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Learning about Citizenship and Sustainable Development: Practices that are integral to French as a Second Language lessons.

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Abstract

This article examines the integration of citizenship and sustainable development into the teaching of French as a second language (FSL) at secondary level in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is based on the observation that, despite curricular reforms and institutional guidelines advocating a holistic approach to learner development, teaching practices in French remain largely focused on the development of language skills, often at the expense of civic, social and environmental dimensions.

The study employs a qualitative and descriptive approach, supplemented by quantitative analysis, conducted in ten secondary schools in the city of Kinshasa. Data were collected through classroom observations, analyses of teaching materials and interviews with teachers of French as a second language. They were then analysed using a framework centred on five dimensions: language learning, the development of critical thinking, citizenship, sustainable development and the co-construction of skills.

The results show a strong predominance of language learning and the development of critical thinking in the teaching practices observed. By contrast, learning related to citizenship and sustainable development, as well as co-construction practices, remain poorly integrated. This situation reveals a disconnect between curricular requirements and actual

classroom practices, reflecting the persistence of teaching models that are still largely transmission-based and not sufficiently contextualised.

The analysis also highlights that, although pedagogical interactions do occur, they do not always lead to genuine co-construction of knowledge and skills. In this context, the Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI) emerges as a relevant pedagogical framework for fostering a more coherent link between language learning, citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

In conclusion, the study emphasises the need to rethink teaching practices in French as a second language in order to make them more integrative, contextualised and geared towards fostering active, critical citizens who are committed to the sustainable development of their society.

Keywords: French as a second language, citizenship, sustainable development, co-construction, teaching practices, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1. Introduction

Contemporary societies face numerous major challenges, including environmental degradation, rising social inequalities, the erosion of social cohesion, and low levels of civic engagement among young people. In the face of these challenges, schools emerge as strategic institutions for educating citizens capable of understanding the complex

realities of today's world and actively contributing to the sustainable development of their society. From this perspective, the teaching of French as a second language (FSL), beyond its linguistic function, is now called upon to play a fundamental role in building learners' civic, social and cultural skills.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, French has a dual status: it is both the official language of the state and the main language of instruction. As a school subject, French as a second language plays a central role in the intellectual and social development of secondary school pupils. However, the teaching practices observed in French classrooms remain largely focused on the development of communicative and linguistic skills, often disconnected from the social, environmental and civic realities experienced by learners. Such an approach limits the educational scope of French and reduces its potential for the holistic development of the individual.

Yet issues relating to citizenship and sustainable development now occupy a prominent place in international and national education policies. Their integration into the school curriculum aims to equip learners to develop critical thinking, adopt responsible behaviour and actively participate in the social transformation of their environment. In this context, the French as a Second Language classroom provides a unique space for reflection, discussion, debate and the development of civic values.

According to Boelen and Laura (2023), eco-constructivism is an emerging educational approach aimed at developing ecological skills based on the relationship between human beings and the living world. The authors argue that integrating this approach into the school curriculum would help to promote a cosmocentric vision of education that simultaneously fosters relationships with oneself, with others and with the environment. This perspective highlights the need to rethink teaching practices in order to better address contemporary ecological and social challenges.

In line with this reasoning, the teaching of French as a second language can no longer be reduced to the mere transmission of grammatical or lexical knowledge. It must also contribute to learners' social integration and the development of their capacity for civic participation. As Jessica Raillard (2026) points out, 'teaching a language means propelling individuals towards integration'. Similarly, the Livry-Gargan Committee (2025) points out that proficiency in the French language is an essential prerequisite for access to rights, employment, housing and participation in social life.

Furthermore, research in the field of contextualised teaching demonstrates the importance of embedding learning within

authentic and meaningful situations for learners. In this regard, Le Bail, Bernard and colleagues (2021) argue that contextualised learning enables pupils to better understand their environment whilst strengthening their motivation for learning. This approach thus fosters a link between academic knowledge and the social realities experienced by learners.

In the field of language teaching, developments in teaching methods also highlight a gradual shift towards more functional and communicative learning. David, Gala Nuria, Leconte and Roubaud (2022) point out that, from the 1970s onwards, the communicative approach profoundly transformed the teaching of French by prioritising real-life communication situations and learners' needs. This pedagogical shift opens up promising avenues for integrating learning related to citizenship and sustainable development into teaching practices for French as a second language.

