

Strategic Teaching Framework in French Immersion Education

Adapted from Tedick 2025 · Lyster 2016 · Fortune 2000, 2014

01 Integrating Language & Content Objectives	02 Comprehensible Input	03 Modeling Cycle	04 Language Supports
05 Student Engagement	06 Checks for Understanding and Mastery	07 Counterbalanced Instruction	4 Mastery Levels - Not Acquired - Emerging - Acquired - Highly Proficient

01 Integrating Language & Content Objectives

The teacher plans instructional sequences based on specific content, thematic, and language objectives. The teacher makes content and language expectations explicit, identifies relevant linguistic elements to teach, integrates them into content instruction, and assesses content and language competencies in an articulated manner. Particular attention is paid to the distinction between form (how something is expressed) and meaning (what is said).

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Develops lesson plans based on specific content, thematic, and language objectives.				
B. Clearly identifies and displays content and language objectives for each lesson and/or unit.				
C. Selects and integrates linguistically relevant elements in relation to the content under study.				
D. Specifies language objectives by identifying the expected discourse type, target language functions, targeted vocabulary, and associated grammatical structures.				
E. Systematically assesses targeted language and content competencies for each lesson and/or unit.				
F. Distinguishes between form and meaning (e.g., That's an interesting idea. How might you express it differently?)				

01 Integrating Language & Content Objectives

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher does not define clear objectives to guide lessons and shows no explicit awareness of the importance of integrating content and language objectives in planning. Linguistic elements are rarely present or disconnected from content.	The teacher is beginning to recognise the importance of planning lessons that integrate content and language objectives. The teacher attempts to define and display them, but objectives often remain incomplete, general, or difficult to use in the classroom. Assessment of language skills is poorly structured.	The teacher regularly plans lessons using precise content and language objectives. The teacher clearly displays objectives, selects relevant linguistic elements, and assesses targeted competencies. The majority of objectives are aligned with content and written in a usable form.	The teacher fully masters the integration of content and language objectives. The teacher plans lessons rigorously and coherently, identifying discourse type, language functions, vocabulary, and associated grammatical structures. Assessments are systematic, aligned with objectives, and effectively guide instruction.

Comments

02 Comprehensible Input

The teacher implements a range of verbal and non-verbal strategies to facilitate students' comprehension of content and language. The teacher creates a supportive learning environment by adapting language, pace, and instructional materials to the group's needs. These practices aim to make input accessible while fostering progressive skill development and greater learner autonomy.

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Provides non-verbal support (gestures, visual/multimedia materials, graphic organisers, etc.)				
B. Incorporates songs, poems, stories, videos, and/or other thematic resources to link language to content.				
C. Facilitates comprehension of taught concepts with pre-reading activities.				
D. Facilitates comprehension of unknown words using linguistic redundancy (e.g., self-repetition, paraphrase, synonyms, examples).				
E. Encourages and reactivates students' prior knowledge; highlights contextual clues and cognates.				
F. Adjusts speech rate and language complexity according to learners' needs.				
G. Uses intonation to highlight important elements.				
H. Speaks in an articulate and intelligible manner.				
I. Selects instructional materials appropriate to students' actual level.				
J. Establishes routines to help students become autonomous in their comprehension.				

02 Comprehensible Input

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
Scaffolding practices are not implemented, or only very occasionally. The teacher does not appear aware of the obstacles students face in accessing language or content. Little or no visual, linguistic, or structural support is provided.	The teacher is beginning to recognise the importance of scaffolding to support comprehension. Some simple strategies (gestures, images) are used, but irregularly or inadequately. Materials are not always chosen based on students' level. Routines are rare or ineffective.	The teacher regularly uses a variety of scaffolding strategies (visuals, reformulations, structuring supports, etc.). The majority of students benefit from effective support that promotes comprehension. Practices are planned, intentional, and adjusted according to identified needs.	The teacher consistently and intentionally integrates a wide range of scaffolding strategies. Gestures, supports, linguistic adjustments, and routines are appropriate, differentiated, and actively support comprehension and student autonomy. Pedagogical choices are intentional and their effectiveness is clearly observable.

