Strategies Utilized by Secondary French Teachers to Help Students Visualize Their Progress

Linnea H. Stegner
Brigham Young University

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Strategies Utilized by Secondary French Teachers
to Help Students Visualize Their Progress

Linnea H. Stegner

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Jennifer Bown, Chair
Blair Bateman
Robert Erickson

Center for Language Studies
Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

Strategies Utilized by Secondary French Teachers
to Help Students Visualize Their Progress

Linnea H. Stegner
Center for Language Studies, BYU
Master of Arts

This qualitative study identified the strategies that secondary French teachers use in their classroom to show students that they have made progress in their learning. Six teachers participated in this study. Data were collected from interviews, class observations, and artifacts used by the teachers. The findings suggest that teachers use a variety of strategies to help their students to know that they have made progress. These strategies include various forms of formative assessments, self-assessments, and self-reflections. The findings reveal that teachers choose to use these strategies because they are able to help their students develop characteristics of autonomous learners.

Keywords: learner autonomy, self-regulation, self-assessment
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In second language learning there has been a shift in focus towards engaging students in the learning process. Research has indicated that students are more engaged and motivated when they have the opportunity to participate in their own learning process (Moeller & Yu, 2015; Oscarson, 1989). Students also become more autonomous and better capable of regulating their own learning (Nunan, 1999; Ping & Sirai, 1995). This is one of the reasons why the Can-Do Statements were produced as the result of the collaboration between the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The Can-Do Statements are described by NCSSFL-ACTFL (2015) as “checklists used by language learners to assess what they can do with the language” (p.1). The Can-Do statements allow for both the teacher and the student to have progress indicators outlined for different levels of proficiency (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2015).

Though little research has been conducted on the effects of using Can-Do statements in the classroom, research has shown that the teachers who use self-assessment and goal-setting strategies in their classrooms help students to understand their individual progress, thereby making progress visible to students (Moeller & Yu, 2015). Many teachers also help students see progress by engaging students in formative assessment activities. Formative assessment allows for both the teacher and student to understand the progress that has been made in their language learning (Andrade & Cizek, 2010). Though multiple strategies are available for use, little research has focused on what teachers are actually doing in their classrooms to make progress visible for their students.

This qualitative study of six secondary French teachers identifies the strategies they use to ensure students understand that they have made progress in their language learning.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Importance of Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy plays an important role in the learning process in the context of second language learning. According to Little (2003), “learner autonomy, in other words, entails a variety of self-regulatory behaviors that develop – through practice – as a fully integrated part of the knowledge and skills that are the goal of learning” (p.223). Likewise, Little (1995) noted a need for attention to the learner, as an individual with specific individual needs. Similarly, Littlewood (1996) added that learner autonomy focuses on the choices that the learners are able to make about their learning. The concept of learner autonomy is multidimensional, but the basic principal is that learners should have control of their own language learning. In essence, learner autonomy represents the learners’ capacity to take control of their own learning.

The concept of learner autonomy focuses on the responsibility of the individual learner. Learners who take responsibility for their learning are more likely to be successful in their learning and have a more positive attitude about continuing to learn (Little, 1995). Furthermore, they recognize that they are learning and are motivated to keep learning (Cotterall, 2000). Autonomous students have the ability to take charge of their own progress in the learning process.

Self-efficacy and Self-regulation

In addition to learner autonomy, notions of self-efficacy and self-regulation also tie into learners’ capacity to take control of their learning. Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1986) as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce give attainments” (p. 25). Research has shown that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and the achievement of college French students (Mills & Herron, 2007). In this study, surveys
and questionnaires were administered to students on their personal beliefs about self-efficacy. Students’ grades in their French class were used to see the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement. At the end of the study, the researchers concluded that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of achievement. Self-efficacy also helps to enhance learner autonomy. Students with a strong sense of self-efficacy have the ability to take control of their own learning thus allowing them to become more autonomous learners (Tilfarlioglu & Ciftci, 2011). Second language teachers might find it beneficial to help students reflect on and evaluate what can make them more successful, autonomous language learners. By doing this, students have the potential of reaching greater achievements in their language learning.

Similar to self-efficacy, self-regulation also plays an important role in increasing a learner’s self-sufficiency. Self-regulation according to Zimmerman (2000) involves “self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals.” In other words, learners who can self-regulate take responsibility over their own learning, and are more autonomous learners. Self-regulation focuses on relationships between self-efficacy and cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Duckworth, Akerman, MacGregor, Salter, Vorhaus, 2009). Self-regulated learners set goals for learning, use the resources available to them, monitor their performance, manage their time effectively, and have a positive attitude about what they are capable of achieving. In summary, self-regulation is vital to learning because once students are no longer enrolled in formal education classes they are often expected to learn skills on their own.

Research shows that students who use self-regulation in their vocabulary learning enhances their learning process. A study completed by Ping and Siraj (2012) at the University of Malaya investigated how Chinese students learning English as a second language used self-
regulating strategies in vocabulary learning. Researchers found that when students do not self-regulate by using a vocabulary learning strategy it influences their knowledge and process of learning. Learners who do not engage in active vocabulary learning strategies have less control over their ability to improve their vocabulary skills. A similar study conducted by Rose and Harbon (2013) focused on the ability of Japanese learners to self-regulate while learning kanji. This study concluded that due to the difficult nature of learning kanji the emotions of advanced learners broke down because they stopped using self-regulation strategies. Students in this study were defeated when they saw that they were not making much progress in their learning, and needed more guidance from their teacher to work on self-regulation in order to understand that they had made progress. These findings suggest that, teachers need to place more emphasis on the learning process to help their students overcome difficulties with self-regulation. In summary, teachers can help their students by teaching them how to set attainable long and short-term goals, and reflect on their progress.

