

French Ab initio

Nature of French Ab initio

Ab initio means starting from the beginning thus the French *ab initio* course is a Beginners accelerated course for students who have had no prior learning of the French language. At the early stages of this course a lot of listening and repeating is to be expected as students are introduced and immersed into hearing and speaking a new language. Vocabulary learned throughout the course reflects the students own personal world and personal experiences. Progressively, interaction between the teacher and students takes shape to the extent where students will learn to take over a conversation in French with little input from the teacher.

The French Ab initio course is organized into five themes:

- Identities
- Experiences
- Human ingenuity
- Social Organization
- Sharing the planet

Each theme has a list of topics that provide the students with opportunities to practise and explore the language as well as to develop intercultural understanding. Students should be able to respond and interact appropriately in a defined range of everyday situations through the development of receptive skills (understanding through listening and reading), productive skills (using the language learned to produce a message through speaking or writing) and interactive skills (being able to interact socially).

Teaching approach

Students learn this subject through activities based on inquiry, conceptual understanding, developed in local and global contexts, focused on effective teamwork and collaboration, differentiated to meet the needs of all learners and informed by formative and summative assessment. Progressively, students are encouraged to go beyond the confines of the classroom and personally expand their awareness of the francophone world. The awareness of a student's own culture and the respect for another culture is deeply embedded in the themes that are covered throughout the two year period.

Where does it lead to?

Studying a new language is an opening to the discovery and understanding of a new culture. Knowledge of a new language goes hand-in-hand with whatever profession a student chooses to pursue. From international organisations, development agencies, foreign companies, journalism and many more, communicating in another language can no longer be confined to

the classroom but is a living language that can be used in any situation. A testament to this in Fiji with the French language becoming useful in environment is the IUCN Fijian delegation assisting in 2020 in the international conference of the main organization in Marseille (France).

In terms of global business and international diplomacy the ability to speak another language apart from English is advantage. The knowledge of French opens the doors to French companies in France and other French-speaking parts of the world (Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, the continent of Africa, New Caledonia, Tahiti and Wallis and Futuna). French is both a working language and an official language of the United Nations, the European Union, UNESCO, NATO, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross and international courts. French is also the language of the three cities where the EU institutions are headquartered: Strasbourg, Brussels and Luxembourg. ^[2]

In addition to becoming a foreign language teacher, the field of interpreting and translating is also an avenue to be explored. Although most interpreters are freelance many International organizations and large companies around the world employ staff interpreters within their organizations. (<http://aiic.net/interpreting-explained>: The International Association of Conference Interpreters).

Student Reflection

In French Ab initio I had a lot of fun learning about the media, clothing, vacation, work, etc... The topics themselves were simple however learning the different words became slightly difficult as well as conjugation.

I think that learning with French resources like movies and audio recordings is helpful for becoming more fluent as well as being introduced to fun texts such as novels to read in our free time.

I enjoyed attempting to speak in French and trying to guess what a new phrases mean. I also loved to learn new French songs and to understand what I heard. I liked being introduced to skits to practice more conversational French and to French recipes and foods, translating what the ingredients and terms are.

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