Comments

03 Modeling Cycle

The teacher models and makes explicit the expectations related to language use, in connection with the lesson theme. This modelling may include oral or written examples, the presentation of grammatical structures, typical expressions, or formulations appropriate to the activity. By highlighting the expected vocabulary and language functions, the teacher helps students better understand and use the language independently.

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Models and explicitly communicates expectations related to language use.				
B. Provides language examples relevant to the context, both orally and in writing.				
C. Highlights vocabulary already known or being acquired in language demonstrations.				
D. Models precise language use for each assigned activity:				
<i>a. I do (teacher)</i>				
<i>b. We do (teacher with a student)</i>				
<i>c. You do (two students)</i>				
<i>d. Everyone does (all students)</i>				

03 Modeling Cycle

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher does not model or rarely models expected language use. Instructions are sometimes vague or imprecise. Examples provided are rare, out of context, or poorly understood by students. Targeted vocabulary is not highlighted and language expectations remain implicit.	The teacher begins to provide oral or written examples, but these sometimes lack clarity, connection to the activity, or coherence with language objectives. Modelling steps are present occasionally or incompletely. Vocabulary is mentioned but not consistently valued.	The teacher regularly models language use in line with learning objectives. He or she uses relevant oral and written examples, guides students with progressive demonstrations, and highlights key vocabulary. The I do / We do / You do / Everyone does structure is well integrated into the approach.	The teacher models language expectations precisely, explicitly, and systematically at each stage of the lesson. Demonstrations are contextualised, interactive, and promote deep understanding of targeted vocabulary, functions, and structures. Students progressively internalise these models and transfer them to their own productions.

Comments

04 Language Supports

The teacher creates an environment rich in language resources and support tools to promote students' oral and written expression. This support relies on planned, differentiated, and visible practices in the classroom. The teacher may include sentence starters, thematic displays, graphic organisers, or multimedia supports accessible according to students' needs.

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Builds a diverse vocabulary repertoire using a variety of resources and strategies (texts, prior knowledge, word formation, etc.).				
B. Displays a variety of words, sentence starters, and unit-related texts in the classroom and in hallways.				
C. Ensures that a wide selection of reading and reference material is accessible to students.				
D. Effectively optimises wait time during classroom interactions.				
E. Invites native French speakers to make presentations to enrich students' linguistic experiences.				
F. Provides language and contextual aids to facilitate speaking or writing (e.g., outlines, graphic organisers, etc.).				
G. Improves accessibility of taught concepts through pre-writing activities.				

04 Language Supports

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher provides few or no language supports in the classroom. Vocabulary and language resources are rarely visible or accessible. The link between the materials provided and students’ needs is not apparent. Opportunities for exposure to rich French are limited.	The teacher is beginning to integrate language supports, but their use remains irregular or poorly targeted. Resources exist but are not systematically exploited or adapted to current activities. Some strategies are implemented (e.g., displays, visual tools), but without coherence or continuity across units.	The teacher regularly uses diverse, student-appropriate language supports. Displays, supports, and resources are well aligned with learning objectives. Students have access to relevant reading material, and pre-writing and language structuring activities are offered strategically.	The teacher consistently and intentionally implements a rich and structured language environment. Vocabulary is actively built, reused, and valued. Supports are visible, used, differentiated, and accompany the student throughout the learning journey. Native speakers are invited to model the language.

Comments

05 Student Engagement

The teacher proposes varied activities that encourage students' oral, written, and physical participation. The teacher draws on students' profiles, interests, and cultures to create an inclusive and stimulating environment. Students are actively involved in rich exchanges, group work, role plays, or activities where movement is linked to learning. These practices aim to strengthen engagement, motivation, and peer interaction.

