impacting the learning environment or other student behaviours? Knowing the answers to these questions allows us to deal with the root of the problem rather than just the behaviour.

“When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. Schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that are developmentally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviours while helping students to make good choices.”

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010 (pgs.5-6)

Restorative Practice Interventions

The guiding principle of restorative justice and restorative practices is the belief that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them. In restorative practice the focus is on the harmful effects of offending, and the objective is to restore relationships. Offenders are required to meet those affected, to take responsibility for their actions, and to make amends, but they participate in the decision-making process rather than having a decision imposed on them.

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, 2010 (pgs.36-37)

Intervene or correct misbehaviour quietly, inconspicuously or face-to-face with the student. Try not to distract or catch other students' attention. Avoid power struggles – are you resolving or escalating the situation?

In the FSL classroom, it is most beneficial to help those in conflict move from anger and blame towards understanding and resolution. ***Je me sens ... quand tu ...*** Establish reasonable consequences – allow the response to reflect the severity of the behaviour. Time out can be an effective strategy to diffuse conflict – ***Alexandre, prends deux minutes pour réfléchir, s.t.p. J'ai hâte de t'inviter de nous rejoindre quand tu seras prêt.***

An article by Leanne Miller entitled ["Use More than your Words"](#) in the Ontario College of Teachers' Professionally Speaking magazine (March 2008), describes the importance of helping students stay on task through the use of Nonverbal Communicative Intelligence (NCI). The strategies include proximity, respectful touch, student's name (***Michelle, j'apprécie beaucoup comment tu as ... Merci André, pour ton attention ... En regardant la carte du Canada, Yvette, on peut voir ...***), gesture, the look, the pause (***J'attends votre attention ... Merci, on peut continuer***), ignore, and signal for attention (***Anwar, je veux que tu aies la chance d'entendre l'idée fascinante de Rahim***). It describes the importance of teacher volume versus classroom volume. "Class volumes fluctuate every five to seven seconds. Don't try to talk over them when they're loud. Wait a few seconds for the next lull and then

speak. Make sure your volume is two notches above that of the students so that you interrupt them. Once you have their attention, pause a few seconds and then start your message in a whisper. This lowers the group's metabolism, allows you to hold students' attention and lets them hear your message." At the end of the article you will find 10 "tried and true" strategies for managing your class.

Should more intervention be required, consider working with your administration, or the student's parents or guardians. Behaviour contracts could be established, either as informal agreements based on a behaviour to be modified or as formal contracts signed by the student, parents and teacher.

Keep in mind the end goal: to help develop student fluency and confidence in French within a safe, rich, engaging classroom learning environment.



Resources

Curriculum Services Canada (2012). A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers

Module 1- Oral Proficiency, 2012

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

Miller, Leanne (2008). “Use More Than Your Words.” Professionally Speaking

http://professionallyspeaking.oct.ca/march_2008/non-verbal.asp

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs through Progressive Discipline Kindergarten to Grade 12

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/caring_safe_school.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education (2008). Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/literacy/booklet2008.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core, Grades 4–8; Extended, Grades 4–8; Immersion, Grades 1–8, (revised)

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/fsl.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum: French as a Second Language: Core French, Extended French and French Immersion, Grades 9-12, (revised) 2014

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl.html>