Although some students may be more autonomous and self-regulated learners than others, many students do not take responsibility for their learning. Thus, teachers need to guide students and give them resources and opportunities in order for them to become more autonomous learners (Little 1995). The way in which students develop self-regulation strategies depends on how their teachers assist students in attaining them. Ganza (2008) points out that learner autonomy is achieved by how the teacher and student relate to one another. The learners are dependent on the teacher to show them how to become autonomous learners. Thus, support from the teacher is crucial in the initial stages to facilitate the development of autonomy and self-regulation of the learner.
Formative Assessment and Learner Autonomy

It is important for the teachers to help guide students through the learning process, but learners also need to be active participants in their own learning process. Research on language learners shows that engagement in the learning process is an important component of success (Macaro, 2006). Formative assessment is one method of engaging students in their own learning. The goal of formative assessment is defined by Andrade and Cizek (2010) as “to identify the student’s strengths and weaknesses; to assist educators in the planning of subsequent instruction; to aid students in guiding their own learning, revising their work, and gaining self-evaluation skills; and to foster increased autonomy and responsibility for learning on the part of the student” (p.4). They further explain that formative assessment helps the teacher know what needs to be taught or retaught based on how the students respond to their formative assessments. The primary purpose of formative assessment is to measure progress. Not only do such assessments measure the progress students have made, but they also communicate how successful a teacher was in teaching a concept. In addition, formative assessment can involve either a quick informal assessment that is not graded or can be a more formal assessment such as a quiz that is graded (Abeywrikrama & Brown, 2010). The results of formative assessment give the teacher an indication of what the students need in order to reach a specific learning standard or objective. Though the primary focus of formative assessment has been on the benefit to the teacher, formative assessment can also be beneficial for students. Additionally, formative assessment allows learners to guide themselves through their own learning processes by allowing them to gain self-evaluation and responsibility skills.

Recent research demonstrates the benefits of formative assessment for learners. For example, Vandergrift’s (2000) study concluded that the implementation of formative assessment
increased student motivation to learn the French language, helped students stay organized, and increased student awareness of the learning process. A later study conducted by Bayat, Jamshidipour, and Hashemi (2017) found that using formative assessment improved students’ listening engagement, and helped to lower students’ anxiety during listening activities. The study also found that formative assessment made the learning process more enjoyable for students because they were able to retain information and make connections to other topics that they had previously learned. These studies indicate that formative assessment fosters the development of learner autonomy.

**Importance of Self-assessment**

In addition to formative assessment, self-assessment can also facilitate autonomous learning. The goal of self-assessment is to help students reflect on their academic performance and growth. In a way, self-assessment serves as a type of formative assessment. Self-assessment is defined as students’ evaluation of their performance, their strengths and weaknesses, and their views on improvement (Ross, 2006). Students have the opportunity to engage in developing notions of autonomy and self-regulation through self-assessment. In summary, teachers who use self-assessment strategies in their classrooms make learning outcomes more explicit for their students. When students have to self-assess on the learning objectives they are more aware of what is expected of them in the classroom. Additionally, self-assessment provides more insight into what students need to do on certain assignments because they have the opportunity to think about their learning progress (Ross, 2006). Moreover, using self-assessment also encourages students to spend more time focusing on their personal academic progress rather than on the achievements of their classmates (Benson, 2007).
Teachers who use self-assessment strategies in their classrooms do so for a variety of reasons, even though it can be a time-consuming process. For example, according to Ross (2006), teachers feel students are far more engaged and interested in the learning process when they actively participate in self-assessment. Teachers describe the benefits of self-assessment as giving students an increased awareness of how they are performing in the language (Oscarson, 1989). This knowledge provides the students the opportunity to gauge and monitor their own progress, which is an important component of both learner autonomy and self-regulation.

**Self-assessment tools.** A number of tools are available to use for self-assessment in second language learning. These tools include the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), Linguafolio, and the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. The CEFR was developed to create learning targets for second language learning, teaching, and assessment (Moeller & Yu, 2015). In addition to the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements, individual states have also adapted the idea of teachers writing their learning targets in a student friendly can-do statement (Utah, 2014). The goal of the state requiring teachers to write a learning target in a can-do format is to ensure that students understand what they are working towards in the classroom. The state hopes that by requiring teachers to do this that it will help guide both students and teachers during the learning process.

The CEFR has created reference levels for different levels of language proficiency for both teachers and learners to use as a resource. Teachers discovered that their students had more opportunities to understand and reflect on what they were learning based on the learning targets created by CEFR (Zárate, Álvarez, & Aldemar, 2005). Secondary French teachers in Canada also found the CEFR to be a powerful self-assessment tool (Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, & Crowley, 2011). These teachers used the CEFR document of reference levels for different
levels of proficiency in their classrooms for a period of three months. At the end of the three-month period, the teachers noted that using the CEFR document in their classroom increased student motivation, encouraged learner autonomy, and helped students gain more self-confidence.

In addition to the CEFR, LinguaFolio is an assessment tool that was designed to help increase student autonomy through a goal-setting process. Students create portfolios that allow them to self-evaluate and self-assess on the progress that they have made while completing the portfolio. This process allows students to become more independent and to self-regulate. The Department of Education in the state of Nebraska implemented LinguaFolio for their foreign language students enrolled in grades 7-12 (Ziegler & Moeller, 2012). Each portfolio that students create includes checklists for students to complete based on proficiency levels, samples of their own work, and self-reflections. In summary, the state’s goal in implementing LinguaFolio into every foreign language classroom was to involve students in their own learning and to promote their success. At the end of each year, teachers are instructed to aid students in analyzing their progress from the entire school year. Implementing LinguaFolio gives students a chance to learn how to self-assess and monitor their own progress while being enrolled in a foreign language course.

Similarly, a longitudinal study found that when students set goals and reflect on those goals, they are better able to perform in their language courses (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). The study examined the relationship between goal-setting ability and the performance of high school students enrolled in a Spanish course over a period of four years. Participants included 1,273 students and 23 teachers. For the study the assessment tool LinguaFolio was used. As part of the LinguaFolio assessment, students were instructed by their teachers to set their own goals
according to the objectives outlined for each chapter they studied. At the end of each chapter the students reflected on their progress. After the study was completed it was determined that goal setting showed a strong relationship to growth in student’s language proficiency.

Similar results have been found when students make use of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements, the goal of which is to provide language learners with a way to chart their progress. These NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements allow for learners to indicate their progress and growth in the language on a nationally recognized scale (Moeller & Yu, 2015). They also serve as a guide to help both teachers and students in the language learning process. Moeller and Yu (2015) found that use of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements facilitated self-assessments. Students from a University Spanish class participated in the study. After each of their oral exams in their Spanish classes, the students completed a self-assessment. At the end of the study, the students’ language awareness and self-efficacy increased from completing the self-assessments. Students gained a better sense of control of their own learning, and gained insights into the progress that they had made in Spanish.

