



CASLT PODCAST SERIES

Effective Practices for Improving French as a Second Language Education

Teaching Strategies for Oral Communication **Joan Netten and Claude Germain**

About the Authors

Joan Netten is an honorary research professor at Memorial University in Newfoundland and Labrador and has published numerous articles on second language teaching. With Dr. Claude Germain, she co-edited a special issue of the Canadian Modern Language Review on 'Intensive French in Canada'. She received the Order of Canada for the promotion of linguistic duality in Canada.

Claude Germain is a professor at the University of Quebec at Montreal. He is well-known, nationally and internationally, for his numerous books and articles on second language teaching.

Content of this Podcast

Joan Netten and Claude Germain share teaching strategies for improving students' oral communication.

Facts

- ✓ Core French programs taught in elementary schools emphasize learning vocabulary. The assumption is that learning to communicate in a second language first requires knowledge of many words, which later can be combined to communicate messages. This is based on the assumption that explicit knowledge of the language can become a skill with practice.
- ✓ Researchers such as Paradis from McGill University have shown that knowledge cannot become a skill through practice. The functions necessary for acquiring knowledge and developing skills are located in two different parts of the brain, which do not communicate directly with each other.

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- ✓ Skills have to be developed separately from knowledge, by the use and re-use in authentic situations of the sentences needed for communication.
- ✓ Speaking with spontaneity requires that students develop an internal, or automatic, grammar rather than relying on an external grammar or textbook.

Important strategies that you, as a teacher, can use:

- Model complete sentences for your students, based on authentic experiences. Follow up by having your students use and re-use the modeled sentences in personal adaptations so that they can develop their internal grammar.
- Use interactive strategies so your students can use and re-use in many different contexts the language learned in order to develop spontaneity in speaking.
- Encourage your students to speak in complete sentences in order to develop their fluency.
- Consistently correct your students by asking them to articulate the corrected forms in order to develop an accurate internal grammar.

Further Reading

The CASLT Web site features many articles by Joan Netten and Claude Germain on Intensive French. Visit <http://www.caslt.org/teachers/fslintens.htm> to download these articles.

Germain, C. and J. Netten (2005). Place et rôle de l'oral dans l'enseignement / apprentissage d'une L2. *Babylonia*. 2: 7-10.

Netten, J. and C. Germain (2005). Pedagogy and Second Language Learning: Lessons Learned from Intensive French. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 8(2): 183-210.