

**USING FUN ACTIVITIES/ GAMES IN CLASSROOMS TO PROMOTE ORAL  
EXPRESSION IN FLE (FRENCH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE) IN COLLEGES IN  
TAMIL NADU**

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**Introduction:** According to the words of John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist and reformer of education "*Give the students something to do, not something to learn; And the thing must be able to demand thought; By naturally learning results.*" So a teacher's duty is to facilitate learning and not just to teach.

**Oral expression among students in Tamil Nadu**

Students in the Tamil Nadu state who learn French as their second language for 4 semesters are unable to speak French well. They have a good percentage of points, they can write good French and they are also confident of their grammar, but they are unable speak. Why does this phenomenon exist? Is it only in Tamil Nadu or the entire nation?

An analysis of the following topics will help us understand the reason for the phenomenon mentioned above:

1. Syllabus of French taught in colleges
  2. Evaluation system
  3. Recruitment of French teachers
  4. Student's passion
  5. Demography
- **Syllabus of French taught in colleges**
    1. The main reason a student chooses French is just to avoid the great syllabus of other languages offered at the university level. A large number of students choose French just to avoid the grammar, prose and voluminous poetry they should study if they choose Tamil, Malayalam, Urdu, Hindi or Sanskrit.

2. The second reason is that French is taught from the basic level and it would be just a repetition of what they have already learned at school; therefore, passing the exam would be easier.

- **Evaluation system**

All languages must be tested for the 4 competencies - listening, reading, speaking and writing. The evaluation system here in Tamil Nadu gives more value or almost all the importance to the written aspect of the language. I will try to explain with a general example. The total score of a student (100) is divided into two parts: 75 + 25, the external and internal points respectively. The 75 points allotted during a written exam are all awarded to the written component. The 25 internal points are allocated to activities, projects and also to the attendance of the student. Now, we can understand the real importance given to the other 3 skills.

- **Recruitment of French teachers**

The difference between the number of qualified French teachers and the number of institutions offering French is vast. This lack in the number of qualified French teachers

- ✓ touches on the recruitment of part-time teachers
- ✓ pushes teachers to work in various institutes
- ✓ causes the recruitment of underqualified teachers

Since the number of part-time teachers and those employed in several institutions is significantly high, there is a time constraint for the teacher to complete his program. This time constraint forces the teacher to focus only on the part that is being evaluated - the written aspect. Thus the unevaluated competencies are thrown for a toss.

As there is a demand for French teachers, teachers' salaries are high and some institutions do not want to pay them; which leads to the other problem of recruiting underqualified teachers (this is not a generalization, but a notable fact in some colleges).

- **Passion of the student for the language**

Only a handful of students have a real passion for learning a foreign language because, as we saw in the beginning, most of them choose French to avoid the great syllabus of other languages offered in their colleges.

- **Demographics**

A student here in India has no opportunities to expose himself to hearing or speaking French except in a few French colonies in India or educational institutions or French television shows.

### **The proposed solution**

Having understood the problems now, it is time to give a new impetus:

- ✓ Change in the evaluation system
- ✓ Changing the teaching and learning method

- **Change in the evaluation system**

A system of examinations similar to that of the practical examinations in the science streams/courses must be employed to evaluate all the 4 competencies of the student. Thus equal value must be allotted to each skill. Changing the assessment system is something huge that involves government interference.

- **Changing the teaching and learning method**

So changing the method of teaching and learning is the only practical solution.

### **How to change the method to make students talk?**

To improve the spoken aspect of the language one can

- Introduce fun activities/ games in the classroom
- Organize student workshops
- Visiting French colonies in India
- Establish language laboratories
- Train teachers to make classes online using digital resources.