Summary

In language learning, the ability to self-regulate and set learning goals by the student has proven to play a significant role in student performance. Research studies on the validity and benefits of self-assessment strategies and the Can-Do statements (Lappin-Fortin & Rye, 2014; Ross, 2006; Ziegler, 2014) have concluded that self-assessment leads to increased motivation, learner autonomy, and self-regulation for students. Some teachers may understand the significance of helping students see their progress, but it is unclear if they are actually taking the time to do so. Teachers may overlook the importance of progress and how it influences students’ path to proficiency. It is unclear what teachers are doing in their classrooms. Research needs to
be conducted on the strategies teachers are using that help students to understand that they have made progress in their language learning.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify strategies that French teachers at the secondary level are using in their classrooms to show their students that they have made progress in their language learning. To identify these strategies, this study investigates the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How do secondary French teachers know that their students have made progress?
2. What do teachers have their students do to help them gauge their progress?
3. Why do secondary French teachers choose these strategies to show their students that they have made progress?

Participants

This study included six secondary French teachers from the same school district. This particular school district was chosen purposefully because it was a large school district with 16 secondary French teachers. Additionally, the location of this school district was convenient because of its close proximity to the researcher. Initially, twelve secondary French teachers in the school district were invited to participate in the study by email. These twelve teachers were chosen specifically because this sample included both veteran and first-year teachers, and to ensure that the sampling included multiple perspectives. In the email sent to teachers it was mentioned that the study would focus on how they know that their students have made progress in the French language. Only six teachers responded to this email; these six teachers became the primary participants in the study. In order to keep the teachers anonymous, pseudonyms were used.

This sample of six teachers ranged from one year of experience to 40 years of experience. Four of the six teachers teach at high schools, and the other two teachers teach at junior high
schools. Furthermore, three of these teachers were members of a district-wide professional learning community (PLC) established for French teachers in the district. According to Stoll and Louis (2007) a professional learning community is “a group of teachers sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an on going, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (p. 2). Membership in this district’s professional learning community is voluntary, and the other three teachers in the sample did not choose to participate in it. The three who are members of the professional learning community all use the same resources in their teaching practice. These resources were created by the community with the intent of creating a successful learning experience for students studying French in the school district. All six teachers were enthusiastic about participating in the study. They were excited to share what they have been doing in their classrooms to support student success.

Table 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Years of Teaching Experience:</th>
<th>Type of School:</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Junior High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mary teaches at a junior high school and has 12 years of French teaching experience. She is also a member of the French PLC in the school district. Mary also teaches history at the junior high school.
Nathan has 13 years of teaching experience. He is currently teaching at a junior high school. In Nathan’s classroom he has several visuals on his bulletin boards to help motivate students in his classroom. One of the bulletin boards includes his “Pathway to Proficiency” graph.

Catherine teaches at a high school, and has three years of teaching experience. Catherine is a member of the PLC. She enjoys being a member of the PLC because it has given her access to more resources that she can use as a beginning teacher. In addition to teaching French during the school day, Catherine also teaches history.

Anna has 25 years of teaching experience. She is currently teaching at a high school, and is a member of the French PLC in the school district. Her focus in her PLC is to help French teachers in the school district develop common assessments. Anna is passionate about being a teacher ally for her students, and showing them that she really cares for them as a teacher.

Susan is teaching at a high school, and has been teaching for 40 years. She has created her own French curriculum that she has been using for most of her career. Susan also teaches theater at the high school. Since Susan describes herself as a theater person, she tries to incorporate theater philosophies into her French classes such as teaching students basic stage performance skills.

Jessica is an enthusiastic first-year high school French teacher. She was excited to share what she is currently doing in her classroom. Jessica is in the process of creating her curriculum for her French classes.

**Sources of Information**

Interviews, observations, and artifacts were the three sources of information in this study. These three sources of information allowed the researcher to triangulate the data. The three
points used for triangulation were interviews, observations, and artifacts. A description of each source of information is explained as follows.

**Semi-structured interviews.** Teachers were interviewed once during the course of the study. The interviews generally took place during their preparation class period, so as not to interfere with class time. However, a couple of the interviews were conducted after school. All six teachers were interviewed using an interview guide (see Appendix A) that focused on the three research questions. The main topics discussed in all of the interviews included information on how teachers know that their students have made progress, and details about specific strategies that teachers use to help students gauge their progress. All of the interviews included questions on how the teachers know that their students have made progress. They also included questions about the ACTFL Can-Do Statements, or any form of self-reflection strategies the teachers used. All teachers shared specific strategies that they currently use and were asked clarification follow-up questions. Each interview took approximately 10-30 minutes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

**Observations.** Teachers were aware of the researcher’s interest in strategies for gauging students’ progress and were asked to select a day during which they would be using some of these strategies. This class observation was completed just once. The teachers were not asked to do anything differently than they normally do in the classroom. During each observation notes were taken on specific strategies that teachers were using during the class period. Special attention was given to strategies that teachers had discussed during their interviews, and to any other strategies that they used that helped them to show students their progress. These observation notes were then typed and prepared for data analysis.
**Artifacts.** During the interviews and observations teachers shared various artifacts that they use in their classrooms that promote student progress. These artifacts included can-do handouts for students, goal setting handouts for students, learning objectives written on the white board, and bulletin boards. Pictures were taken of these artifacts, and a summary of each one was written for data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis for the study consisted of a qualitative analysis of the interviews, observations, and artifacts. The interviews and observation notes were transcribed after they had been completed. A short description of each document was written shortly after a picture of it was taken. All of the transcriptions were then uploaded to Saturate, an online qualitative data analysis tool. The researcher read through each transcript taking notes on various themes as they appeared. These themes were refined as the researcher continually read through the data to find answers to the research questions. Special emphasis was given to the themes that focus directly on answers to the research questions. Passages were then coded from chosen categories related to the themes. Once the categories were established, a memo was written to summarize the category. Related categories were grouped into overarching themes, and memos were written to describe the themes. Thick description is described by Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyuan (1993) as, “describing what has been seen or heard frequently using extensive quotations from the participants in the study” (p. 510). Thick description and direct quotes from the transcriptions were used to explain the results of the data.

**Internal and External Validity**

The interviews took place at a time convenient for the classroom teachers. This increased the response rate of the completion of the interviews. Some of the data collected from the interviews was shared with the teachers as a member check to ensure that they were represented
accurately, and that no misinterpretations had been made. This increased the internal validity of their comments.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

The findings from this study are organized by themes that were found from the data that answer the following research questions:

1. How do secondary French teachers know that their students have made progress?
2. What do teachers have their students do to help them gauge their progress?
3. Why do secondary French teachers choose these strategies to show their students that they have made progress?

How do Secondary French Teachers Know that their Students Have Made Progress?