This article is part of this integrative approach. It aims to demonstrate that the French as a second language classroom at secondary level can provide an ideal setting for citizenship education and education for sustainable development, provided that teaching practices are contextualised, participatory and geared towards social action. More specifically, this analysis seeks to highlight the fact that the integration of linguistic, citizenship and environmental learning promote the co-construction of the skills necessary for learners' harmonious and responsible integration into society.

The overall objective of this study is to analyse how the integration of citizenship and sustainable development learning into teaching practices for French as a second language contributes to the development of civic and social skills among secondary school learners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The general hypothesis underpinning this research is that the effective integration of citizenship and sustainable development education into teaching practices for French as a second language, in accordance with the guidelines of the National French Programme and the legal texts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, would significantly promote the co-construction of learners' civic, social and communicative skills.

2. Research question

Contemporary educational reforms place increasing emphasis on educating citizens capable of understanding the social, environmental and cultural challenges of today's world. From this perspective, education for citizenship and sustainable development is gradually establishing itself as a cross-cutting dimension of modern education systems. In the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, this approach is supported by several official documents, notably the Framework Law on National Education (2014), the National Programme for French in Secondary Education (2005) and various curriculum reforms based on a competence-based approach. These documents advocate a holistic approach to learner development, integrating linguistic, social, cultural and civic learning.

However, despite these institutional guidelines, the teaching of French as a second language (FSL) at secondary level remains largely dominated by teaching practices centred primarily on the transmission of formal linguistic knowledge. Classroom activities generally prioritise the acquisition of grammatical rules, vocabulary, syntactic structures and text types, at the expense of engaging with the social and environmental realities that learners face on a daily basis. This pedagogical approach tends to reduce the teaching of French to an essentially linguistic objective, without any real connection to the requirements of citizenship education and sustainable development.

However, in a context marked by mounting environmental challenges, social inequalities, tensions over identity and low levels of civic engagement amongst young people, schools can no longer limit themselves to the mere transmission of subject-specific knowledge. They are called upon to educate learners capable of analysing the complex realities of their society, developing critical thinking and acting responsibly within their social environment. To this end, the French as a Second Language classroom emerges as a strategic space that simultaneously facilitates the development of communication skills and the building of citizenship skills.

However, observations carried out in several secondary schools in the city of Kinshasa reveal that learning related to citizenship and sustainable development is poorly integrated into the teaching practices of French teachers. When these aspects are addressed, they are often dealt with in an ad hoc, thematic or peripheral manner, without any real pedagogical link to the linguistic objectives being pursued. This fragmented approach to learning limits the educational impact of French as a second language and does not sufficiently foster the development of the macro-systemic skills necessary for learners' social and civic integration.

Furthermore, the pedagogical interactions observed in French classrooms remain predominantly centred on transmissive practices inherited from the traditional teaching paradigm. Although certain situations involving exchange and participation do occur, they do not always lead to a genuine co-construction of knowledge and skills. In many cases, learners still occupy a relatively passive role in the learning

process, whilst the content taught remains insufficiently contextualised.

This situation highlights a major pedagogical challenge: how can we integrate language learning, citizenship education and education for sustainable development into teaching practices for French as a second language, in order to foster the development of social, critical and participatory skills among secondary school learners?

In other words, how can the French as a second language classroom be transformed into an integrated learning space enabling learners not only to master the French language, but also to develop the skills necessary for active and responsible participation in society?

From this perspective, the Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI) emerges as a relevant pedagogical framework for rethinking teaching practices in French as a second language. This approach prioritises the simultaneous integration of linguistic, social and civic learning through contextualised, interactive and meaningful learning situations. It emphasises learners' active participation, collaboration, the contextualisation of content and the collective construction of knowledge.

Thus, this research forms part of a pedagogical reflection aimed at overcoming the current fragmentation of learning in secondary school French as a second language classrooms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It seeks to analyse the pedagogical conditions likely to promote the effective integration of learning related to citizenship and sustainable development into classroom practices.

This research question gives rise to the following central question:

In secondary school French as a second language classes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, do teachers' pedagogical practices enable an effective integration of language learning, citizenship education and education for sustainable development with a view to promoting learners' social and responsible participation?

This main question also gives rise to the following specific questions:

1. What role does citizenship education play in teaching practices for French as a second language at secondary level?
2. How do French teachers integrate issues relating to sustainable development into their teaching sequences?

3. Do the teaching interactions observed in the classroom genuinely promote the co-construction of learners' civic and social skills?
4. To what extent can the Integrative Co-construction Approach contribute to improving teaching practices in French as a second language at secondary school level?

3. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the interplay of several fundamental concepts that underpin the discussion on integrating learning about citizenship and sustainable development into the teaching of French as a second language at secondary school level. These are primarily the notions of learning, citizenship, sustainable development, integrative teaching practices and the co-construction of skills. These concepts are considered from a dynamic and interactional perspective, grounded in socioconstructivist approaches to education.

The aim of this conceptual framework is to clarify the central concepts used in this research and to highlight the relationships between them within the specific context of teaching French as a second language in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

3.1. Learning

Within the framework of this study, learning is viewed as an active, dynamic and progressive process of constructing knowledge, skills and values. This conception is in line with the socioconstructivist perspective, according to which the learner does not passively receive knowledge transmitted by the teacher, but actively participates in its development through social interactions, lived experiences and contextualised learning situations.

Learning thus involves a lasting transformation of the learner's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours through activities involving reflection, discussion, experimentation and problem-solving. From this perspective, the teacher's role is no longer limited to the transmission of content; it also consists of creating educational situations that encourage learners' active engagement in the construction of knowledge.

In the French as a Second Language classroom, learning goes beyond the mere mastery of grammatical or lexical structures. It also encompasses the development of communication skills, critical thinking, social participation and cultural integration. French thus becomes both a subject of study and a tool for building social and civic skills.

This approach is in line with research on didactic contextualisation, which suggests that learning is more effective when it is grounded in learners' socio-cultural realities. Contextualised learning situations enable pupils to make sense of the content being taught and to better understand the issues at stake in their social environment.

3.2. Citizenship as a cross-curricular competence

In this study, citizenship is understood as a cross-curricular competence based on the acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviours that promote responsible participation in social life. It refers to an individual's ability to exercise their rights and fulfil their duties, to develop critical thinking, to respect democratic principles and to contribute to the collective well-being.

In contemporary education systems, citizenship education plays an important role in the learner's overall development. It aims to develop skills such as cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, solidarity and community engagement. Citizenship is therefore not merely a theoretical subject; it constitutes an educational process aimed at shaping social actors capable of engaging consciously and responsibly with their environment.

In French as a Second Language (FSL) classrooms, citizenship is developed primarily through language and interactive practices. Activities such as reading, debate, argumentation, written expression and critical analysis enable learners to reflect on the social, cultural and political realities of their society. These practices simultaneously foster the development of both language skills and citizenship skills.

The teaching of French as a second language thus emerges as a prime setting for citizenship education, insofar as it enables learners to learn how to communicate, engage in dialogue, present arguments and participate in social exchanges in a constructive manner.

3.3. Sustainable development as an educational focus

Sustainable development refers to a model of development aimed at meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is based on the interplay of three fundamental dimensions: environmental protection, economic development and social justice.

In the field of education, sustainable development is now a major educational priority. Education for sustainable development aims to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand contemporary environmental and social issues and to act responsibly in the face of these challenges.

According to UNESCO, education for sustainable development should enable learners to develop critical thinking, creativity, social responsibility and the ability to participate in public debates on environmental and societal issues.

In French as a second language classes, sustainable development can be addressed through the use of authentic texts, problem-based scenarios, debates, group projects and oral and written expression activities focusing on environmental and social realities. This approach helps to link language learning to learners' real-life concerns and to foster their civic engagement.

Integrating sustainable development into French language teaching thus helps to strengthen the social and educational dimensions of language learning.

3.4. Integrative teaching practices

Inclusive teaching practices refer to teaching approaches that simultaneously integrate several dimensions of learning, based on the principles of complementarity and interdependence. They stand in contrast to fragmented teaching approaches that isolate subject-specific content from social realities and educational objectives.

In the context of this study, integrative teaching practices involve combining language, citizenship and environmental learning within French as a second language teaching activities. This integration is reflected in particular by:

- The incorporation of citizenship and environmental themes into language content;
- The use of active and collaborative approaches;
- The contextualisation of learning situations;
- Encouraging participation and interaction;
- The use of authentic situations that foster critical thinking.

These practices help learners to develop complex skills that simultaneously draw on language, critical thinking, cooperation and social engagement.

From this perspective, the teaching of French as a second language is no longer merely a space for the transmission of linguistic knowledge, but also a framework for social and civic education.

