

Innovations and Challenges in Second Language Teacher Education: A View from New Brunswick

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Conference of the Canadian Association of
Applied Linguistics
Carleton University, Ottawa, May 2009

B.Ed Second Language Education at UNB

- ▶ Two certificates available:
 - 1. Teaching French as a Second Language
 - Intensive French option
 - French Immersion option
 - 2. Teaching English as a Second Language
 - sanctioned by TESL Canada
 - includes school-based and adult language learning contexts

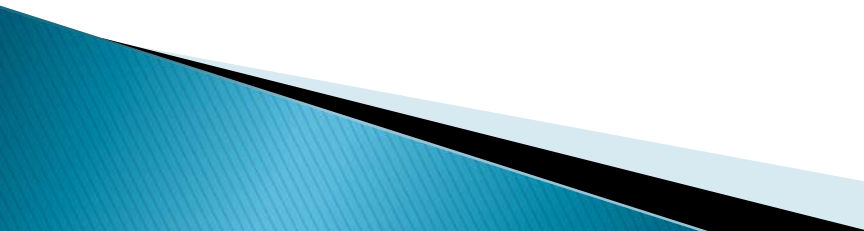
The Current Context in NB – Innovations

- ▶ Extensive reorganization of FSL programs in NB school system
 - Elimination of Gr. 1 EFL entry – replaced by Gr. 3 entry
 - Intensive French at Gr.5 for all non-immersion students
 - Gr.6 LFL entry point maintained
- ▶ Increased efforts by prov gov't to attract new immigrants
 - Agreements with specific countries, esp. Korea and China
 - Many more EALs at elementary and secondary school levels
- ▶ New 11 month B.Ed program
 - Co-existing with 2 year B.Ed being phased out
 - Increased intake to compensate for lost revenue due to shorter program (250 students in 11mths vs 150 students per year x 2 years)

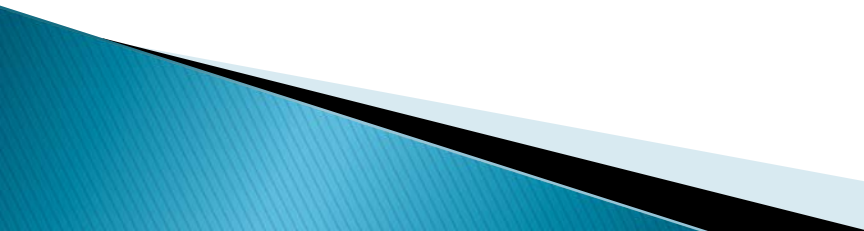
School System Program Challenges

- ▶ New Gr.3 entry point for FI
 - Educating Gr 1 & 2 teachers about the Gr 3 entry
 - Addressing the pedagogical needs of Gr. 3 FI teachers regarding L1 literacy competencies of students and possibilities for transfer (common underlying proficiencies)
 - Identifying interventions that were effective in L1 literacy at Gr 1&2 that could be continued in Gr 3 FI
 - Identifying students at-risk and interventions that are effective for these students in L1 and L2 contexts
 - Implications for B.Ed course development and delivery

School System Program Challenges cont.

- ▶ Intensive French at Gr.5
 - A precise and prescriptive method
 - How to prepare teachers effectively but not lose sight of larger vision of FSL teaching (Stern's "break with the method concept")
 - What exactly are pre-intensive and post-intensive French?
 - How to prepare teachers to maximize the learning that students will have coming out of IF at Gr.5
 - Implications for B.Ed course development and delivery
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School System Program Challenges cont.