In this study, formative assessment was found to be an important indicator for the teachers in this study to gauge the progress that their students have made. The formative assessments used by teachers in this study included games, quizzes, whiteboard activities, and gestures.

Formative assessments. Abeywrikrama and Brown (2010) define formative assessments as “evaluating students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them continue that growth process” (p. 7). In addition, Abeywichrama and Brown describe the importance of appropriate feedback given to the student from the teacher in formative assessment as crucial to improving a student’s language learning ability. The feedback received from formative assessment is timely and sometimes instantaneous. Formative assessment can take many different forms in the classroom. It may be a more formal assessment such as a quiz, or it may be more informal. Some examples of informal formative assessments might include gestures, games, notebooks, individual whiteboard activities, think-pair-share, and exit slips. Some teachers might choose to grade formative assessments, and other teachers might not grade them.
All teachers who participated in the study reported that they use formative assessments to know that their students have made progress, and to help their students understand the progress that they have made. Anna pointed out early on in her interview that “we have formative assessments along the way that can pinpoint what are gaps and where we need to move faster or move more slowly or simply reteach.” The formative assessments used differed by teacher, but some of the teachers used similar formative assessments. For example, three of the six teachers (Catherine, Mary, and Anna) described playing games using technology, including Kahoot, Socrative, and Quizlet as formative assessments (see Appendix B). Catherine stated that “instead of using it as a game, we want to use it as like a way for me to tell on a short, quicker…scale, how they did that day.” Catherine had students complete a Quizlet activity during class on individual computers. As students played the Quizlet game, Catherine circulated around the room to answer any questions that students have about the game. Mary asserted that when her students are playing games such as Quizlet or Kahoot they “know for sure when we are playing one of those if they’re not getting the information because they’ll be low on the score on the scoreboard.” The three teachers that use games in their classrooms believe that it enables the students to instantly see whether or not they understand material that they have been learning in class. It is also a fun and engaging way for students to gauge where they are in their progress towards a learning objective.

Quizzes were another type of formative assessment that were frequently discussed by the participants. Anna stated “quizzes show us or guide us and their progress.” Jessica mentioned that she has a quiz “once a week usually, on grammar concepts.” When her class was observed, her students took a very short quiz on the grammar concept that they had been learning about that week. Catherine, on the other hand, stated that she has “some formative assessments that are
kind of longer, they’re quizzes, but they are not short quizzes. After each lesson they take a quiz, and then after they’re done with all of those, we take a test.” These longer quizzes help Catherine’s students to be “more aware of their progress along the way until they reach the end of the unit and take a unit exam that is based on all of the quizzes from the unit.” Nathan describes how he uses a learning management system (LMS) called Canvas to quiz students as they are learning material. His students use Canvas everyday to do an activity based on what they are learning. If, for instance, his students are doing a “vocab study” he has them “take a quiz right after to see if they now know the words.” Nathan has students complete listening, reading, and speaking activities using canvas as well as vocabulary. Later, he gives a larger quiz, “to try and recycle all of the material that they are going through so that they get multiple opportunities through Canvas to kind of show me they are learning.” Nathan explained that through Canvas students receive automatic feedback on their responses to questions, and can then come to see him to get additional support on the questions that were incorrect. He puts all of the data from Canvas into a spreadsheet, so that he can see how students are progressing over time. This information is shared with his students. Susan explained how she uses “understanding tests, where [the students] have to draw things.” The researcher observed just such an “understanding test,” in which the teacher named a vocabulary word in French, and then the students drew the vocabulary word. Immediately after the test, Susan had the students correct their tests. Students knew right away if they understood the vocabulary that they had been studying.

In addition to the quizzes and games used as formative assessments in the classrooms of the teachers, some of the teachers also used what they called individual whiteboard activities. Jessica described how she uses individual whiteboard activities, saying, “I’ll show them a picture
of spaghetti and have them describe it on their whiteboards.” During my observation of Jessica’s classroom, she instructed students to change the sentence that she stated in the present tense to the conditional on their individual whiteboards. Students held up their individual whiteboards when they finished, and Jessica told them whether their response was correct. After students had an opportunity to show their response, Jessica wrote the correct answer on the board. Anna and Catherine both used individual whiteboard activities during their classroom observations, but did not mention it as a strategy during their interviews. Anna spent the majority of her class time doing an individual whiteboard activity with students. She had students complete several different activities using the individual whiteboards throughout the lesson. For most of her individual whiteboard activities, she simply had students complete exercises that were projected to the front of the room on their individual whiteboards. Anna would circulate as students were working on them, and then once they were finished she would instruct students to compare answers with their partner before showing them the correct responses. Catherine had students translate vocabulary into French, and conjugate verbs on their individual whiteboards. Like Jessica, she also wrote the correct answers on the board once students were given a chance to share their answers on their individual whiteboards. Individual whiteboard activities gave the teachers a quick way of knowing if students were making progress on what they were learning. At one point in her observation, Anna even told her students, “this is my way of knowing if we are getting it.” The activities that teachers have their students do during class provide feedback to both the teacher and the students. Teachers can use these activities as formative assessment.

Gestures can also be used as formative assessment. Only one teacher described using gestures to help her know that her students comprehend material. Mary stated:
I always do lots of thumbs-up, thumbs-down during class periods. You know, how we feel about that. “Did you get that?” And that’s actually really helpful because they’re at a point where they know me, and they know each other well enough to instantly do a thumbs-down if they are confused. If I’m reviewing something and they just don’t get it, they’re not too shy to do a thumbs-down, and then I can go over it again or I can remember.

All of the teachers who participated in this study commented on how valuable they find formative assessments. These teachers gain insights into student leaning and progress even though they are using different forms of formative assessments. Some of the formative assessments that the teachers mentioned such as the whiteboard activities and games gave students instant feedback on their performance. In regard to feedback and formative assessment, Abeywickrama and Brown (2010) suggest that “when you give a student a comment or a suggestion, or call attention to an error, that feedback is offered to improve the learner’s language ability (p. 7).” A common theme seen from the formative assessments that these teachers mentioned or completed during their observations was immediate feedback to their students after a formative assessment was completed. During the whiteboard activities, students knew instantly whether or not the responses they had written on their whiteboards was correct. Allal (2010) indicates that the feedback that students receive from formative assessments allows them to self-regulate and consequently allows them to see progress in their learning. The teachers in this study gave students a frame of reference during their formative assessments by providing instant feedback containing correct models. This frame of reference, according to Allal (2010), helps students to self-regulate their learning.
What do teachers have their students do to help them gauge their progress?