### **Why use games?**

According to the words of Valerie Lemeunier ***"In order to allow students to anchor the inputs and to generate fun/enjoyment in the learning process, activities should be interactive, must develop group dynamism and its aim must never be purely linguistic"***

Using games to teach is one of the best ways to teach any foreign language because

1. Learners act physically.
2. Learners are all active at the same time.
3. The activity mobilizes learners' attention.
4. The activity is contextualized and / or playful.
5. The issue of the activity is not purely linguistic
6. Learners appropriate the class space.
7. The activity multiplies the contacts within the group.
8. The activity involves the fairness of speaking.
9. It reduces the teacher's speaking time for the benefit of learners.

### **Learning oral production using the game**

According to the words of Janine Courtillon "You cannot speak without having at your disposal sentences or snippets of memorized sentences."

#### **How to get this provision?**

1. Create a range of fun and motivating activities to develop learners' ability to express themselves orally.
2. Practice designing and running a fun activity
3. Animate the group, give it life
4. Create and maintain a class climate
5. Examine how people behave in groups
6. Strengthen the factors that increase the group's potential

#### **Invariants**

1. Analyze your learning situation
2. Set clear and coherent learning objectives
3. Create a gaming environment
4. Do not "pretend" to play
- 5.

### **Organize teaching activities**

In the field of FLE, the notion of didactic unit (Courtillon 1995) aims at providing a framework for the organization of activities of discovery and appropriation of the language for the learners in order to develop their capacity to communicate and to act in that language.

### **The structure of the didactic unit**

Anticipation	Make assumptions about the communication context of the triggering document (Who? What? Who? Where? When? How? Why?)
Global understanding	Have the hypotheses on the communication situation issued previously checked
Comprehensive Understanding	Identify the information needed for a focused understanding of the document
Tracking	To raise the structures to be implemented to develop the targeted competence
Conceptualization	To analyze and explain a rule of speech functioning
Systematization	Set the means to implement to develop the targeted competence
Production	Re-use content as part of a task to be done in a given situation

### **The structure of the teaching unit**

- **Step of understanding:** This step constitutes the first block of activities of the didactic unit. It allows framing the work of the following steps, from the understanding of the triggering document. The teacher brings the learner to rely on situational and contextual elements of the given documents in order to progressively build access to the meaning of these documents.
- **Stage of language processing:** This second stage of the teaching unit makes it possible to focus the interest of the learner on the functioning of the language in context. The aim here is to identify and understand the functioning of the language in this or that situation. This stage of work will be all the more beneficial as it will be based on the learner's cognitive ability to analyze the functioning of the language by itself, with the help of the teacher as a guide.
- **Stage of the expression:** This third stage relies on the first two: from the comprehension and the treatment of the language, the learner discovers and appropriates the language little by little. Memorisation is facilitated by setting up contextualized systematization activities. These training activities allow the learner to develop his ability to express himself orally and in writing, appropriately and correctly in various communication situations. It is about training to interact orally and to master the writing of different types of writing.

### **Classroom practices and pedagogical choices of practices used to bring learners to systematize**

- Suggest exercises or activities that correspond to the communicative contents of the starting document
- Contextualize the exercises or activities offered in an accessible language
- Have these exercises or activities done individually to effectively control the work of each learner
- Give a fun and / or interactive character to the exercises and activities offered
- Specify in the instructions the "what to do", the "how to" and the "why"

### **Methodological principles**

To systematize, teachers will be asked to:

- Propose exercises or thematic activities (according to the triggering document) allowing the appropriation of previously conceptualized language elements;
- Check whether the objectives of these exercises or activities are in line with those who determined the choice of triggering document;

- include these exercises or activities in a precise and coherent situational framework, taking into account the level of competence of the learners;
- implement these exercises or activities in order to make the class time profitable during this stage;
- give these exercises and activities characteristics that will promote group dynamics and motivation;
- (re)formulate the instructions in a clear and precise manner and check the feasibility of the exercise or activity.

### **Conclusion**

In accordance to the words of Burns R *"There are no two learners who progress at the same speed. No two learners are ready to learn at the same time. There are no two learners who use the same study techniques. There are no two learners who solve problems in exactly the same way. There are no two learners who are motivated to achieve the same goals.* The teacher is thus responsible for finding the needs of his student and responding to him

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