- ▶ Increased EALs at elementary and secondary levels
 - ▶ Very little support at ministry/department; school district, and school levels
 - ▶ Some high schools have an EAL teacher – none at elementary level
 - ▶ No established curriculum
 - ▶ Difficult to place student teachers interested in EAL teaching in school system
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Some General Challenges

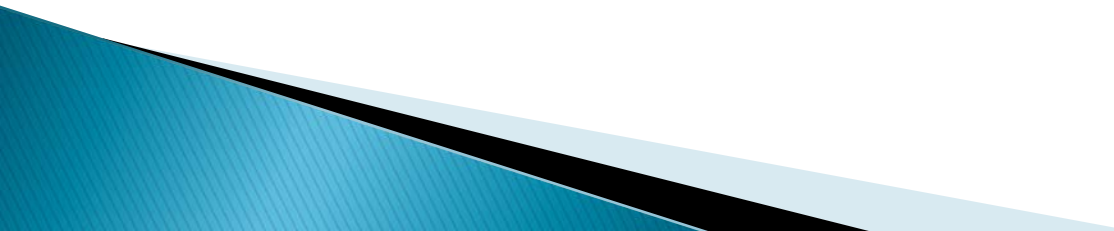
- ▶ Linguistic competency of applicants to B.Ed
 - FSL candidates need to have a minimum of Advanced on NB Oral Proficiency Scale
 - TOEFL or other recognized standardized tests of English for non-native speakers (NNS)
 - Varied needs of NNS
 - teach English in China vs teach English in Canada
 - Varied needs of students in Faculties of Education for FSL
 - Core French, Intensive French, French Immersion
- ▶ Pedagogical/Academic competency of graduates
 - Graduates from L1 institutions who do not have L2 pedagogical training
 - Candidates who have linguistic competency in French but less than desirable academic record

Innovations – Revised B.Ed Program

▶ Practicum:

- Multiple and early student teaching experiences
 - An initial 2 week placement at the start-up of school year with specific “look-fors”
 - Every Monday in schools
 - A 3-week intermediate practicum at the end of the first semester
 - An advanced 7 week practicum at the end of the program

Challenges related to practicum

- ▶ Early practica not necessarily in L2 classroom
 - ▶ University supervisor not necessarily (and probably not) an L2 speaker or an L2 specialist
 - ▶ L2 university specialists supervising students in other subject–area specialties, and not L2
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Innovations B.Ed – Course Delivery

A
Modular
Approach

Revised
Content

Program
and Level
Specific

Reflective
Semester

Innovations: Courses → Modules

FSL I Élémentaire

Module 1
Fondements
(3e à 8e année)

Module 2
Immersion précoce (3e à
5e année)

FSL II Élémentaire

Module 1
Français intensif
(4e à 5e année)

Module 2
Immersion précoce
(6e à 8e année)

Innovations: Courses → Modules

FSL I Secondaire

Module 1
Fondements
(6e à 12e année)

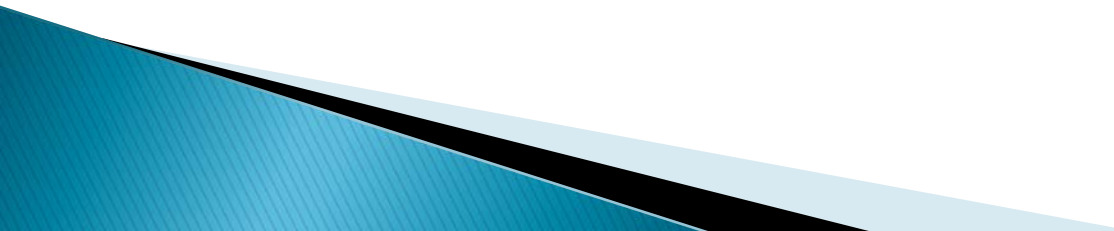
Module 2
Immersion tardive et
post-intensif
(6e à 8e année)

