



What does a CEFR-inspired Classroom look like?

A classroom inspired by the Common European Framework of Reference would have the following features:

- French is established as the language of communication in the classroom, (Teacher-Student, Student-Student).
- There is an emphasis on spontaneous oral interaction in real-life situations.
- An action-oriented approach (“*la perspective actionnelle*”) is advocated in which learners use language to perform authentic tasks.
- Repeated opportunities are made available for student reflection and descriptive feedback is given on an ongoing basis.
- The 5 language skills are developed through a variety of communicative activities. These skills are listening, spoken production, spoken interaction, reading and writing.
- Grammar is presented in the context of a relevant communicative task. In other words, there is a shift from practices that focus on the mechanics of the language to a focus that invites students to communicate in the target language.
- The principles of Differentiated Instruction are adhered to.
- The Gradual Release of Responsibility model is the basis of classroom instruction.
- The Ministry of Education’s “Growing Success” document shapes the assessment and evaluation practices.
- The students are regularly exposed to authentic French texts such as pictures, music, video clips, stories, new media, real objects, etc.
- The students are aware and appreciative of the cultural context of language.
- “Student Talk Time” is maximized by using a variety of groupings, (pair-work, small group work, centres), and cooperative learning activities.

Maximize “Student Talk Time”!

Try imagining a stopwatch above each student’s head which begins as soon as the student starts speaking in French and stops when he or she finishes speaking. What would the total amount of time be for each student at the end of a lesson? What about at the end of a week, a month or even a term or semester? Has every student had sufficient time to really develop his or her spoken French? What could you do to increase “Student Talk Time”?

What are “Action-oriented Tasks”?

These are spontaneous interactions in real-life situations in which learners use language to perform authentic tasks. Possible action-oriented tasks could be phoning a friend to arrange to go to the movies, or pleading with a teacher to be allowed to stay in at recess. In other words, they are everyday tasks in which language is used to solve a problem or accomplish a goal. Because they are active rather than passive, and closely associated with students’ interests, experiences and needs, these tasks can be extremely motivating and engaging for students.

What is the Gradual Release of Responsibility model?

The “Gradual Release of Responsibility” model is used to provide the structure for the introduction of new language and the support students require as they move towards autonomy. The stages of this “scaffolding” are:

1. Modelling
2. Shared Practice
3. Guided Practice
4. Independent Practice

Language skills are developed throughout this process as each student is supported and guided by on-going assessment *for* learning, assessment *as* learning, and descriptive feedback, with learner autonomy being the ultimate goal.