

Bilingualism in a Plurilingual Canada Podcast Series

Teacher Use of French in the Classroom, by Wendy Carr

Author

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Summary

Wendy shares strategies and helpful tips that French as a second language teachers can use to improve confidence in their French language skills.

Facts

Just as your students are encouraged to work at just slightly beyond their comfort zone of knowledge and skills in order to learn and grow, you, as a teacher, may be venturing into new territory and taking a risk in trying to use French as the language of instruction. Here are some suggestions you can use to increase your confidence in using French in the classroom:

- Learn and use a small repertoire of classroom language for giving instructions, gaining attention, celebrating good work, and modeling strategies. Use and master key structures needed for authentic classroom conversation.
- As you preview a new text, use the same strategies for exploring text that you are teaching students to use: highlight familiar content and format features, link to your own prior knowledge, and consult resources to help with new words or ideas.
- Listen to the audio version of the text to be explored in class. Pause and repeat aloud as you listen. It takes time to practice articulating and using new language structures.
- Limit what you say in class to your developing repertoire. In the beginning, this may mean that only your opening routine, strategy-modeling, key questions and instructions are delivered in French.
- Don't feel that you can *never* use English in the core French class. There are times when it makes sense to let students give voice to some of the connections they are making regarding strategies they are using or between French and English or other home languages.

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers is a non-profit professional association of over 4,000 members.

Through its research, resources and publications, professional development and advocacy activities, the association plays a significant role in increasing awareness, appreciation and understanding of the importance of second and additional language learning and teaching throughout Canada. www.caslt.org

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Podcast Series

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The goal of this initiative is to make current research in second language teaching and learning available to teachers and the general public.

All podcasts from this series can be downloaded from the CASLT and OLBI Web sites.

Further Reading

Carr, W. (1999). Fear of teaching French: Challenges faced by generalist teachers. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56 (1), 155-179.

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Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and Language* (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Eds. & Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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