



Meaningful Learning Experiences:
Engaging French-language learners through
relevance and authenticity



Synopsis

Discover what some students say about relevant and authentic opportunities for learning French. Find out how some educators make connections between what students study in French class and the real world.



Before Viewing

Reflecting on current practice

1. How do I make learning relevant for my students?
 2. How do I provide authentic learning experiences?
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During Viewing

Making connections

1. How well does the quote from *Qu'as-tu fait à l'école aujourd'hui?* / *What did you do in school today?* describe the tasks I plan for my students?
 2. Would my students agree with the opinion shared by the student regarding worksheets?
 3. Which of the technology applications mentioned am I already using to support student engagement in French?
 4. Which of the authentic learning opportunities mentioned would I like to adapt or incorporate into my program to increase student engagement in French?
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After Viewing

Moving forward

1. How could I strengthen connections between student interests and tasks to heighten engagement in learning French?
2. How might I increase opportunities for students to use their French in authentic situations within and beyond the school?
3. What steps can I take to strengthen connections between what students do in class and the real world?



Going Deeper

“[L]es élèves qui estimaient que la matière enseignée et les activités prévues par leurs enseignants étaient significatives et liées à leurs propres aspirations étaient plus émotionnellement et cognitivement engagés que ne l’étaient leurs pairs.”

– Levesque (2013)

“Je parle aux élèves des liens entre la vie et ce qu’ils font. Plus ils ont des expériences en français hors de la salle de classe, plus ils veulent pratiquer.”

– Laura Stewart, Teacher, British Columbia

“Si tu peux faire ton projet sur un sujet que tu aimes, c’est plus amusant alors tu veux faire plus et mieux parce que tu veux apprendre le plus possible.”

– Élève d’école intermédiaire en immersion

A critical factor for engagement of all students is relevance. Educators use their understanding of the age group of students they are teaching to plan activities and tasks that they believe their students will find interesting and meaningful. They discuss students’ leisure time activities and find out what students want to learn.

In addition to planning relevant tasks, educators endeavour to plan authentic situations in which students use French for a real purpose. Students are engaged when they know that the French they are learning will be useful to them in the world beyond the classroom. In order to be able to communicate in French on a daily basis, students need to learn the language of their outside interests, as well as the language of the classroom. They need to learn how to communicate about everyday life, their families and friends, and then to learn speech acts that enable them to gradually increase their functional repertoire, for example, to ask for help or give directions.

Educators make connections with Francophones or other French-language learners to provide students with real audiences and purposes for using their French. They facilitate real or virtual exchanges and trips to Francophone communities so students can experience authentic Francophone cultures and apply their French-language skills in real communicative situations.

As students progress in their French-language development, the increased use of written, oral and multimedia texts produced for Francophones enhances authenticity and interest.

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