

EDUC 351: Reflective Journal #1
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Reflective Journal #1: Using Routines to Approach Second Language Instruction

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EDUC 351: Curriculum and Instruction in a Second Language
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I have been enjoying this course more than I thought I would! I came into it feeling a little nervous because I did not feel confident in my own knowledge of a second language or core French. As I gain insights into how second language instruction can be managed, I am beginning to feel more at ease. My biggest takeaway from this class so far is that one of the most effective instructional approaches to teaching a second language is to build it into your daily routine.

This year is my first year having my own classroom, albeit half-time, and I have found a concrete morning routine that is both predictable, yet engaging helps my students start the day off right. On Monday mornings, after our morning meeting, we always play math games and on Wednesday mornings, after our morning meeting, we do some type of word work. Clearly, I appreciate alliteration. I enjoy these solid, structured classroom routines and they seem to as well. If I taught Grade 6 again next year, I would seriously consider building a 15-minute French lesson into our daily morning meeting. That way students are being exposed to second language content each day which has multiple benefits. Any successful, effective second language program requires frequent, intentional attention (Ignace, 2016). Firstly, it makes learning the content manageable for students. Secondly, because the lessons are so short and so frequent it would be more difficult to develop an avoidance-based anxiety around the subject. Lastly, it would help to manage potential learning gaps caused by student absences.

I would begin the year by implementing a daily calendar-time style routine. Essentially, I would create an elevated, French version of the traditional calendar time used in primary classrooms. During this time, students could practice saying today's

date, and sing songs about the months of the year, days of the week, and the alphabet in French. Students could also practice their counting at this time. I would also build in weekly and monthly themes depending on the seasons, weather, and relevant holidays. In addition to this calendar routine, I like the idea of implementing classroom routines such as saying “Good Morning!” or “May I go to the washroom?” in French. Toward the end of the year, I would consider swapping calendar time for daily Duolingo practice. With Duolingo, students could complete daily lessons at a more individualized pace while taking more ownership of their learning.

Small, consistent steps toward second language progression seem much more attainable, approachable, and meaningful for student learning. I hope to put these ideas into action in my own classroom next year.

References

Ignance, M. (2016). *First Nations language curriculum building guide: British Columbia kindergarten - gr. 12*. First Nations Education Steering Committee.
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