The teachers who participated in this study reported that they use various forms of self-assessments, goal setting, and self-reflection strategies to help their students gauge their own progress. Each teacher had a unique way of using these strategies in their individual classrooms. However, the teachers who were members of the PLC use the same self-assessment strategies in their classrooms.

**Self-assessments.** Initially, very few of the teachers participating in this study thought of self-assessments as a way of gauging student progress. However, once they were asked if they were using self-assessment, during the interviews, almost all of the teachers said they were using some sort of self-assessment in their classrooms. In Mary’s interview she even stated, “I forgot to mention this, we’ve done this three times already this unit.” She went on to explain how she uses self-assessment in her classroom:

At the beginning of the unit they get a unit overview, which tells them this is what you will be able to do by the end of the unit, and then lists the vocabulary, the grammar structures, and the culture that we’re going to hit. Every student has this, but this is their “I Can” statements. So, for every single day of these are every single standard in each of the standards in each of the chapters in each of the lessons. Then, they have this little one, two, three, four next to it. Throughout the unit their self-start will be, “pull out your stamp sheet…and self-assess where you’re at on the ones that we’ve done so far. Then, I love that that they do it more then once because as we progressed throughout the unit they go back and they change. They give themselves higher scores as they have more practice and they get better.

The stamp sheet that Mary described was created by her Professional Learning Community (PLC) in the school district. All three of the teachers who are members of the PLC
mentioned using the stamp sheet (see figures 1 and 2) as self-assessment in their interviews. Catherine stated that “we, as a French team in the district, we call them stamps. They’re basically all the targets or essential learning standards. At the end of each lesson I say, ‘look at your stamps, and rate yourself one through four.’ They circle it.” Catherine not only has her students rate themselves at the end of each lesson, but sometimes she will also have students check with a partner to see if they can actually do the things that they circled on their stamp sheet. She pointed out that doing the stamp sheet allows “[the students] to actually see, can you talk about this with your neighbor? Then move onto the next thing.” Anna, who is also a member of the PLC, described using the stamp sheet as “a mastery grade for the students on a scale of one through four.” Shortly after Catherine started her class, she had students take out their stamp sheets to look specifically at the “I can” statements on them. She read each of the “I can” statements aloud for the class pausing between each one to give students time rate themselves on each one.
BEGINNING LANGUAGE – Level 1
UNIT 2 OVERVIEW: Who Am I?

What students will be able to do by the end of this unit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERPRETIVE</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL</th>
<th>PRESENTATIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I can understand when someone describes themselves or someone else.</td>
<td>- I can understand some basic personal information found in short readings.</td>
<td>- I can answer questions about physical characteristics and personality traits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I can understand simple questions about myself or someone else.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- I can ask questions to find physical characteristics about someone else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- I can describe someone else including age, personality, and physical characteristics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What will students know about by the end of this unit?

**Vocabulary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How old is he/she?</th>
<th>Shy</th>
<th>Good looking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He/she is...years old.</td>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>Pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are you like?</td>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>Ugly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am...</td>
<td>Stupid/dumb</td>
<td>Fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is he/she like?</td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Thin/skinny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she is...</td>
<td>Boring</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpleasant/unfriendly</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>What color is your hair?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>What color are your eyes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Disorganized</td>
<td>I have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>You have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Studious</td>
<td>He/she has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Tall</td>
<td>Green eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>Short</td>
<td>Blue eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown eyes</td>
<td>Short hair</td>
<td>Long hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Straight hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curly hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brown hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Blonde hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Red hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Braces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pimples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grammar/Structures**

- Subject pronouns: I, you, he, she
- Verbs: to be, to have
- Negatives
- Adjectives: gender agreement

**Culture (& Cultural Comparisons)**

- I can tell you how to describe people using socially acceptable vocabulary in the target cultures.

*Figure 1. Stamp Sheet Front.*
Figure 2. Stamp Sheet Back.
Jessica, Nathan, and Susan, although not part of the PLC, also used self-assessments in their classrooms. The following paragraph describes the self-assessments used by Jessica, Nathan and Susan.

Jessica uses something similar to the stamp sheet. She uses a worksheet that has circles with the learning objectives written in an “I can” format on them. Jessica called this worksheet a “bubble sheet” (see Figure 3). Her students mark the circles they believe they have mastered. Afterwards she said, “I’ll give them time to do ‘bubble pass offs,’ where they show two people that they can do the bubble successfully. Then, they see me and I’ll stamp it.” Jessica holds her students accountable for their self-assessments by having them go through this process. During Jessica’s observation, at the end of the class period, she had her students rate themselves on how well they performed in class that day on a clipboard with their names.
BEGINNING LANGUAGE – Level 1
Unit 3: What do you like to do?

3.1 I can ask/answer “What do you like to do?”
3.2 I can ask/answer “What don’t you like to do?”
3.3 I can ask/tell what someone else like/does not like to do.
3.4 I can ask/answer “With whom do you like to...?”
3.5 I can ask/tell with whom someone likes to do something.
3.6 I can ask/answer “When do you like to...?”
3.7 I can ask/tell when someone like to do something.
3.8 I can ask/answer “How often do you like to...?”
3.9 I can ask/tell how often someone likes to do something.
3.10 I can ask/answer “Why do you like to...?”
3.11 I can ask/tell why someone likes to do something.
3.12 I can ask/answer “What do you like to eat?”
3.13 I can ask/tell what someone else likes to eat.

I can ask questions using the three different forms of questions.
I can compare the popularity of various sports in France and the USA.

