

Foreign Language Immersion

Professional Learning Team

Carmen Anderson
Elizabeth Pruitt
Amy Sánchez
Xin Yu



你好
Nǐ Hǎo



Inquiry Question:

How do we use target language immersion experiences to improve students' speaking and listening skills as well as their confidence using the target language?

“Second Language acquisition research shows that children learn languages best when the target language instruction is consistently conducted in the target language.”

Languages and Children: Making the Match.

Curtain + Resol 1994

Why “immersion”?

The objectives:

- to become more comfortable and more proficient speaking in the target language (to improve speaking skills) using current and past concepts
- to improve listening comprehension skills and overall communication skills in the target language

Before implementing immersion days...

Students completed a survey so that the teachers could gain an understanding of:

- the students' level of confidence speaking in the target language
- their level of understanding of the target language using their listening skills.

Proceso / Procès / Guo cheng

During class on immersion days, Foreign Language teachers conducted all instruction in the target language and spoke in English *only if it was absolutely necessary.*

How did students know when it was Immersion Day?

On immersion days, there was a **sign** posted in the doorway:



jīn tiān quán bù yòng zhōng wén

Proceso / Procès / Guo cheng

The Foreign Language teachers held immersion classes at least one day per week.

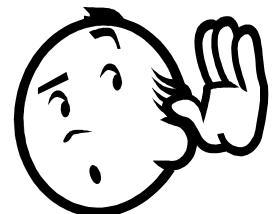
Student Expectations

Students were expected to...

- speak in the target language as much as possible
- use basic greetings, goodbyes, courtesies, etc. in the target language
- increase their participation in the target language during Do Nows, homework review, and partner activities

Students were NOT expected to understand *all* of what the teacher was saying in the target language...

BUT students were expected to
**pay attention, listen well,
watch for gestures, props,
and other cues.**



And mistakes?

- We encouraged students NOT to worry about making mistakes. We reminded them that mistakes help them learn; mistakes are okay.



In class...



We kept a **special set of notes** for vocabulary that was commonly used on immersion days.

We **added new expressions** from time to time.

Ticket to Leave



At the end of class on immersion days, students completed a short survey / "ticket to leave" to keep track of:

- how many times they spoke in the target language
 - how much they felt they understood
 - their overall comfort level

Ticket to Leave



The teacher collected the "tickets to leave" after multiple Immersion Days to monitor students' progress.

An example...

Date: le _____

- 1) Today in French class during whole class discussion, I spoke *en français*..
 1 - 5 times 6-10 times more than 10 times

- 2) Today in French class during small group/partner work, I spoke *en français*..
 1 - 5 times 6-10 times more than 10 times

- 3) When Mme Pruitt spoke in French in class today, I felt that I was able to understand...
 all most some a little of what she said.

- 4) When Mme Pruitt spoke in French in class today, I...

<input type="checkbox"/> enjoyed the experience	<input type="checkbox"/> felt somewhat at ease/comfortable
<input type="checkbox"/> felt somewhat uncomfortable/frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/> felt anxious

Resultados / Résultats / Jie guo

Teachers gathered data to analyze the results of the effect of Immersion Classes on students' confidence as well as speaking and listening skills.

Exit Survey

Students completed a second survey at the end of the school year so that the teachers could gain an understanding of:

- the students' current level of confidence using the target language
- their level of understanding of the target language using their listening skills following several months of weekly Immersion Classes

Survey Findings

Students felt that they had improved "a lot" or "somewhat" in their:

- overall confidence using the target language
- listening comprehension skills
- speaking skills in the target language

Since the beginning of the school year, I feel that my **LISTENING SKILLS** in the target language have...

	I am a foreign language student in:			
	7th grade French	7th grade Spanish	8th grade Spanish	Response Totals
improved a lot.	51.7% (45)	65.8% (50)	31.4% (16)	51.9% (111)
improved somewhat.	34.5% (30)	27.6% (21)	45.1% (23)	34.6% (74)
improved a little.	6.9% (6)	3.9% (3)	7.8% (4)	6.1% (13)
not improved at all.	2.3% (2)	1.3% (1)	7.8% (4)	3.3% (7)
I don't know.	4.6% (4)	1.3% (1)	7.8% (4)	4.2% (9)
answered question	87	76	51	214

Since the beginning of the school year, I feel that my **SPEAKING SKILLS** in the target language have...

	I am a foreign language student in:			Response Totals
	7th grade French	7th grade Spanish	8th grade Spanish	
improved a lot.	52.9% (46)	76.3% (58)	27.5% (14)	55.1% (118)
improved somewhat.	36.8% (32)	21.1% (16)	37.3% (19)	31.3% (67)
improved a little.	8.0% (7)	2.6% (2)	21.6% (11)	9.3% (20)
not improved at all.	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	9.8% (5)	2.8% (6)
I don't know.	1.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.9% (2)	1.4% (3)
answered question	87	76	51	214

Since the beginning of the school year, I feel that my CONFIDENCE using the target language has...

	I am a foreign language student in:			
	7th grade French	7th grade Spanish	8th grade Spanish	Response Totals
improved a lot.	37.9% (33)	63.2% (48)	21.6% (11)	43.0% (92)
improved somewhat.	46.0% (40)	28.9% (22)	43.1% (22)	39.3% (84)
improved a little.	11.5% (10)	6.6% (5)	17.6% (9)	11.2% (24)
not improved at all.	2.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	15.7% (8)	4.7% (10)
I don't know.	2.3% (2)	1.3% (1)	2.0% (1)	1.9% (4)
answered question	87	76	51	214

Éxito / Succès / Cheng gong le

Students enjoyed the experience of being fully immersed in the target language, saw the value of target language immersion experiences, and appreciated the challenge.

Student testimonials

"Over the course of the year I feel that I have gained more confidence in speaking and listening to French. Now I can understand a lot more of what my teacher is saying and I can piece words and phrases together that I wasn't able to do at the beginning of the year. I also am able to figure out more ways of saying things by actually saying them in French out loud and immersion days help."

Student testimonials

"It was really fun because you could also experience how REAL Spanish-speaking people would talk! Also because some people could understand most of what Sra. Sánchez was saying and I think people were proud of themselves for understanding a little!"

Student testimonials

"I really like the Spanish language! The Immersion is very helpful, and I can speak Spanish A LOT more confidently than I could during the beginning of the year."

Student testimonials

"I like immersion days because they really help us to learn Chinese tones, and to get used to hearing and differentiating words from other words. We also learn more vocab. The immersion has made me more comfortable hearing and speaking Chinese. Immersions days are very helpful."



Student testimonials (Grade 8 Spanish)



Cara

Alejandro

Rashunda

Tom

Next Steps

- Continue to conduct instruction in the target language at least one day per week.
- Find more ways to tailor immersion experiences to student needs.
- Find more ways to evaluate students' speaking and listening skills in order to collect "data" that shows students' progress.