

Acknowledgement of country

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which I am today, the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung People, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.



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It's on us

IMPROVING RETENTION IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN AUSTRALIA
MARC FAVRE – ELWOOD COLLEGE – FAV@ELWOOD.VIC.EDU.AU

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Our biggest hurdles...

- 1) Under 10% of secondary students Australia-wide are choosing to study a language they have no family connection with. We are losing 90% of students between Year 7 and Year 12.
 - 2) Geographical isolation that hides the benefits of language learning.
 - 3) A national language that is globally spoken.
 - 4) An educational system that doesn't value language learning.
 - 5) Schools and parents/guardians who directly or indirectly do not place value on language learning.
 - 6) It's not 'LOTE'...language learning is important, a small hurdle we can control.
- ▶ Focus on what we can control – namely points 1 and 6.

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For things to change, don't count on...

- ▶ Government/politicians
- ▶ Principals
- ▶ Software
- ▶ Textbooks
- ▶ Fads
- ▶ Parents/Guardians
- ▶ Students

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A need for direction



(OBJECTIVES WILL VARYING DEPENDING ON CONTEXT)

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A snapshot from my school

- ▶ **2017** – 8 students chose French when it became elective, compared with 25 in Japanese in the same cohort.
- ▶ **2017** – 4 French teachers did an internal review that assessed areas needing improvement and set up frameworks to make those changes happen.
- ▶ **2021** – 38 students studying French in Year 10, two years after it became elective.

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Focus on the language learning students first.

- ▶ How can we help them see relevance in language learning?
- ▶ How can we help them see the importance and benefits of learning about other cultures?
- ▶ How can we build a language learning program that has students regularly experiencing and feeling success in language learning?
- ▶ If we can answer the three questions above successfully, more students will enjoy language learning and more students will choose to continue their language learning journey for longer.

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Language teachers need to work together

- ▶ Don't count on anyone else, but we must support each other.
- ▶ Build a common understanding where everyone's voice is included, get it right for your school's context and then support each other to implement it.
- ▶ Make going to work enjoyable.
- ▶ Use 'Fika' at domain/department meetings
- ▶ Do photocopies for each other, buy a colleague a coffee every now and again.
- ▶ Students know when teachers are working together and respond positively when it is being done well.

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A sample language continuum (not a one size fits all)

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS ⇄	LANGUAGE PRODUCTION SKILLS		LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION SKILLS	
LANGUAGE LEVEL ↓	WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS	SPOKEN ASSESSMENTS	READING & VISUAL ASSESSMENTS	LISTENING & VISUAL ASSESSMENTS
LEVEL 1 (First year of French)	50-100 words in French without dictionaries or notes in class time, handwritten under teacher supervision.	1-2 minutes of student voice in spontaneous, unrehearsed French dialogue with teacher without notes or dictionary.	Comprehension questions based on 100-200 word authentic, unseen written and visual text. Some questions and answers may be in English.	Comprehension questions based on 1.5-2 minute authentic, unseen aural and visual text. Some questions and answers may be in English.
LEVEL 2 (Students having completed 1 year of French or equivalent)	100-150 words in French without dictionaries or notes in class time, handwritten under teacher supervision.	2-3 minutes of student voice in spontaneous, unrehearsed French dialogue with teacher or student without notes or dictionary.	Comprehension questions based on 200-300 word authentic, unseen written and visual text(s). Some questions and answers may be in English.	Comprehension questions based on 2-3 minute authentic, unseen aural and visual text(s). Some questions and answers may be in English.
LEVEL 3 (Students having completed 2 years of French instruction or equivalent)	150-200 words in French without dictionaries or notes in class time, handwritten under teacher supervision.	3-4 minutes of student voice in spontaneous, unrehearsed French dialogue with teacher or student without notes or dictionary.	Comprehension questions based on 300-400 word authentic, unseen written and visual text. All questions and answers must be in French.	Comprehension questions based on 3-4 minute authentic, unseen aural and visual text(s). All questions and answers must be in French.
LEVEL 4 (Students having completed 3 years of French instruction or equivalent)	200-300 words in French without dictionaries or notes in class time, handwritten under teacher supervision.	4-5 minutes of student voice in spontaneous, unrehearsed French dialogue with teacher or student without notes or dictionary.	Comprehension questions based on 400-500 word authentic, unseen written and visual text(s). All questions and answers must be in French.	Comprehension questions based on 4-5 minute authentic, unseen aural and visual text. All questions and answers must be in French.

