



STUDENT VOICES

Immersion teachers often look to research and the experiences of other educators to inform their curriculum planning and instruction. In this feature we hear what students think about immersion learning.

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Working in Pairs: Top Ten Quotes from Early French Immersion Student about their Peer Collaboration

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In the last ten years, we have been interested in the role of collaborative dialogue in second language learning. Collaborative dialogue occurs when students work together on a task and talk to each other about content and language issues that arise as they carry out the task. Together, students are often able to perform better than they would on their own as each student contributes to the collective knowledge being created. At the completion of a study, we interview the students in order to understand their perceptions of the activities they engaged in. One question we regularly ask is if and why they appreciate working with a peer. Some of our favorite responses, provided below by grade seven immersion students, reflect the importance they place on hearing the opinions of their peers; their willingness to share ideas and to be corrected; and the positive feelings they have from helping others, and being helped. One student found working in pairs "easier", and another believed that "it helps you go faster". And in the case of our top choice quote, we love his view that it is "more exciting" and "more colourful".

"When I'm on my own I'm very productive. But ...it's not very big and exciting. It's just straight to the point....when I'm with a partner, it's, I don't know, it's more colourful."

"It's sort of cool to have a person that you can talk to and say, 'Oh, you know, is this right? Is this the way you do it?'... they can help you, guide you sort of. And you guide the other person. It sort of feels good and you know what you are doing, and then the other person is just like 'I don't know what I'm doing' and then you can help them. That's why it feels good."

"I think it was beneficial to both of us ... if I had a certain opinion and if it was wrong, then I could learn from it. And if it was right, then my partner could learn from it."

"Maybe because what I picked up could be useful and also what she picked up, because I could've missed a few things and she could've had them. So, if we had put them together, maybe we would have remembered more."

"You can have like two points of views and two opinions on how a sentence sounds, like

if it sounds right. And you can double check your answers to make sure they're right instead of just knowing by yourself."

"Because we got to talk about it and when we weren't sure of a word you just asked your partner. You can compare what you think and stuff. And it's also not always your ideas that are in the story."

"I liked how we got to do it together ... and then see what our mistakes were and ... it was easier than doing it by yourself."

"If I wouldn't understand something, she would back me up and, like, tell me the right answers and help me out."

"So, it's cool to have someone you can sort of socialise with and do your homework at the same time. ... you go faster I think."

"I think you have less [sic] mistakes because when someone helps, when you're doing something in pairs, you have different ideas and you can incorporate them to make it better." ○