3.5. The co-construction of skills

The co-construction of skills is based on the idea that learning is built collectively through interactions between the various

participants in the educational process. This approach emphasises collaboration, the active participation of learners, the exchange of ideas and the shared construction of knowledge.

In the context of school-based learning, co-construction means that the teacher and learners work together to develop knowledge and skills through interactive and context-based activities. The learner thus becomes a central figure in the learning process.

Co-construction promotes the development of several cross-curricular skills, such as:

- Communication;
- Cooperation;
- Critical thinking;
- Problem-solving;
- Civic engagement.

In French as a Second Language (FSL) lessons, this approach is particularly evident through debates, group work, collaborative projects, argumentative discussions and collective production activities. These teaching situations enable learners to gradually develop their linguistic and social skills through interactions with their peers and with the teacher.

3.6. The Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI)

The Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI) forms the central pedagogical framework of this study. It is based on the principle that linguistic, civic and environmental learning must be developed simultaneously within interactive, contextualised and meaningful learning situations.

This approach considers that skills do not develop in isolation, but within a holistic dynamic that integrates the cognitive, social, cultural and civic dimensions of learning. It prioritises:

- The active participation of learners;
- Educational interactions;
- The contextualisation of content;
- Collaborative approaches;
- Solving real-world problems;
- The social engagement of learners.

Within the APCI framework, the teacher acts as a mediator and facilitator of learning. They organise teaching situations

that encourage discussion, collective reflection and learners' involvement in the construction of knowledge.

When applied to the teaching of French as a second language, this approach moves beyond traditional teaching practices centred exclusively on linguistic content. It promotes an effective integration of communicative skills development, citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Thus, the Integrative Co-construction Approach emerges as a relevant pedagogical framework for meeting the contemporary educational needs of learners within the educational context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Presentation of the data collected

The research carried out in ten secondary schools in the city of Kinshasa aimed to analyse the prominence given to learning related to citizenship and sustainable development in the teaching practices of French as a Second Language teachers. Classroom observations, analysis of teaching materials and discussions with teachers revealed several common trends.

Across all the schools observed, teaching practices remain strongly focused on the development of language and communication skills. Teachers place significant emphasis on activities relating to grammar, vocabulary, written expression, text comprehension and the development of critical thinking through classroom interactions.

At Elikya Secondary School, French teachers primarily develop learners' communicative and linguistic skills through relatively sustained interactions. However, learning related to citizenship, sustainable development and the co-construction of skills remains poorly integrated into the teaching sequences observed.

At Boboto Secondary School, French teaching is essentially centred on language development and the cultivation of critical thinking. Despite a relatively high level of interactive engagement, civic and environmental aspects appear to be under-utilised in learning activities.

Observations carried out at the Cardinal Monsengwo School Complex also reveal a predominance of language-based learning and teaching interactions geared towards critical reasoning. However, practices promoting education in citizenship, sustainable development and the co-construction of knowledge remain insufficiently developed.

At Saint-Raphaël College, teachers place greater emphasis on language skills and the critical analysis of content. Nevertheless, learning relating to citizenship and sustainable

development is addressed only marginally, whilst practices of co-construction remain largely absent.

At the Monseigneur Moke School Complex, the teaching practices observed prioritise language learning and critical thinking, without any real integration of citizenship and environmental dimensions into the activities offered to pupils.

At Chaumba High School, teachers focus their teaching interventions primarily on the development of communication and language skills. Aspects relating to citizenship, sustainable development and the co-construction of learning play a very limited role there.

Observations carried out at Motema Mpiko High School reveal a strong emphasis on language learning and teaching interactions that encourage critical thinking. However, activities relating to citizenship and sustainable development remain largely absent from classroom practice.

At Sacré-Cœur High School, teachers significantly develop learners' language skills and critical thinking. However, aspects relating to citizenship, culture and the environment are under-utilised in teaching sequences.

At Lycée Kabambare, teachers also prioritise language learning and interactions that foster the development of critical thinking. Although some activities address the issue of social integration, learning related to citizenship and sustainable development remains insufficiently structured.

Finally, at the Institut de la Gombe, teachers of French as a second language place the main emphasis on developing communicative and critical skills. Learning related to civic participation and social life remains relatively limited there.

Taken together, these observations highlight a general trend characterised by the predominance of language learning at the expense of civic and environmental dimensions in the teaching of French as a second language at secondary level.

4.2. Data analysis

The data collected from the ten secondary schools surveyed have been summarised in the table below to highlight the main pedagogical dimensions utilised in the practices of FSL teachers.

