

Recruitment and Retention of Spanish-Language Students

Recruit Spanish-Language Students for your French Class!

Inform Spanish-speakers!

- They already know two languages; so, making the effort to become trilingual is a logical step.
- They have advantages in learning French because Spanish and French have the same Latin origins.
- French is easier for Spanish speakers because of parallels in grammar and vocabulary.
- Spanish-language students already intuitively use gender markers; formal and informal *you*, the word order of direct and indirect pronouns in a sentence and the structure of pronominal verbs, and can see similarities in French and Spanish vocabulary.
- Studying French can improve English skills, an advantage in studies and careers.
- Other students have made the choice to study two or more languages simultaneously.

Emphasize to Spanish-speakers that Multilingualism is an Asset!

- The phrase “Languages spoken: English, Spanish, French” is a distinct asset when it appears on a résumé.
- Those with multilingual skills therefore have increased opportunities for employment in today’s global job market.

Promote French to Spanish-Language Students!

- During National French Week, ask if students may do announcements in the languages taught at your school. Check the AATF web site [<http://www.frenchteachers.org/>] for more information on projects for National French Week in November. National Foreign Language Week and Fête de la Francophonie (March) offer additional opportunities to emphasize French in the school and the community.
- Sponsor contests showing parallels between Spanish and French, for example, in terms of vocabulary similarities.
- Emphasize the French sports connection, especially soccer, cycling, and rugby, as well as the French fashion scene and cuisine. For instance, two Spaniards won the Tour de France cycling tournament: Alberto Contador Velasco in 2009 and in 2007 and Carlos Sastre Candil in 2008. Buenos Aires, Argentina, in addition to Paris, holds an annual fashion show of new collections. Designers houses Armand Basi from Barcelona and Yves St. Laurent from Paris have international influence in the fashion world. The authority of Spanish Chefs Ferran Adria and José

Andrés and French chefs Alain Ducasse and Paul Bocuse as trend-setters in cuisine is frequently acknowledged.

- Plan joint activities for students in French and Spanish classes or clubs, as well as with other language groups.
- Display in a public space a map indicating continents and countries where French is spoken with the slogan “The WORLD invites you to learn French.” Emphasize the areas where both French and Spanish are likely to be spoken because of geographic proximity of speakers of both countries: for example, France - Spain and Haiti - Dominican Republic.
- Post a letter or information on the school’s or your teacher web page promoting the benefits and explaining the advantages of studying French – a third language. This information could be in Spanish and in English.
- Making French Class and French Club activities visible in the school and community is a valuable recruitment tool for all students, including Spanish-language students. For example, sponsor a “Bûche de Noël” contest or another event in an area where students congregate. Publicize field trips, classroom visitors, speakers, French Club activities by displaying photos of these activities in the hallways or on display monitors or make announcements on movable or electronic signage boards in or near the school.
- Show a film in French with Spanish subtitles during a Foreign Language Fair or National Foreign Language Week.
- Make available an article in French on a high-interest topic so that Spanish-language speakers can see how much they can understand just by knowing Spanish.
- Send home a letter in Spanish from the French teacher to Spanish-language parents. Additionally, use the letters and documents emphasizing reasons to study French included in the French Language Advocacy Kit to indicate that French is a good language choice for Spanish-language students. A version in Spanish, “Con el francés, tú podrás...” replicates the reasons to study French in the document “With French, YOU can...”
- Distribute the list of French-Spanish vocabulary similarities, contained in the Spanish-language speakers, to prospective students.
- Consult the French Language Advocacy Kit article by Jacqueline Thomas, “Promoting and Teaching French to Spanish Speakers” for more ideas on this topic.

Promote French to Counselors!

- Convince counselors that adding a third language (French) to a student’s course load will benefit the student’s future opportunities. Use some of the arguments mentioned above.
- If French classes are smaller than Spanish classes; students are likely to have more opportunities to speak the language.
- Utilize the resources in the French Language Advocacy Kit, which are suggested for working with the counseling staff, e.g., the article written by Jim Malone,

“What a French Teacher Needs to Know to Work Effectively with Guidance Counselors.” In addition, use the letters in Spanish for Spanish-speaking students and for their parents, the list of 10 reasons to learn French: “With French YOU can” in the Spanish version (*Con el francés, tú podrás...*). In addition, the list of French and Spanish vocabulary similarities, included in the French Language Advocacy Kit, can emphasize the advantages that Spanish-language students have in learning French.

Retain Spanish speakers already in French class!

Point out the economic, political, and cultural advantages of French in the world!