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Takes students' profiles and interests into account when designing lessons.				
B. Creates a welcoming learning environment that values students' cultural diversity.				
C. Uses questioning methods that promote extended discussion and deep reflection.				
D. Assigns activities requiring sustained, engaging, and meaningful production (role plays, simulations, debates, presentations, etc.).				
E. Promotes structured collaborative learning situations (team work, collective reflection, peer assessment).				
F. Integrates activities involving a physical response (TPR, moving to the correct answer, opinion lines) to link movement to learning.				

05 Student Engagement

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher offers few engaging activities or ones adapted to students' profiles and interests. Interactions are limited, often centred on brief or closed responses. Cultural diversity is not valued in content or exchanges. Students participate passively, without clear opportunities to express themselves, collaborate, or move.	The teacher begins to include varied activities promoting active participation, but their frequency or relevance remains uneven. Some attempts are made to adapt lessons to students' interests or include their cultural diversity, but this is not yet systematic.	The teacher regularly designs dynamic lessons, grounded in students' interests, needs, and identities. The teacher fosters rich and structured exchanges, encourages deep reflection and extended language production. Movement is sometimes integrated into learning (e.g., TPR, opinion lines).	The teacher consistently creates an inclusive, interactive, and stimulating learning environment. He or she uses varied and differentiated strategies to encourage expression, reflection, collaboration, and physical engagement. Students' profiles and cultures are actively considered in designing rich, relevant, and motivating activities.

Comments

06 Comprehension Checks

The teacher regularly checks students' understanding throughout the learning process, using a variety of assessment strategies such as open questions, production activities, observations, and class discussions. The teacher encourages self-correction, peer support, and the expression of thinking among learners. Pedagogy is adapted based on observed needs, with individualised monitoring of progress.

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Assesses learners' comprehension by asking open questions and using production activities.				
B. Encourages learners to correct their own errors and those of their partners.				
C. Adapts teaching to improve comprehension and linguistic expression for all learners.				
D. Tracks each learner's progress and modifies expectations as needed.				
E. Maintains regular dialogue with families to support learning.				
F. Collaborates with colleagues to design assessments adapted to students' specific needs.				

06

Comprehension Checks

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher rarely poses open questions or activities that allow for in-depth comprehension checks. Students’ errors are not used as learning opportunities. Little or no pedagogical adjustment is observed in response to needs. Progress tracking is absent or very sporadic. Families are not involved, and collaboration with colleagues on assessments is absent.	The teacher begins to use certain verification strategies (open questions, short productions), but their use remains irregular. Efforts are made to take students’ errors into account and to adapt, but this remains unsystematic. Tracking is initiated for a few students. Exchanges with families or colleagues exist but are not yet frequent or structured.	The teacher regularly uses varied strategies to check comprehension (open questioning, oral or written activities). He or she encourages students to correct errors and adapts expectations based on observed progress. Families are informed of learning developments, and assessments are built collaboratively with the team.	The teacher consistently and differentially implements continuous and varied assessment practices, integrated into instructional sequences. The teacher guides students toward self-regulation and peer assessment. Tracking is individualised, families are actively involved, and assessments are co-constructed with colleagues to address the group’s specific needs.

Comments

07 Counterbalanced Instruction (Lyster)

Counterbalanced Instruction is a pedagogical framework developed by Roy Lyster, designed to alternate students' attention between linguistic and content objectives. By integrating language into subject content, this method strengthens both language skills and subject comprehension. It also helps avoid two common difficulties: cognitive overload (when too much information is given at once) and error fossilisation (when repeated mistakes become entrenched). This strategy should be used selectively and strategically, in response to students' specific needs — particularly when an important linguistic concept cannot be inferred through exposure or natural immersion alone.

