

The Use of Language as a Cognitive Tool in French Immersion Teaching

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Abstract : A literacy-based approach, centred on the use of the language of instruction as a cognitive tool, can increase the L2 communication skills of French immersion students. Academic subject areas such as science and mathematics offer an authentic language learning context where students can become more proficient speakers while using specific vocabulary and language structures to learn, interact and communicate their reasoning, when provided the opportunities and guidance to do so. In this Canadian quasi-experimental study, the effects of teaching specific language elements during mathematic classes through literacy-based activities in Early French Immersion programming were compared between two Grade 7/8 groups: the experimental group, which received literacy-based teaching for a 6-week period, and the control group, which received regular teaching instruction. The results showed that the participants from the experimental group made more progress in their mathematical communication skills, which suggests that targeting L2 language as a cognitive tool can be beneficial to immersion learners who learn mathematic concepts and remind us that all L2 teachers are language teachers.

Keywords : mathematics, French immersion, literacy-based, oral communication, L2

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