



# **The University of British Columbia's FLAGS (French Language and Global Study) Program**

**ACLA/CAAL**

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# FLAGS – 2007-08



# FLAGS – 2008-09



# French Pre-service Education at UBC

- **Elementary & secondary French specialist cohorts (immersion/core)**
  - **French language/literature pre-requisites, entrance proficiency test**
  - **coursework in French**
  
- **FLAGS – Elementary core French generalist cohort**
  - **pre-program summer immersion experience (*Explore*)**
  - **generalist BEd program + French conversation course + core French methodology course**



# Number of French teacher candidates

- 500 elementary/middle years teacher candidates
  - 30 French specialists
  - 18 FLAGS generalists
- Similar percentage at Simon Fraser University
- No distinct cohort at University of Victoria



# BC's Teacher Education Programs

Usually, students are either generalists or in a full French stream. Thus, teacher candidates who have an interest in teaching French but perhaps need more time to work on their language skills are left to do so independently. They are not given practicum experience in the classroom teaching French nor any language-teaching methodology. They must do so on a more risky trial and error basis after they have launched their careers. This is a loss for students and teachers alike. (Seda, 2008)



# BC Context

- **French (or other second language) mandated in Grades 5 to 8**
  - **delivered mainly by classroom generalists**
    - **15% have taken a 2<sup>nd</sup> language methodology course**
    - **25% have taken a French course at the university level**
    - **21% report ease of use in speaking French; 28% in reading French**
- (study involving 800 elementary/middle years French teachers, Carr, 2007)



# FLAGS teacher candidates

- **Background in core French to Grade 11 or 12 (a few had 1<sup>st</sup> yr. French)**
- **Did not consider themselves as potential French teachers**

I knew that I wanted to incorporate French somehow into my Education degree but I also knew that my French was not strong enough for a specialization in core or immersion. (Adrienne, 2008)

- **Reasons for investment: employability, love of French, lifelong learning, influencing future change and renewal of core French**



# FLAGS teacher candidates

- For me personally I know that, after five years of studying French in a high school setting and being unable to string a simple sentence together, it was frustrating to say the least. I see this as an **obvious problem with the way French is taught in BC** and, in my opinion, something has to change. I want to be a part of this change. (Marie-Claire, 2008)
- I have three children who experienced Core French and have seen firsthand the **poor quality of instruction** that is given in many schools and, therefore, I understood the need for the FLAGS program. (Faith, 2008)



# Extended practicum opportunities

- 5 candidates – 3-week mini-stage in French context:
  - 2 in Québec, QC
  - 2 in Tracadie, NB
  - 1 in Montréal
- other opportunities for French specialists
  - Switzerland



# What else? What's next?

## **Preservice Teachers**

- FLAGS – 3<sup>rd</sup> intake 2009; French Specialist cohorts – ongoing
- proposed change to UBC's Teacher Education program:
  - 2 credit French methodology course for all elem/middle yrs.

## **Inservice Teachers**

- MEd for FSL Teachers (2<sup>nd</sup> cohort intake Sept. 2010)
- FSL Teachers Certificate (15-credit accreditation) coming



# FLAGS candidates





# References

Carr, W. (2007). *Teaching core French in British Columbia: Teachers' perspectives*. Vancouver, BC: BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages.

Carr, W. (2008). Raising *FLAGS: Renewing core French at the pre-service teacher level*. □ Unpublished paper.