Four-Step Progression

① Contextualization <i>Content takes priority</i>	② Awareness <i>Language takes priority</i>	③ Practice <i>Language takes priority</i>	④ Autonomy <i>Content and language both take priority</i>
Vocabulary · Text summary · Essential questions · Predictions about the text · Main idea and details · Sharing an opinion on the topic	Analysis tasks · Sorting activities · Detection of linguistic patterns · Metalinguistic exercises · T-chart (Yes/No; Colour-coded) · Rule discovery tasks · Compare and contrast · Highlighting · Annotation	Student-created questionnaires/surveys · Interviews · Well-planned games · Tasks where students describe photos · Question/answer sessions	Science experiment · Social studies timeline · Explaining the steps of a maths problem · Debating a current event · Interviewing a historical figure · Writing and/or narrating a biography · Explaining geographic features of a country

Notions particularly suited to this approach:

Grammatical gender · Verb conjugations · The passé composé / imparfait distinction · The conditional · Verbs of movement or direction · Personal pronouns and direct/indirect object pronouns · Tu and vous (informal vs. formal address)

07 Counterbalanced Instruction — Verification Checklist

The teacher...	No	Partly	Yes	Observations / Examples observed
A. Designs coherent instructional sequences				
<i>a. Noticing: content takes priority</i>				
<i>b. Awareness: language takes priority</i>				
<i>c. Guided practice: language takes priority</i>				
<i>d. Autonomous practice: content and language both take priority</i>				
B. Identifies linguistic errors both orally and in writing, using various types of corrective feedback.				

07 Counterbalanced Instruction (Lyster)

Mastery Level Grid

Not Acquired	Emerging	Acquired	Highly Proficient
The teacher does not implement the steps of the Integrated Approach explicitly. Proposed activities do not follow a coherent sequence or remain focused solely on content or language. Noticing, awareness, guided, or autonomous practice tasks are absent or poorly adapted. No corrective feedback strategy is identifiable.	The teacher begins to structure lessons according to the principles of the Integrated Approach, but some steps are underdeveloped or disconnected from each other. Awareness or guided practice activities are present but linguistically unfocused. Language feedback is irregular or limited to implicit corrections.	The teacher designs coherent sequences integrating the four steps (noticing, awareness, guided practice, autonomous practice). Activities are varied, aligned with objectives, and students' attention alternates in a structured way between content and language. Corrective feedback is used intentionally to support learning.	The teacher applies the Integrated Approach expertly, adapting the four steps to their classroom context. Activities are creative, progressive, and perfectly aligned with language and content objectives. The teacher precisely identifies when this approach is needed, differentiates tasks according to students' needs, and uses corrective feedback to enrich language competencies. Students engage fully at each step and reinvest language in complex, authentic tasks.

Comments

Bibliography

1. Collins-Peynaud, Emmanuel and Neu, Kerrie. Sandwiching Grammar and Content in a Language Class. 2023.
2. Fortune, Tara. Immersion Teaching Strategies Observation Checklist. CARLA, 2014. <https://carla.umn.edu/immersion/checklist.pdf>
3. Howard, Elizabeth R. & Simpson, Shera. Dual Language Tandem Teaching: Coordinating Instruction Across Languages through Cross-Linguistic Pedagogies. Velazquez Press, 2024.
4. Government of Manitoba. La langue au cœur du Programme d'immersion française. Une approche intégrée dans la pédagogie immersive (2nd ed.). Éducation Manitoba, 2021.
5. Lyster, Roy. L'approche intégrée en univers social. McGill and the Eastern Townships School Board, 2017.
6. Lyster, Roy and Tedick, Diane. Scaffolding Language Development in Immersion and Dual Language Classrooms (Ch. 3 & 4). Routledge, 2020.
7. Lyster, Roy. Vers une approche intégrée en immersion. Les Éditions CEC – ACPI, 2016.
8. University of Minnesota. Rubric level descriptors – DLI self-assessment rubric. DLI Teaching Rubrics. <https://dliteachingrubrics.umn.edu/self-assessment-rubric/rubric-level-descriptors>
9. Utah State Board of Education. DLI Core Instructional Strategies Observation Protocol. 2016.