Figure 3. Bubble Sheet.
Nathan, on the other hand, uses notebooks in his classroom for self-assessments. Students take notes during class and complete in-class activities in their notebooks. Then, multiple times a semester, his students complete “notebook checks” (see Figures 4 and 5). When checking notebooks students “are doing self-assessments, they’re grading themselves on their behavior and on their note taking ability and they set goals based on that.” Like Jessica, he also meets one-on-one with students to discuss their notebooks. He describes this process as:

an opportunity for me to meet one-on-one with the students every three or four weeks. They come in and I sit down with them and we go through kind of how they’re taking notes yes, but I also look at the behavior and then I also do a speaking. I can give them again one-on-one kind of feedback on how they’re progressing so each time we do that.
**Cahier Check 1 – Français 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Near Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The date is written each day in French.</td>
<td>□ Never or rarely.</td>
<td>□ Sometimes</td>
<td>□ Most of the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes are taken each day in class during learning time.</td>
<td>□ Never or rarely. Notes are unhelpful.</td>
<td>□ Sometimes. Notes are often missing things.</td>
<td>□ Most of the time. Notes are helpful for review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is clean, neat, and easy to read.</td>
<td>□ Never or rarely.</td>
<td>□ Sometimes.</td>
<td>□ Most of the time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Behavior: How would you rate yourself on how you are behaving in class?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Near Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attendance</td>
<td>More than 5.</td>
<td>2-3 absences</td>
<td>No more than 1 absence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Respectful/Consideration of others</td>
<td>Frequently distracting others and talking when I shouldn’t.</td>
<td>Had to be reminded to be quiet at least once.</td>
<td>Rarely distracted or disrespectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Engages w/Subj Be Proactive</td>
<td>I never/rarely answer ?’s and contribute.</td>
<td>I sometimes answer ?’s and contribute.</td>
<td>I often answer ?’s and contribute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engages/interacts with others</td>
<td>I never/rarely do partner/group work.</td>
<td>I mostly do partner/group work.</td>
<td>I usually do partner/group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Effort/Engaged Learning</td>
<td>I frequently do other things and am unfocused.</td>
<td>I sometimes work on other things.</td>
<td>I am usually focused only on French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Applies Learning</td>
<td>I never review French outside of class.</td>
<td>I sometimes review French outside of class.</td>
<td>I often review French outside of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organization &amp; Preparedness</td>
<td>I come to class unprepared.</td>
<td>I sometimes come to class unprepared.</td>
<td>I rarely come to class unprepared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4. Notebook Check Front.*
Goals: What is one or two areas, based on items discussed, that I want to improve on between now and the next notebook check?

Goal 1: 

Goal 2: 

French Check:

- Count from 0-20
- Say the alphabet A-Z
- Say the date
- Say your birthday
- Say your telephone number
- French Conversation
  - Hello
  - How’s it going
  - Name
  - Age
  - Nationality
  - Live
  - From
  - Goodbye

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Below Expectations</th>
<th>Near Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary/Grammar</td>
<td>Little to no retention of vocabulary or grammar; multiple promptings needed.</td>
<td>Some new vocabulary words from the lesson/unit are used; new grammar is used with some errors.</td>
<td>Many new vocabulary words from the lesson/unit are used; new grammar is used with few errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>Unable to discuss many items.</td>
<td>Able to discuss some items clearly.</td>
<td>Able to discuss most items clearly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

Figure 5. Notebook Check Back.
Susan uses a “proficiency guide” (see Appendix C) for her students to assess themselves. She gives them this proficiency guide at the beginning of each unit. The guide explains all of the concepts that the students should be able to do by the end of the unit. She uses the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines to help students set their own goals, and self-assess on those goals throughout the unit. Here is her explanation of what she has her students do every unit:

They record as we go along the different concepts that we’re going through. They record any homework assignments. Did they, you know, did they do it…when it’s due. Can they check off, “Yeah I got it,” or “no I didn’t get it so I need to ask questions.” I give them the proficiency outline and they have to look at like what the Novice, Intermediate-Mid, and then they set their level so they can achieve. I’ve had, in my previous classes they’ll set themselves higher so they set their own standards as to where they want to achieve and then when they come up and do their oral proficiency with me that’s the standard that I judge them by.

During some of my observations students did not appear to take the activities of self-assessments seriously. In one class, for instance, during a self-assessment activity, many of the students in one classroom appeared to circle answers as quickly as possible, and then try to finish other work that was due.

All six of the teachers in the study used self-assessment slightly differently in their classrooms. A common theme seen among the different uses of self-assessment was that they were centered on the learning targets or objectives for the class. Ross (2006) suggests that “self-assessment encourages students to focus on their attainment of explicit criteria (p. 7).” This gives students a chance to understand what they are working towards, and to self-regulate.
**Goal setting.** Some of the teachers incorporated goal setting into their self-assessments giving students the opportunity to be a part of their own learning process. Goal setting is seen as an important tool for students to learn in order to promote learner autonomy especially in language learning (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). As learners are encouraged to make goals and accept responsibility for their progress in completing those goals they are becoming more autonomous learners (De Saint Léger, 2009). Goal setting also gives the students a clear goal of what students need to be progressing towards. None of the teachers used the ACTFL Can-Do Statements for their self-assessments. Rather, the teachers were adapting the structure of the Can-Do Statements to create their own can-do statements for their individual classes because of the state’s standards.

**Self-Reflection.** Three of the six teachers pointed out that they use self-reflection activities to help their students to see their progress. Mary has students come talk to her individually to reflect on how they are doing, and to discuss any missing assignments. During my observation of Mary’s class she pulled a few students aside to discuss one-on-one how they were doing in class. Anna described her self-reflection activities as reflective goal setting:

So when they assess their exams and their chapter quizzes they answer questions for me that guide them towards better, more productive study, more productive class time, more productive whatever. We attribute some of our strengths and weaknesses. We often, like my French four class don’t want this done so we made unit two goals, and so I guided them through kind of a little reflective question list. What works for you in Unit One? What didn’t work for you and then why based on this? What is the goal that you can set just for this class Unit Two? Then I asked them how I can help them achieve their goals so that they have a teacher ally who will follow up and kind of kick their butt as needed
and help them. So we do that in my class. We do a lot of reflective things like that. I’m teaching them to be better students and better managers of time not just teaching them French.

Nathan encompasses his self-reflection strategies as part of a process of reassessing students. He expects his students to relearn material to be reassessed on:

Initially, they do a self-reflection where they’re looking at questions they missed and they go back to the test and have to write out an explanation of why they missed it, what they didn’t understand. Then, I give them a similar type of assessment on the same standards again a few days later on that.

These three teachers realize how crucial it is for students to reflect on their learning in order to become more autonomous learners. They focus on the individual students in their self-reflection strategies to help them take charge of their learning, and to realize that they care about their success in their classes. This promotes learner autonomy, because according to De Saint Leger (2009), when students are held responsible for their own learning through self-reflections, they have a greater responsibility for their own learning.

