Ici on parle français – PD grants for FSL teachers

Back to Collaborative Games in French!

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School District: Avon-Maitland District School Board

What We Did

Our group participated in a self-guided collaborative learning experience, where we hoped to better understand how to improve engagement in our FSL courses. We started by exploring Strengthening Engagement in FSL, created by the Council of Ministers of Education, by meeting a few times during the year and by reading all parts of the document and by watching videos on the website. This created interesting discussions about what we considered engagement in the past, what that looks like in our classrooms now, and how to broaden that definition. We then used the templates in the document, modified them and created a survey for students to fill out about engagement to inform our direction for action. More than 120 students answered and, with the results, we worked on adding more collaborative games, activities and engaging materials in our classrooms by purchasing a variety of resources. Finally, we implemented them and discussed the results in our last meeting.

What We Learned

1. That we had gotten away from collaborative activities in general during COVID and that it was time to bring them back.

2. That engagement is more than just seeing students happy and having fun. They need to believe the activity is relevant to them, that it creates positive interactions with teacher and peers, that it is attainable and that they have control or choice.

3. In the survey, we learned that many of our students already consider themselves engaged (we thought it would be a lower number) and that what they want more of is collaborative games, short skits where they can act out real life situations, as well as more options / choice in assignments.

4. That using technology is not always engaging (i.e. wifi / computer problems, games played individually, not all students playing, etc.) and that sometimes we fall back on using Kahoot!, Quizlet and Blooket, whereas we could be doing more engaging things.

5. That there are different types of engagement: academic, social and intellectual. These three types are tied to a sense of belonging, curiosity, and wanting to do well.

6. That many games can be used for different language levels, but that different structures / memory aids need to be created to support them during the game / activity. And that these memory aids need to be simple, not too complex or long.

7. That students WANT to speak French, but they need vocabulary support and phrases that have them engage in conversation in short dialogues or conversations

How We Shared Our Learning With Others

We shared our learning in our final meeting where we discussed what went well in our classes and what we plan on doing next. We were also able to share this learning in a staff meeting in small groups with other teachers that teach other subjects. They were interested in what we discovered.

Links to Our Work

Asking questions card
Uno card (side 1 / (side 2)
Taboo / Scrabble card
Learning folder

Any Next Steps We Have To Continue Our Learning

We will continue to develop more memory aids and structures to help students play a wider variety of games. This will take time. These memory aids can apply to other activities we have already developed for other tasks. We want to continue to create Google Slides with instructions for each game that can be shared in our department. We would like to diversify our portfolio assignment to include a larger variety of options / choice for students to explore. We also want to find a resource that includes templates for simple, varied dialogues to help students speak quickly about a topic or in a real-life situation, and that they could then modify creatively on their own.