Bilingualism in a Plurilingual Canada Podcast Series

Integrating English Language Learners in Core French Using a Literacy-Based Approach, by Callie Mady

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Summary
Callie Mady shares with listeners strategies for supporting English language learners in FSL classrooms.

A Few Definitions

English language learners: Students for whom English or French is not their dominant language.

Literacy-based approach to FSL: An approach to teaching FSL whose foundation is the development and enhancement of literacy skills and strategies.

Facts
- There is no one formula to meet the needs of all English language learners. But some strategies do provide support to students as they add additional languages to their repertoire.
- English language learners can be advantaged in FSL as they already have second language-learning strategies that they can transfer to French language learning. Research also suggests that their learning of French can enhance their learning of English.
- As an FSL teacher, your knowledge of second language acquisition and second language learning as well as your use of supporting visuals, expressions and gestures, can help you support English language learners in other areas of the curriculum than FSL, where they may struggle because English is the language of instruction.
Strategies to Support the Inclusion of English Language Learners in Your FSL Classroom:

- Consider the needs of your English language learners when choosing texts. In order for all your students to consider part of your curriculum, you need to ensure that the texts you are using represent a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- Spoken texts: Make sure that a variety of francophones are represented. Encourage your students to make sound symbol connections, relating sounds in French to sounds in their languages.
- Themes: Select texts that provide a variety of experiences. Whereas most students can relate to and have experience with some themes, other themes will require you to make explicit connections to your students’ lived experience.
- Use literacy-based strategies: Engage the prior understandings of your students in order to provide connections between French and their language or allow other students to provide same language support to your English language learners. Your students can also provide such connections by teaching their language to the class. Using knowledge of all languages not only helps decode text, but also makes students feel more comfortable in your class as their identities are recognized.

Further Reading