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Beginner French – First unit

LEVEL 1: (For students in their first year of French)	
KEY VOCABULARY	KEY GRAMMATICAL CONCEPTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal pronouns Numbers 1-100 Personal introductions Colours Days & Months Telling the time Physical and character descriptions School materials Family vocabulary Animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of present tense form of être, avoir, aller, faire Knowledge of present tense conjugation of -er and -ir verbs Understanding of adjective agreements First introduction to the passé composé and futur proche using the verb 'aller'. Knowledge of negative sentence structures in French. Expressions with 'être' and 'avoir' (avoir fait etc.) Asking clarification questions
<p><u>Connective words:</u> parce que, mais, je pense que, c'est, il y a</p> <p><u>Question words:</u> où, qui, comment, pourquoi, quel(le), quand</p>	
<p>INTERCULTURAL AIMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of different French numbering system. Understanding of the importance of and difference between formal and informal register in French. 	
<p>COMMUNICATION AIMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to describe themselves and others with regard to appearance, personality, likes/dislikes and nationality. Students able to express opinions in French using "Je pense que" and give justifications using basic connectives. Students able to recognise and communicate French numbers, days, colours, months Text types seen/produced: letter, email, brochure. 	

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How can we help students see relevance in language learning?

- ▶ Authentic formative and summative assessment tasks. No postcards, rote-learnt oral presentations – move to spontaneous dialogue, emails, blogs, job applications etc. Teach content the students value.
- ▶ Give students voice in their language learning – give them the map, not the keys or the steering wheel – we are the professionals.
- ▶ Have students choose unit content that aligns with the school's language learning continuum.
- ▶ Encourage personalised learning goals for students and refer back and reflect on them.
- ▶ Keep student portfolios for student reflections and parent-teacher nights.
- ▶ Partnerships with other Australian and international schools for real student exchanges.
- ▶ Multi-lingual school signs – make the languages visible – language days.

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How to explain the benefits of learning about other cultures?

- ▶ Share personal language learning stories with your students
- ▶ Take the time to explain cultural elements as part of language learning process through grammar, register, vocabulary.
- ▶ Take the time to explain global contributions from the target culture to underline the relevance and importance of multiple perspectives.

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How to build a language learning program that focuses on success?

- ▶ Content must be authentic and relevant
- ▶ Real-life language, real-life situations
- ▶ Spontaneous language production - get students used to thinking on their feet in the target language
- ▶ Unseen texts for comprehension tasks
- ▶ All formative and summative assessments must be in the target language
- ▶ All formative assessment must feed directly into success in the following summative assessment task(s)
- ▶ Language learning is cumulative – our assessment should reflect this – draw on prior knowledge. Help students see how important a strong foundation is

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Key questions for teaching self-reflection:

If I could, would I choose to be a student in my classroom?

Is there an obvious purpose to what I'm doing?

Does the content I'm delivering draw on previous content and lead into upcoming content?

Does my formative assessment clearly lead into success in my summative assessments?

Has student understanding/knowledge of the target language and/or culture been improved as a result of my lesson/unit/assessment?

Do our textbooks/resources best serve the needs of our students?

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Set high expectations

- ▶ For our students
- ▶ For ourselves
- ▶ For each other
- ▶ Australian students are just as capable language learners as students from anywhere else
- ▶ It has to start with students and it can only build up from there!