

Enduring Idea #3: Development of Language Learning Strategies

It is important to note that language learning is a personal journey and that not all students acquire language in the same way or at the same rate. It is essential to respect the needs of the learner and where they may be on their language learning journey.

In order to demystify for the students the process of learning a new language, it is important that there is an increased focus on the development of language learning strategies.

There are expectations in all four strands which focus on the introduction and use of language learning strategies. The strategies may not be unique to learning a second or additional language but help students to be aware of the things they are doing while learning a language. It is important to note that not all students acquire these strategies on their own.

Most students will benefit from explicit classroom instruction regarding the use of second language learning strategies, in authentic and relevant contexts. The language learning strategies are not program or grade specific. Students should be exposed to a wide variety of strategies and apply them in increasingly complex contexts and situations.

There are four types of language learning strategies in the FSL curriculum – listening strategies, speaking strategies, reading strategies, and writing strategies.

Listening Strategies include showing respect, activating prior knowledge, interpreting non-verbal cues, processing information, confirming understanding, taking notes, reacting to the message, anticipating responses and making predictions.

Speaking Strategies are selecting purpose and audience, establishing and maintain contact, supporting the message, clarifying the message, rehearsing, confirming understanding, and using appropriate language register.

Reading Strategies are activating prior knowledge, making connections, asking questions, summarizing, inferring, predicting, and monitoring and repairing understanding.

Lastly, Writing Strategies include choosing a topic and audience, making a plan, “sketching to stretch,” engaging the audience, following the writing process, and selecting stylistic elements.

Once students are consciously aware of strategies, have practiced using them, can select the most effective ones for a particular task, and can see the link between their own actions and their learning, they will be more motivated and more effective French language learners.