

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Doing the Delf/Dalf

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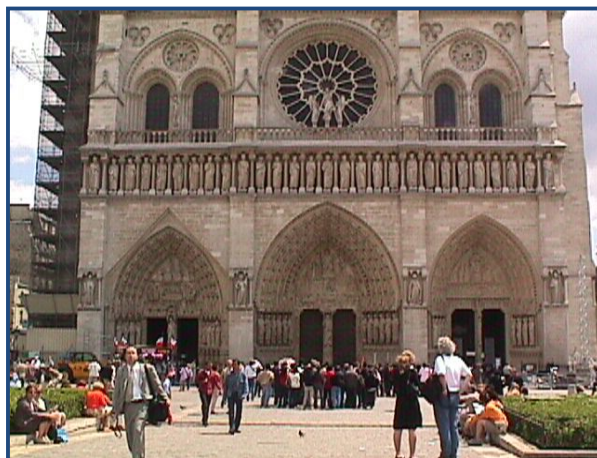
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In the current climate of growing professionalisation of language teaching it is heartening to see that increasing numbers of teachers are seeking to engage in professional development to enhance their curriculum delivery and maximise learning outcomes for their students. In my opinion, there is no better investment of time and effort than that of linguistic upskilling. Although it is not impossible to teach effectively with a relatively low level of linguistic competence, the benefits of a sound knowledge of subject matter and a reasonable level of fluency are manifold. Besides the obvious professional advantages, such as greater flexibility, ability to respond to student needs and interests, credibility and confidence, the process of being a life-long language learner is a salutary exercise in self-reflection and an excellent role model for any language teacher.

If we feed ourselves as much as we feed our students we become effectively our own resource. The more language we know, the more creative we can be both in and out of the classroom. There is a wealth of fascinating, free, authentic documentation available on the internet to those whose language level allows them to access it. It has the capacity to modernise and diversify our teaching practice, thus motivating students and improving retention rates but, just as importantly, it allows us to use our languages for other than pedagogical purposes - for pleasure for instance!

For French teachers wishing to upskill or validate their current level of competence with an internationally recognised qualification, the Delf/Dalf is an option worth considering. These are a series of language proficiency tests created by the CIEP (Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques) and based on the six levels of the European Framework (Delf A1, A2, B1, B2; Dalf C1, C2). In order to ascertain your level of language acquisition you can first refer to the descriptors below. The tests for each level can be sat in May or October at the Alliance Française in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. It is not obligatory to do a preparatory course for any level but it is certainly advisable, as mastering the format of the test will maximise success. These three Alliances all offer preparatory courses (according to demand), which is convenient for those who live in those cities but less helpful for those resident elsewhere, as they do not yet offer distance courses. Auckland and Massey

Universities both offer distance French courses which, although they are not linked specifically to Delf/Dalf, provide comprehensive instruction in all language skills, tutor support and units towards a degree. Curiously the CIEP itself has not yet developed distance courses for its own qualifications but there is another option. The CNED (Centre national d'enseignement à distance) provides a series of tutor-supported CDROMs corresponding to each level of the Delf/Dalf. Their website <http://www.cned.fr> is worth a look. Under the heading CNEDSUPERIEUR click on 'Préparer une certification en langues étrangères' then under 'Français langue étrangère (FLE)'> Préparation au Delf et au Dalf (click on the Union Jack for the English version). Courses cost 63€ for self-funded students. This is for tuition only and does not include the cost of sitting the tests.



For more information on the Delf/Dalf (including Delf junior) consult <http://www.ciep.fr> (English version available) and click on 'Tests & Diplomas'. Sample papers are available which will help you identify your level and tame the format.

In addition you can also sit the TCF Test de connaissance du français for which you receive an attestation of your level of language acquisition. Information about the TCF is available on both the above sites.

What does Delf stand for? Diplôme d'études en langue française. I think the 'a' in Dalf stands for 'approfondi' but could find no definitive confirmation of this.

Bon courage et bonne continuation!

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

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