Objectives posted. All but one of the teachers from the study had either their objectives posted where students could see them or a visual representation of the objectives. For example, at the beginning of the observation for Catherine’s lesson, she read the learning target for the lesson that was written in the upper left hand corner of the whiteboard. Nathan also focused his students’ attention to his learning objectives by calling on students to read the objectives from a PowerPoint slide. Mary called on students to read the “I can” objectives on their stamp sheets at the beginning of the class period. Unlike the other teachers, Anna had her students copy the lesson’s objectives in their notebooks at the beginning of class. Nathan not only had his
objectives written on the whiteboard, but also had what he called “My Pathway to Proficiency” (see figure 6) on a bulletin board:

I have this graph talking about “My Pathway to Proficiency.” We spend some time in class talking about what proficiency is, what it looks like in each of the sublevels and larger levels of the ACTFL scale. I help them to become real experts in that as well so that they know where they are and what they need to do to get an Intermediate or Advanced. I want to see, and I want the students to see that the amount of language that they’re able to gain entrance of proficiency…that [way] they’re seeing progress.

Figure 6. My Pathway to Proficiency

The teachers recognized the importance of making students aware of the learning objective for each lesson. This was seen in the objectives that were written on the whiteboard where students could see them, and when teachers would call students’ attention to them at the
beginning of the class. The objectives showed students what the goal for the lesson was, and gave them a progress indicator at the end of each lesson. Nathan emphasized the importance of students understanding their progress in becoming proficient in the French language with his “My Pathway to Proficiency.”

**Why do secondary French teachers choose these strategies to show their students that they have made progress?**

For this study, teachers reported different reasons for choosing specific strategies to show their students that they have made progress. These reasons included having an end goal in mind, increasing responsibility from students, showing that the teacher cares for their students, and increasing student confidence.

**End goal.** The goal behind any teacher-chosen strategy is to give students a clear idea of the lesson objective. Nathan describes why his strategies have worked so well:

I love it. It’s awesome. It’s very easy for me to teach it [French] because the students and myself both have a picture of what it is we’re going for. It’s like okay we’re not just learning some grammar concept now. We’re doing this--I want you to be able to do this with the language.

Catherine explains “they know what they’re supposed to be learning. They know what they’re supposed to be paying attention to and that’s good.” She also realizes that it gives students a sense of direction in their learning:

I think it [stamps] makes them once again more guided and focused. They know what to work towards. I think it helps them feel less overwhelmed if they know exactly what the goal is that we are aiming for.
Jessica also noted that “the students know what their learning outcomes are, and they keep their notes much more organized. They know exactly what is required of them.”

**Responsibility.** Anna suggested that the strategies that she employs in her classroom hold students responsible for their own learning:

They literally can see, and I think it also helps them a little bit on the responsibility and accountability… I can realize that especially if they pointed out to me today I really am struggling on this, you know, but I also like it because they can see, “Yeah I didn’t put the effort into this one. That’s why I’m struggling.”

**Teacher cares.** One of the things that both Susan and Anna pointed out in their interviews was how they felt that their strategies show students that teachers care about their success. Susan explains, “they’re realizing [my teacher] knows what I’m saying, so it has been so valuable.” Anna believes that being a teacher ally is one of the best things that she can do for students:

Sometimes is not about the outcome, so that's the odd part, but it's about the students knowing that I care to know. So one of the scariest parts of being a language student is that we conduct class-- all levels-- 90% at least in French, and so that can be a very terrifying experience at times, and they need to know that I'm not, like, intending to terrify them, that we're actually, this is the way to learn and grow, and then I'm [their] ally. Like, “I'm not your enemy, I'm your ally,” so a lot of these things are designed, yes to push. I guess I didn't know that at the beginning, but in the beginning I thought that goal setting was good for them, or that personal conversations with students were good for them. I guess what I've learned is, it's good for, like, us as a whole because it means, “I care about you,” and I didn't know that that's what it meant at the beginning of my
career. I didn't know that me sitting down and asking you about your goals meant that I care about you as a person. I guess I should have connected that faster. I want them to know I cared about them as a teacher, and I care about them as a person and if I can help them to set goals and to perform. Better in my class, but I can probably help them do that all over the place and so I feel like there's a direct benefit. Some of them will absolutely [be] burned [overwhelmed] from last unit’s mistakes, and some of them will simply learn that I care deeply and whether [that] changes their behavior, I don't always know, but they will know that their teacher is an ally and in my class that is really important.

Both Anna and Susan pointed out how important they find teacher care in their classrooms. Teacher care has been identified with positive student outcomes. These outcomes include improved academic achievement, increased study time, and higher classroom attendance (Foster, 2008). In addition, teacher care has shown to help create a positive learning environment where students can become more autonomous learners (Bieg, Rickelman, Jones, & Mittag, 2013).

**Increase in confidence.** Mary and Susan pointed out the self-assessment strategies increase students’ self-confidence. Mary stated that “I think it just gives kids a little confidence boost.” Susan explained how she gives students “a lot of vocal reinforcement.” This gives her students more confidence because she tells them how much better they are doing from the beginning of the school year.

All of the teachers in this study mentioned characteristics of learner autonomy when asked about why they use specific strategies to show their students that they have made progress. According to Candy, autonomous learners are disciplined, logical in thinking, reflective, aware of self, curious, motivated, flexible, persistent, responsible, creative, independent, and self-sufficient. In the context of second language learning, learner autonomy plays an important role...
in the learning process. The teachers’ responses focused on how the strategies they used helped to promote learner autonomy. The teachers in this study explained that when their students understood the goal or objective that they are working towards that their students take more responsibility for their learning. They further explained that when their students understand that they have made progress that it gives them increased confidence in what they are doing.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

Autonomous learners are learners who are fully engaged in their learning. Additionally, autonomous learners are able to self-regulate, and take control of their own learning (Little, 2003). Learners who develop characteristics of autonomous learners likewise develop a strong self-efficacy (Tilfarlioglu & Ciftci, 2011). These characteristics give learners the opportunity to be more confident in their learning. Teachers who take the time to help learners understand the learning process and the progress they have made, and help students to set goals and reflect on their progress allows learners to develop characteristics of autonomous learners (Rose & Harbon, 2013). Little research has been conducted on what teachers are actually doing in their classrooms to help students know that they have made progress. This study gave insight into what teachers are doing in their classrooms, and the strategies they prefer to use. Additionally, the teachers shared the reasoning behind the strategies they use.

In this study, three research questions were used to identify what strategies teachers are using in their classrooms to help their students gauge their progress. The findings suggest that teachers use a variety of strategies to help their students become autonomous learners in their classrooms. These strategies include various forms formative assessments, self-assessments, and self-reflections.

