

Participants:

Louise Ouellet (Kindergarten Teacher – École Mount Prevost)
Michelle Tremblay (Kindergarten Teacher –École Mount Prevost)
Nathalie Boulanger (student-teacher VIU)
Lise Pagé (Principal)

Title of the project:

Designing meaningful learning experiences in early French Immersion

Focus of the project:

In the New BC Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to create learning experiences that go beyond learning areas borders to focus on students' needs and interests or local contexts. Deep and authentic learning should promote the development of core competencies: communication, creative and critical thinking, as well as personal and social competency. It encourages teachers to design meaningful learning experiences for all children.

The Reggio-Emilia approach is a postmodern approach to early childhood education that was developed in Italy. It focuses on creating authentic learning experiences for all children. By looking at children as capable, competent and active citizens, the teachers closely observe their students and engage with them to co-construct the curriculum in response to their interests.

The focus of this project is to collaborate in order to heighten our awareness of classroom practices that might not support deep learning and to explore how the Reggio-Emilia principles can be used in French Immersion Kindergarten to promote the development of the French Language while promoting authentic experiences that engage all students and promote higher order thinking skills.

Driving Question:

How can the guiding principles of the Reggio Emilia approach be used in French immersion Kindergarten in order to design meaningful learning experiences for all children while developing French vocabulary?

French Immersion Kindergarten is unique in the way that most of our students come in with absolutely no French vocabulary. As French immersion teachers, we are developing vocabulary within the experiential context of the class (routines, repetition, songs, gestures, personal experience, literature, etc). We use themes that allow for the development of basic vocabulary that is relevant to our students and that will be needed for them to succeed in French Immersion. However, a lot of our activities are teacher-directed and pre-planned and we are wondering what aspects of our practice could be improved in order to promote deeper and more authentic learning in the classroom.

After learning about Canadian teachers who have adapted the principles of Reggio-Emilia education in their early education settings, we are wondering how we can use these principles

in the specific context of Early French immersion in order to promote the development of French vocabulary while engaging our students in more meaningful learning experiences.

Our collaborative inquiry will involve examining the 12 principles of the Reggio Emilia approach:

- collaboration
- the image of the child
- environment as a third (second) teacher
- relationships
- transparency
- documentation
- pedagogical documentation
- provocation
- progettazione (inquiry projects)
- one hundred languages of children
- respect
- reciprocity

In our first sessions together, we will familiarize ourselves with the 12 principles and brainstorm ideas on how to implement them in the unique setting of French immersion Kindergarten. As we progress into our journey, each teacher will document what they observe in the classroom through pictures and written documentation of students' play, thinking and conversations. We will meet to share our pedagogical documentation and observations, discuss our successes and challenges and collaborate in finding the best ways to keep developing French vocabulary while engaging our students in more meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

Outcomes:

The outcomes of the project might include changes in relation to the child, the classroom environment and the teaching.

The project will also lead to the identification of the main limitations to the implementation of the Reggio-Emilia approach in our current situation and the development of a plan of action to overcome these limits in the future.

Methods for Review/ Reflection/ Sharing - Pre and post evidence:

Photo, journal writing and scrapbook.