

# Supporting Itinerant Teachers



## Introduction

Although there are teachers of FSL who teach out of their own classroom, many teachers are itinerant and arrive at designated schools and/or classrooms at a specific time. The same basic teaching strategies apply, but an added layer of organization is necessary to keep things running smoothly. When moving from one classroom to another planning what materials to bring and how to transport them can sometimes be a logistics puzzle. This module presents suggestions experienced teachers have found to be useful in their daily planning.

**Please note: this module suggests using 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.**

## Initiating and Maintaining a Positive Working Relationship with the Classroom Teacher

It is important that a positive relationship is created with the classroom teacher. An itinerant teacher is visiting another classroom which can offer some challenges. Sometimes even finding a place to put down a lesson plan can be difficult, along with finding a place to “park” a cart if it is used or to store bins of work and materials brought in. A small table or a music stand can be a useful temporary spot for the itinerant FSL teacher to place teaching notes, student work or other materials.

Communicating with the classroom teacher is vital to fostering a professional work environment. It is critical to first of all ask about the official fire drill and lock down procedure for each class and where emergency

class lists are located. Itinerant teachers are required to update these as necessary. An easy routine can be established with the classroom teachers to communicate who is missing each day. This routine makes fire drills, lock downs and even school assemblies not only safe but easier to manage.

Mutual respect of times, materials, and shared information about students is beneficial to all. If the FSL educator and classroom teacher have the opportunity to meet before the school year starts, there can be a “head-start” on discussions about bulletin board space for French word walls and to post resources. Depending on the grade that is being taught, these resources can range from frequently asked questions to lists of vocabulary currently useful to conversations in the class. By following the needs of the learners, this space may change regularly and should be referred to by both the teacher and students. Cultural images can be posted in this space and these can be rotated throughout the school year from other classrooms.

Let each teacher know where in the travelling schedule they fit in, so if the previous class is at the opposite end of the school they will know French class might begin a couple of minutes past the time their planning time begins. Delays can happen if a previous classroom teacher is late in arriving back in class, making it impossible for you to leave until the students are properly supervised. Keep lines of communication open and remember that humour is often a good way to approach these situations. It is possible that the clocks

throughout the school are all set at slightly different times. This could be an opportunity to work with the custodian, setting all the clocks to a computer in each classroom, for example. Conversations with the principal about scheduling to reduce travel times between classrooms are also beneficial.

## Carts or Bins?

### Carts

Some teachers prefer to keep all their resources, equipment, activities, instruments and other materials on a rolling cart and bring this to each classroom. The practical aspects of this method include having all students' work available in separate bins as well as any supplies, resources or games. If there are heavy materials, such as a guitar, or a bin of dictionaries, for example, a cart can be useful in transporting these items. Some carts include small white boards and places to store posters. Posters can also be attached to metal audio-visual carts with magnets. An audio/visual cart with a power supply cord and plugs can be really helpful for bringing in a cd player, or charging an iPad or keeping a laptop on.



### What to Have on a Cart?

- bins of student work;
- extra pens, pencils, erasers, masking tape, magnets - all labelled to encourage their return;
- tissues, band aids, paper towels;
- extra paper, paper clips, elastic bands;
- magnets, masking tape or other materials to hang anchor charts, posters, paper up in the classroom.

### Bins

Some itinerant teachers prefer not to use a cart. Some schools have stairs and elevators that can be awkward when using a cart, especially when time is a consideration in moving from one classroom or portable to another. In this case, bins may be more sensible. A set of bins in the FSL teacher's office, one for each class, can be set up to exchange in between classes, or all materials for a morning or afternoon can be carried around in one bin.

## Organization of Teaching Materials

### Storage in the Classroom

Specific French bins for students' work can be placed in the classroom if a place is made available by the classroom teacher. This is handy if work is to be collected, or if the French teacher wants to check something in a students' notebook without having to disrupt the class, or find it after hours. Students can be encouraged to place their notebooks in the bins. Heavy dictionaries can also be stored in the classroom in crates, again, if there is a spot that can be found.

