

FRENCH IMMERSION DAY

What is French Immersion Day? This is a two-and-a-half-hour activity period for French II students to self-assess the skills they have gained over a two-year period in listening to, understanding, reading, and speaking French for an authentic purpose. Students are placed in teams of five or six, mixing students from our French II classes. Each group has a French III group leader and an adult chaperone who speaks French, natively when possible or well enough to help the students communicate. The advanced French students organize a variety of games and activities that will focus on the vocabulary and grammar studied over the year. These students then man each station while the teacher goes from station to station taking pictures and trouble shooting as needed.

Every twenty minutes the groups rotate so that, by the end of the day, every group has gone to each of six main activities, participated and received a stamp on his or her passport. The activities include:

- *Qui suis-je?*—a get-to-know you activity paired with *Arbre généalogique* (identifying family relations);
- Charades—acting out expressions using *faire* paired with a clothing/body relay;
- *Pictionnaire*—drawing pictures from vocabulary cards, having classmates guess the word from a list. A matching game of food items follows;
- *Loto*—both number and vocabulary bingo. Vocabulary cards were made by students earlier in the year as a strategy for learning household vocabulary;
- *Chasse au trésor*—a treasure hunt where students read clues and all end up, at different times, in the principal's office to collect their prizes: chocolate;
- *Qui a fait cela?*—a questioning grid, in *passé composé*, to keep students speaking while they await their turn for the treasure hunt, the *boules* game, and the crêpes.
- Crêpes and *boules* alternately —Comments were: “good!” and very “fun game!”

Preparing for the big day includes deciding on the games and refining them based on evaluations by French II and III students from the previous year. The most difficult part is finding a day and then sending out letters to parents and teachers requesting permission for the students to “take a field trip” at the school just before finals. Chaperones must be called and prizes must be purchased or obtained from supporters. Folders are made for each student. These contain name tags, passports,

game sheets, and pencils for the French II students. Folders for group leaders, activity leaders, and chaperones contain additional items such as stamps for stamping passports and reward stickers to put on the name tags when students participate or teams win a game.

The AATF Small Grant provided us with three new sets of *boules*, a crêpe maker and supplies for 65 students and 10 chaperones/helpers. The most rewarding aspect was that every student attended the day's events without exception, and no one lost the corners of their name tags for speaking English. It is my goal that students will realize the progress they have made and want to continue with French as a foreign language. Hopefully, those who have decided their schedule is too full for a third year of a foreign language will change their minds and sign up. Those who have signed up for a third year will know what a good decision they have made.

I received the idea for French Immersion Day from another teacher I worked with, but I had to make major changes since we do not have a park within walking distance and the weather is unpredictable in Oregon. Rain often meant the day was cancelled in spite of so much effort.

The event has cost about \$300 for my 50 French II students. However, as games and equipment are purchased, the cost per student will go down. Funds have come from candy sales, a school auction supported by parents and funds added to French Club by the principal. A local video store donated video certificates, and Linda Brown donated *très chic* makeup sample bags from Mary Kay (labeling is in French). *Merci beaucoup pour une belle journée!*

Sandra Rands
West Salem High School (OR)
[smrands@hotmail.com]