

# *Beginning French T*

## **Rationale**

Learning additional languages widens horizons, broadens cognitive and cultural experience, and develops communicative and intercultural competence. It also opens up new perspectives for learners, not only in relation to other cultures and languages, but also in terms of their own language and cultural practices.

Learning French strengthens intellectual and analytical capability and enhances creative and critical thinking. Students develop an understanding of the nature of language (including linguistic and stylistic features), of culture, and of the process of communication. They develop understanding of how values and culture shape world view.

Learning French extends the learner's understanding of themselves, their heritage, values, culture, and identity. Students develop intercultural capability; they develop understanding of, and respect for, diversity and difference, and openness to different perspectives and experiences.

## **Curriculum**

At ISS students take the Australian Curriculum Beginning French T course. This is a beginner's course for students who have had no prior learning or minimal knowledge of the French language.

In this course students learn to reorganize their thinking to accommodate the structure of another language, they develop cognitive flexibility and problem-solving ability, which can be applied when problems and solutions are not evident, as well as when critical thinking and creative approaches are required. Learning languages requires and improves intellectual disciplines and systematic study habits. These habits are characterized by effective planning and organization, incorporating processes of self-management and self-monitoring.

Topics included are diverse and are based around four units of study:

Unit 1 – The Individual's Experience

Unit 2 – Society and Community

Unit 3 – The World Around Us

Unit 4 – Lifestyle and Traditions

## **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 the Arts is the Vou Danse Group of Fiji (<http://voufiji.com/>) spending a few weeks in France, and performing mainly to a French audience at the Festival De Martigues near Marseille.

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. <sup>[2]</sup>

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).

### **Reflections from a Beginning French student**

*French has been a fairly challenging course that I have had the privilege of studying . In this two year endeavor, I have picked up vital skills in the language that have enabled me to communicate and speak proficiently with French natives. While the course has been highly intensive and demanding at instances, with short time constraints to work with, my teacher has helped me immensely in developing my confidence with the language. I owe a lot to my teacher for doing a phenomenal job with not only developing my core skills as a learner, but also as a more open-minded global citizen. French is most definitely a language I hope to pursue in the near future, as I continue to broaden my academic horizons. I am happy to have studied the language and remain optimistic for the future, positive that my time spent learning French will come into great use as time continues to progress – Arjun Bhugra*