FSL II Secondaire

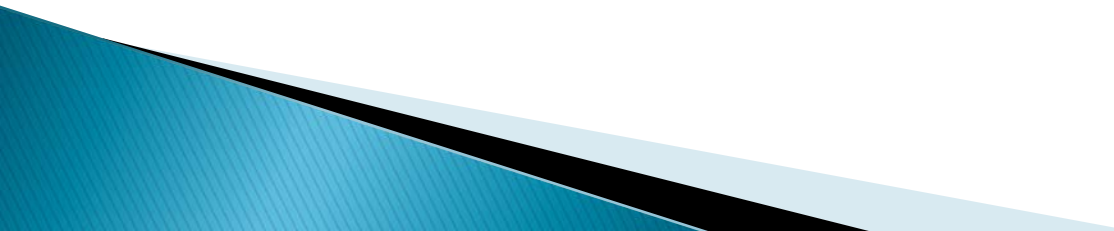
Module 1
Immersion française
et post-intensif
(9e à 12e année)

Module 2
Immersion précoce
(6e à 8e année)

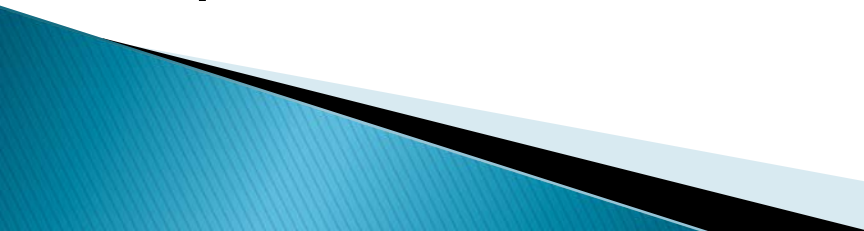
Innovations – Post-Internship Semester

- ▶ A 6 week semester at the end of the program
 - in general a focus on preparation for job market: interviewing, job letter writing, professional portfolio
 - includes a course entitled “Reflections on Second Language Theory and Practice
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Challenges Related to Revised B.Ed

- ▶ 11 month timeframe constraints:
 - How to fit in foundations courses like Bilingualism and Education and Second Language Acquisition
 - How to provide opportunities for students to improve linguistic competence
 - How do students wishing to specialize in FSL or ESL fit it all in (overloads)
 - Lack of recognition of literacy courses in FSL as relevant or as being options to literacy courses in regular program
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Pedagogical and Academic Demands

- ▶ Increased accountability (accreditation)
 - ▶ Increased demands for student–teachers to be ready “hit the road running”
 - ▶ Increased expectation for students to be trained in specific methods of teaching FSL
 - ▶ Difficulty incorporating important foundational courses like Bilingualism and Education, Second Language Acquisition in School
 - ▶ Difficult for L2 student teacher to grow as professional decision maker
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Challenges = Innovation

- ▶ To end on a positive note:
 - Challenges force us to be innovative
 - New ways of delivering course content (modules)
 - More and varied school-based experiences for students
 - More coordination of course content, less duplication (adjusting to time constraints)
 - Greater linking of research to classroom practice
 - (2 examples)

Innovations – Research

- ▶ Language Portfolio for Educators
 - collaboration with CASLT
 - Adaption of the European Language Portfolio for pre-service and in-service teachers
 - A language-based portfolio (not pedagogy)
 - Focus on language use in teaching context
 - Dual purpose:
 - Personal assessment and goal setting
 - Familiarity for use with students during practicum and when teaching “for real”
 - Piloting in 09–10 with survey/focus groups

Innovations – Research cont.

- ▶ Language Portfolio for use with students at secondary school level
 - Action–research project with 4 teachers from a local high school
 - Portfolio design and implementation
 - Use with multiple languages
 - A ground–up project – the teachers approached us

Innovations – Research cont.

- ▶ Action–research in French Immersion and ESL classrooms focused on the teaching of writing
 - Professional learning communities
 - Development of a writing model (ÉCRI)
 - Production of a DVD and workshop guide for use with pre–service and in–service teachers as sustained professional development
 - Stronger school–system/faculty of education connections
 - Teachers involved in research, writing reports and articles, and presenting results

- ▶ Challenges, yes. Exciting things happening as well when working with people who want to learn and improve.
- ▶ “It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows.”

Epictetus, 55 AD