Table 1: Summary of aspects utilised in the pedagogical practices of French as a second language teachers

Schools	Language learning	Development of critical thinking	Citizenship education	Learning about sustainable development	Collaborative learning
Elikya/St-Augustin Secondary School	8	6	2	6	2
Boboto Secondary School	7	8	3	6	3
Saint-Raphaël Secondary School	7	7	3	5	3
C.S. Bishop Moke	8	8	1	4	2
C.S. Cardinal Monsengwo	7	7	1	5	3
Kabambare High School	8	8	1	4	2
Motema Mpiko High School	8	7	2	5	2
Bosangani High School	8	8	1	4	1
Chaumba High School	7	7	2	4	2
Gombe Institute 2	8	8	3	4	2
Total	66	64	21	47	22

Analysis of the data presented in this table highlights a strong emphasis on language learning in the teaching practices of secondary school teachers of French as a second language. With a total of 66 instances across all the schools observed,

language skills clearly form the central focus of the teaching activities carried out in the classrooms.

This trend reflects the enduring influence of a traditional approach to teaching French, centred primarily on the mastery of linguistic and communicative skills. Teachers pay particular attention to grammar, vocabulary, written and oral expression, and text comprehension. This focus confirms that French as a second language continues to be perceived primarily as a subject for the transmission of linguistic skills.

The development of critical thinking also plays a significant role in the teaching practices observed, with a total of 64 instances. This finding shows that many teachers encourage exchanges, discussions and certain forms of pedagogical interaction in their classrooms. However, a qualitative analysis of the teaching sequences reveals that these interactions remain predominantly focused on linguistic analysis and the comprehension of textual content, without any real engagement with contemporary social, civic or environmental issues.

Conversely, citizenship education appears to be particularly weak across all the schools surveyed. With only 21 instances, this aspect plays a marginal role in the teaching practices of French as a second language teachers. Several schools, notably the Mgr Moke School Complex, the Cardinal Monsengwo School Complex, Kabambare High School and Bosangani High School, recorded only a single instance relating to citizenship education.

These results reflect a low level of integration of citizenship education objectives into French teaching activities. However, official documents and curriculum reforms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo emphasise the need to educate learners capable of actively participating in social and democratic life.

Analysis of the table also shows that learning related to sustainable development remains insufficiently developed in the teaching practices observed. Although this dimension has a slightly higher total than that for citizenship, with 47 instances, its integration remains limited and unevenly distributed across schools.

The highest scores are found at Elikya Secondary School and Boboto Secondary School, with six occurrences each, whilst several schools record only four occurrences. This situation indicates that environmental and social issues are occasionally mentioned in certain teaching sequences, but are rarely utilised as genuine learning objectives integrated with language skills.

Furthermore, practices involving the co-construction of skills appear to be particularly limited across all the schools studied. With only 22 instances, this aspect remains marginal in

teachers' teaching practices. Collaborative activities, group projects, participatory approaches and situations involving the shared construction of knowledge remain underdeveloped in the classes observed.

This low level of co-construction highlights the persistence of a predominantly transmissive pedagogical model, in which the teacher retains a dominant position in the teaching/learning process. Learners participate in interactions, but still have few opportunities to develop autonomy, collaboration and the collective development of skills.

A comparative analysis of the various dimensions studied thus reveals a significant imbalance between language learning and learning relating to citizenship, the environment and collaboration. Whilst language skills and the development of critical thinking play a significant role in teaching practices, aspects relating to citizenship, sustainable development and co-construction remain secondary.

These findings confirm the existence of a discrepancy between official curriculum guidelines and the teaching practices actually implemented in secondary school French as a Second Language classes. Despite institutional guidelines promoting a competence-based approach and citizenship education, the majority of teachers continue to prioritise traditional language learning.

This situation could be explained by several factors, notably:

- Shortcomings in initial and in-service teacher training;
- A lack of proficiency in integrative teaching approaches;
- The prevalence of traditional teaching practices;
- A lack of suitable teaching resources;
- The lack of effective pedagogical support.

Ultimately, the findings of this study highlight the need to rethink teaching practices for French as a second language at secondary level in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The effective integration of learning related to citizenship and sustainable development requires more contextualised, interactive and collaborative teaching approaches capable of fostering the co-construction of skills among learners.

General conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyse the integration of learning about citizenship and sustainable development into teaching practices for French as a second language at secondary school level in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It adopted a

didactic and socio-constructivist perspective aimed at demonstrating that the teaching of French as a second language can no longer be reduced to the mere transmission of linguistic knowledge, but must also contribute to the learner's overall development as a social actor, citizen and responsible individual.

Analysis of the data collected from ten secondary schools in the city of Kinshasa revealed several key findings. The results show that the teaching practices of French as a second language teachers remain largely dominated by language learning and the development of communicative skills. Teachers pay particular attention to language proficiency, text comprehension and the development of critical thinking through classroom interactions.

However, learning related to citizenship, sustainable development and the co-construction of skills plays a relatively marginal role in the teaching practices observed. When these aspects are addressed, they often appear in an ad hoc, implicit or peripheral manner, without being genuinely integrated into the linguistic objectives pursued in the teaching sequences.

This situation reflects the persistence of a pedagogical model still heavily influenced by traditional teaching approaches, centred primarily on the transmission of subject-specific knowledge. Despite curricular reforms and institutional guidelines promoting a competence-based approach, as well as education for citizenship and sustainable development, the teaching practices observed reveal a significant gap between official guidelines and their actual implementation in French as a second language classes.

The study also shows that pedagogical interactions, whilst fairly frequent in several schools, do not systematically lead to a genuine co-construction of knowledge and skills. Learners remain insufficiently involved in collaborative, participatory and contextualised activities likely to foster their civic and social engagement.

Thus, this research confirms the hypothesis that the effective integration of learning about citizenship and sustainable development into French as a second language teaching practices can contribute significantly to the development of learners' civic, social and communicative skills. It also highlights the relevance of the Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI) as a pedagogical framework capable of fostering a harmonious integration between language learning, citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Ultimately, the teaching of French as a second language at secondary level should be viewed as a prime setting for the

holistic development of the learner. Beyond the development of communication skills, it must enable pupils to understand the social and environmental realities of their society, to develop critical thinking and to participate actively in building sustainable and responsible development.

This line of thinking thus opens up significant prospects for the renewal of teaching practices in French as a second language in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in favour of teaching that is more contextualised, participatory, civic-minded and focused on contemporary societal issues.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and analyses carried out, several recommendations can be made to strengthen the integration of learning about citizenship and sustainable development into teaching practices for French as a second language at secondary level.

1. Recommendations for teachers of French as a second language

Teachers of French as a second language should:

- Systematically integrate issues relating to citizenship and sustainable development into their teaching units;
- Prioritise active, participatory and collaborative teaching approaches;
- Contextualise learning by taking into account the social and environmental realities experienced by learners;
- Encourage debates, group work, collaborative projects and activities that foster critical thinking;
- Develop authentic learning situations that enable learners to link language skills to contemporary social issues.

2. Recommendations for teacher training institutions

Institutions responsible for initial and in-service teacher training should:

- Strengthen modules relating to citizenship education and sustainable development;
- Train future teachers in integrative and socio-constructivist pedagogical approaches;
- Develop skills related to contextualising learning;

- Introduce teachers to the Integrative Co-construction Approach (APCI);
- Promote teaching practices centred on the learner and on active participation.

3. Recommendations to the education authorities

The Ministry of National Education and educational services should:

- Strengthen pedagogical support for teachers in the field;
- Develop teaching guides that explicitly incorporate learning about citizenship and sustainable development into French language teaching;
- Organise continuing professional development on innovative teaching approaches;
- Monitor the effective implementation of curriculum guidelines in schools;
- Encourage the production of contextualised teaching materials tailored to Congolese realities.

4. Recommendations for schools

Schools should:

- Promote a school culture based on civic participation and environmental responsibility;
- Support innovative educational initiatives related to sustainable development;
- Encourage extracurricular activities that foster learners' civic engagement;
- Develop educational projects that integrate social and environmental issues into the school curriculum.

5. Research prospects

This study opens up several avenues for research that could further the discussion on the teaching of French as a second language in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Future research could, in particular:

- To analyse the actual impact of inclusive teaching practices on learners' academic performance;
- To examine teacher training in relation to the challenges of citizenship education and sustainable development;

- To explore the integration of social, cultural and ethical skills into the teaching of French as a second language;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the integrative co-construction approach in different educational contexts.

In short, the successful integration of citizenship and sustainable development education into the teaching of French as a second language will depend largely on the ability of educational stakeholders to rethink current teaching practices in order to build a school system that is more open to the social, environmental and civic realities of the contemporary world.

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