- French has approximately 200 million speakers on all continents and has the status of official language in 32 countries.
- Over 12 million speak French in Mexico, the Caribbean, and in Central and South America. (Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques)
- French is the only language with English taught as a foreign language in every country.
- California, Texas, Florida, and New York have joined Louisiana, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire as the main centers of French in the US.
- French is one of the official or working languages of many international agencies and organizations, such as the African Union, the International Olympic Committee, Amnesty International, the World Health Organization, the International Red Cross, Doctors without Borders, and the United Nations.
- French is an official and working language in the European Union with its three political centers of activity in the French-speaking cities of Strasbourg, Brussels, and Luxembourg.
- In July 2009, France ranked third among the top 10 countries with the most Global 500 companies, as ranked by *Fortune Magazine*. Paris was ranked second among the top 10 cities with the most Global 500 companies.
- France is a world leader in communications, transportation technology, the aerospace industry, the medical field, and chemical industries.
- Canada, officially bilingual in English and French, is the largest bilateral trading partner of the US, and Quebec alone is the sixth largest trading partner of the US.

Plan activities and programs to encourage Spanish speakers enrolled in a French class to continue their French studies.

- Prepare a travel brochure in Spanish and French to include simple tourist phrases and vocabulary (food items), numbers, days, months, etc. Include pictures, and post these in the classroom. (Signage in Mexican tourist areas and airports is frequently in Spanish, English, and French.)
- If the French teacher knows Spanish, she/he can make references to the similarities and/or differences in the two languages.

- Convince the school administration to authorize the wearing of a tri-color tassel at graduation by students having studied two or more second languages.
- Create your own multilingual honorary society for students who maintain a certain grade-point average in studying two or more second languages.
- Share the essay, “Le Tango à trois,” written by Carolyn Pinet, Professor of Spanish, for the French Language Kit as a reflection of her discovery of the cross-currents of French, Spanish, and English in her own reading and writing.
- Share the personal stories of Richelle Sipiora, a physical therapist who uses French and Spanish professionally, (“Multilingualism: ‘Oh, the Places You Will Go’”) and Bill Laughlin, an entrepreneur working in Barcelona, (“French Led to an MBA and Life-Long Friendships”)
- Show the video clips of Frank Zarate, high school principal in a predominantly Latino community; Maria Muro, assistant director of a French-immersion school; and Del Philipps, international business consultant, in “The World Speaks French: Video Stories.”

Advice and reflections offered by native Spanish speakers who teach French

- When communicating in writing or in speaking to Spanish-speaking parents, I think about tailoring the form of the message according to my audience. While the content remains the same, the message may vary in vocabulary choice and density as well as length. It is important to attend to the educational level of parents and choose the appropriate language register.
- In materials designed to promote French studies to native Spanish students and parents, I would add an example or a drawing or photo depicting the correlations between Spanish and French to make the content more eye-appealing.
- In addition to guidance counselors, it is important to consider other school personnel who are responsible for recruitment, registration, and enrollment of students in language classes. While this personnel may vary by school, secondary and post-secondary coaches, programmers, schedulers, registrars, and school clerks often have these responsibilities and can be influential in course selection.
- Not only is promoting activities in both French and Spanish a very smart idea, it is also good to plan with a Spanish teacher joint activities for students. In my school a Spanish teacher and a French teacher are now doing fundraising to take their students to France and Spain. Since we have a large number of Latino students in our classes, the idea was well received by parents.
- As teachers, we should help students understand that studying French can facilitate learning about one’s own identity and heritage. As a student in French class, I always found myself comparing what the French do to my own traditions, realizing the similarities and differences and, in the end, understanding myself better. I had a lot of those "ah-ha" moments.

- Because of the similarity of two Romance languages, Spanish can help one communicate and understand more French when speaking or listening. I found my French teachers surprised that I knew a lot of vocabulary before it was formally introduced or that I was able to use words without having been formally introduced to them. When asked how I knew a word, I would respond that I had just "made it up." In reality, when I produced a real word in French, we all knew that it was because of my knowledge of Spanish.
- Organizing activities that appeal to the senses attracts students. One idea is to taste-test foods that are unique to French and which students may not have experienced before. Chocolate or other desserts should be successful in attracting interest.
- Let students know that in other countries students speak more than one language and that multilingualism is encouraged and required. Native Spanish-language students already have the benefit of knowing more than one language.
- Making students aware that people (like celebrities) with whom they are familiar speak more than one language can increase the importance of French in their eyes. Some examples include Julio Iglesias (singer), Ricky Martin (singer), Penelope Cruz (actress), Orlando Bloom (actor), Natalia Sanchez Molina (actress, singer, model), Miguel de Unamuno (writer and philosopher), and Antonio Machado (writer).
- Praise and validation also go a long way to encourage and motivate Spanish-language students and to make them realize that they are lucky to have an opportunity to learn a third language. It can't be said just once but continually so that each knows he or she is not just *another* French student but has an advantage over most other students.