### Storage in the French Office

Regardless of whether carts or bins are used, there will be an enormous amount of material needing to be stored in the French office where space may be limited. Organizing materials by subject, or grade, or strands of expectations, or units is a personal preference. As information and communication technology advances and more interactive white boards become available some print material, posters or charts may be transferred to USB keys, minimizing the amount of paper that needs to be stored.

### Cameras

Cameras are easily accessible on cell phones and iPads. Photos of anchor charts, word walls and sentence strips can be printed out and given to students to file in notebooks or binders for use during French class. If there is a limited amount of space on the walls, students will still have the anchor charts available to use. Learning goals, success criteria and word walls can be temporarily posted in the classroom during instructional time. Small copies of these can be made for storage in binders. For students who require it, simple reminders can be photographed and temporarily taped to their desk. Negotiating wall space with the classroom teacher can help enormously with reducing the amount of charts that need to be transported from class to class.

## Portables

Portables pose an additional challenge for itinerant teachers, particularly in winter. Find out if special footwear or a coat is necessary to get to the portable. If there is yard duty right before or after the class in the portable, is there a place to hang a coat and leave teaching materials?

## Information and Communication Technology

Making use of information and communication technology allows itinerant teachers the possibility to travel with a USB key if there is an interactive white board or projector with a laptop available. Creating and saving files, videos, documents, calendars, groups of students, and links to websites is efficiently accomplished by using a computer. Teachers unfamiliar with information and communication technology are encouraged to start with one small task and to build on that.

Televisions and DVD players are less commonly used in classrooms, with laptops and internet connections becoming more popular. Instead of carrying around a laptop, files on a USB key can be plugged in to the lap top for the interactive white board or projector. All work can be stored on the teacher drive for each school, so if the USB key is forgotten or misplaced, the work can be accessed from the storage via the computer. All work should be saved on the school computer network, including student work. All important devices should be labelled with the teacher's name. It is easy to forget a USB in the classroom as one is moving from one room to another, and easier for the teacher to return it if it is labelled.

With practice and repetition, confidence with using information and communication technology will be gained and the benefits to students realized. More information about using technology in the FSL classroom may be found in the [Information and Communication Technology](#) module.

## Instructional Strategies

### Daily Routine

Sometimes it is necessary to begin or end a class with snack time. (Please note that all school boards have policies or procedures in place to address anaphylaxis, according to [Sabrina's Law](#). Instruction can continue during this time. Students can speak about food, their preferences, recipes, how to make things, asking for

help in opening things, vocabulary about the recycling/compost/garbage bins. Videos introducing or summarizing the class work, or a song students are learning, or vocabulary practice can all be shown during these times.

As FSL instruction moves away from photocopied worksheets towards an action-oriented approach, instructional strategies will change. These will need to be adjusted according to the class that is being taught. An itinerant teacher will have different strategies based on which classroom is being visited. It can be difficult to move furniture in some classrooms. Other classrooms may have a carpeted area which can sometimes be used with much effectiveness. Some classrooms have computers, for others it may be necessary to book a computer lab or to send students to other classrooms to do work. Students will need to be given opportunities to interact with each other and it will be necessary to "provide frequent opportunities for collaboration and practice in pairs, small groups, and large groups", [The Revised 2013-2014 FSL Curricula, elementary](#) (p. 33) and [secondary](#) (p.37). Introduce a routine for moving desks into new arrangements and back into their original places. Train the students to do it efficiently, safely and as quietly as possible, reducing transition times.

### Groups

Organize groups using coloured paper, files on the interactive white board or with a projector. Teach a routine whereby one student gathers and replaces materials for his or her group. Practising this so it becomes routine aids in reducing transition times.

### Tools for Assessment

In general, most assessment tools remain the same for teachers with their own classroom as for teachers in different classrooms or schools. More information about assessment tools may be found in the [Assessment and Evaluation](#) module.

### Conclusion

Communication and good organizational skills combine to reduce the challenges an itinerant teacher faces. Consulting with other itinerant teachers within the board for their suggestions can be useful in problem solving. FSL coordinators or consultants may also be able to offer suggestions for practical arrangements to help things run smoothly between classes.

## 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>

**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**

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/fsl.html)