

Enduring Idea #4: Interdependence of Language and Culture

The language used in a community is reflective of the cultures of the individuals within that community. The language therefore reflects the ideas, values, and traditions of the community.

In the revised French as a Second Language curriculum there is one Overall Expectation entitled Intercultural Understanding in each of the four strands. It includes the two specific expectations of Intercultural Awareness and Awareness of Sociolinguistic Conventions

This is a map of the French-speaking areas of the world – Le monde de la Francophonie.

The expectations that deal with the development of intercultural understanding are developed through the four interconnected strands and are included to help students make connections and build bridges between diverse French-speaking communities and society as a whole.

Through a focus on intercultural understanding, students will

- build a strong understanding of “Le monde de la francophonie” – French speaking communities around the world;
- have a better understanding of the people, traditions and aspects of their culture;
- develop cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures; and
- develop an increased awareness and the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.

To build student intercultural awareness, we start with increasing knowledge and building understanding about the aspects of cultures in local French-speaking communities in Ontario. We then move to Quebec, eastern, western, and northern regions of Canada.

Students continue to build their intercultural awareness by gaining an understanding about the aspects of culture of French-speaking communities in North America and South America.

Students continue on their journey by learning about French-speaking communities in France and Europe.

Finally, students will continue to build their awareness and understanding about French-speaking communities in Africa, Asia, and Oceania to give a more global perspective of le monde de la francophonie.

Intercultural awareness and understanding are key aspects of the concept of global citizenship which includes citizenship at all levels - from the local school community, to North America, and beyond.

Here we can see the Intercultural Awareness Expectation from Grade 4 Core French from the Listening strand. In grade 4, students will have multiple opportunities to explore Franco-Ontarian communities and make connections to their own and other communities.

This expectation illustrates how the specific expectations, the illustrative examples, the teacher prompts, and the instructional tips work together to serve as a guide for the teacher to the various ways students can demonstrate the required knowledge of the expectation.

This is an example of the second specific expectation related to the awareness of sociolinguistic conventions in the Speaking strand of Grade 5 Core French. In this expectation, students are required to show understanding of the different forms of address and differences in language register. For example, students may be required to select the appropriate form of address “Tu” or “Vous” based on the context or who they are addressing. Teachers are encouraged to highlight sociolinguistic conventions related to the chosen French-speaking region for that particular grade, but have the flexibility to address the various sociolinguistic conventions that may be universal or related to other French-speaking communities.