The strategies that were used in this study varied from teacher to teacher. However, all of the teachers reported that they use formative assessment as a strategy for them to gauge the progress of their students. The specific formative assessments that the teachers use include games, quizzes, whiteboard activities, and gestures. In addition to formative assessments, teachers also use self-assessment and self-reflection strategies to help their students gauge their progress. The self-assessment strategies vary from teacher to teacher, but the three teachers in the
Professional Learning Community use stamp sheets that they have created for each unit. These stamp sheets allow for their students to self-assess on learning standards. Other self-assessment strategies reported by the teachers include notebook self-assessments, bubble sheets, and proficiency guides. Many of the teachers also reported that they incorporate goal setting and self-reflection strategies into their self-assessment strategies. Furthermore, some of the teachers also post their objectives where students can see them in the classroom. One teacher has a graph posted on a bulletin board that shows what proficiency looks like at different levels.

Some of the teachers were not necessarily sure if the strategies they use cause an increase of student success rates and grades in their classrooms. The students’ development of the characteristics of autonomous learning, through self-assessment and self-reflection strategies, was of greater importance to the teachers. The teachers explained that their students are more aware of the learning goal when they self-assess. Furthermore, teachers pointed out that taking the time to show their students that they are willing to meet one-on-one with them to discuss their progress in the classroom helps students know that the teacher cares about their success. In addition the teachers explained that formative assessments provide timely responses that allow both the teachers and the students to know exactly what progress has been made towards the learning objectives. Additionally, formative assessments provide teachers with insights into what their students may not be understanding, which affords them the opportunity to make plans to re-teach certain concepts so that their students can make progress.

None of the teachers were using tools that have already been created to promote self-regulation and autonomous learning in their classrooms such as the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements or LinguaFolio. The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements specifically give both students and teachers a way to chart progress (Moeller & Yu, 2015). The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-
Do Statements are convenient for both teachers and students to use because they have already been created. However, many of the teachers in this study have adapted the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements to best fit the needs of their students. The teachers in this study reported that it made more sense to them to make their own can-do statements based on their learning outcomes. This might be because the state that the teachers teach in recommends that teachers write their objectives in a user-friendly can-do statement for students (Utah, 2014). The strategies that the teachers do use still integrate notions of self-regulation and learner autonomy.

**Limitations**

In this study, all of the data came from the teachers, and it represents only the teachers’ view. In addition, the teachers that responded to the email to participate in this study might have felt more confident in what the strategies that they are using in their classrooms. The teachers’ insights are essential because they show how teachers make sure that their students are meeting learning targets. These data provide insight into a handful of secondary French teachers’ strategies, and the results suggest things taking place in the larger community. Though teachers’ perceptions of how their students are gauging their own progress is important to understand, it is also important to understand the students’ perspective as well.

Despite these limitations, this study provided important insights into what teachers are actually doing in their classrooms. It shows what strategies teachers are choosing to use and why they are choosing to use them. In addition, this study also provides teachers with potential strategies and insights from current teachers that they could use in their classrooms to show student their progress.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

This study lacked the perspective of the student. It is not obvious how students feel about the strategies that these teachers are using. Although the teachers were passionate about the
strategies that they were using, it remains unclear whether students were equally as passionate about them. If the students do not buy into the strategies that their teachers are using, they may not be as successful as the teachers think they are. Many of the teachers in this study were part of a professional learning community. Further research could be conducted to see how the role of professional learning communities affects the teacher practice in relation to formative feedback and self-assessment.

Furthermore, specific strategies of feedback from formative assessments, self-reflections, and self-assessments could be examined to see how they enable students to become more autonomous learners. Formative assessment strategies give learners a lot of feedback on their learning, but what might be overlooked is how the feedback could help students self-regulate.

In conclusion, all of the teachers who participated in this study use strategies to help make progress visible for their students. Teachers did not indicate that there was just one strategy that they used to show their students that they have made progress. Rather, they used a combination of formative assessments, self-assessments, and self-reflection strategies. These strategies allowed the teachers to not only gauge the progress their students were making, but it also allowed them to help students gauge their own progress. Using these strategies helped teachers aid students in developing self-regulatory skills and characteristics of learner autonomy.
References


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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. How long have you been teaching French?
2. What have your students learned so far this semester?
3. How do your students know that they have learned that?
4. What do you have your students do to help them gauge their progress?
   - Why do you use these strategies/methods?
   - Can you show me an example?

5. Do you use any of the following techniques: Can-Do statements, goal setting, or any other forms of self-assessment?
6. Do you use any techniques that I did not list? If so please describe/list them.
   - How do you use_______?
   - When do you use_______?
   - Can you show me an example of_______?
   - How effective do you find that technique to be?

7. How do these strategies affect student performance?
8. Are there other techniques that you’ve considered using?
   - Why/Why not?
Appendix B: Kahoot, Quizlet, and Socrative

1. Kahoot: https://kahoot.it

With Kahoot, teachers can create free interactive games for the students to play in the classroom. To play Kahoot, students only need a code that is generated for each game a teacher creates to play the game from their own device.

2. Quizlet: https://quizlet.com

Using Quizlet, teachers have the option of creating free games and flashcards for their students to use. Teachers can create individual games for their students to play as well as games that can be played as a whole class.

3. Socrative: https://www.socrative.com

Socrative allows teachers to create multiple formative assessments for their students. Teachers can create a variety of assessments that give students immediate feedback. Some of these assessments include, class games, quizzed, and class polls. Not all functions in Socrative are free of charge.
**FRENCH III & IV**

**Proficiency Guide**

**STUDENTS:** *Keep this guide.*

1. Establish a proficiency goal for each concept
2. Record your level of proficiency for each unit / concept that we study.
3. Celebrate your success :)

**CONVERSATION** These proficiencies will be completed during class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I CAN...</th>
<th>My proficiency goal</th>
<th>Teacher Evaluation</th>
<th>Date Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Use formal and informal greetings &amp; salutations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Ask questions &amp; give responses about my personal information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Describe personal preferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Describe my daily routine &amp; activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Describe my summer and other vacations and holidays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Plan what cities I will visit when I am in France</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Buy food and other supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>Order and pay for a meal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Discuss &amp; describe my family past and present</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>Shop for and buy clothing with correct size, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>Discuss Christmas and Thanksgiving traditions and activities both in my home and in a French home</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>Describe plans for future occupations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Talk about my health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>Ask for and give detailed directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.</td>
<td>Buy tickets — train, metro, museum, etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P.</td>
<td>Describe in detail home environment with amenities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.</td>
<td>Describe both domestic and exotic animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.</td>
<td>Make reservations and get a hotel with required amenities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Change money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>