

Highlights of the French Programs unit's 2015-2016 report

Yukon Department of Education recognizes the value of being fluent in Canada's two official languages. To give our learners the opportunity to learn French, the French Programs unit coordinates Core French, Intensive French and Immersion French programs in Yukon schools. Recognizing the importance of culture, we also support French cultural experiences through classroom, multi-school, and community events and activities that bring the language to life.

The French Programs unit congratulates everyone who made French second language and culture acquisition possible for our learners. We thank school administrators, classroom educators, Yukon Education staff and French monitors for their support in strengthening French Programs according to a vision of Canada rooted in history and diversity. We also thank learning assistant teachers, educational assistants, remedial tutors and teachers on call. We would also like to recognize the FSL Working Groups and Advisory Committee, whose work was instrumental in shaping the new 5-year action plan for French Programs in Yukon.

Public Participation on the Future of FSL Programs

In Fall 2015, the French Programs unit collaborated with teachers, parents, students and administrators to determine the future of FSL programs. With consultants leading focus groups, we explored the current state of French Programs and developed visions for the future, leading to a series of recommendations. With the Yukon Bureau of Statistics and **Canadian Parents for French**, we surveyed parents of pre-school and school-aged children to determine their awareness of French programs and to understand their motivations for sending (or not sending) their children to French Immersion programs. The focus group recommendations and the survey results informed the development of a new 5-year Action Plan for French Programs by the FSL Working Groups and Advisory Committee.

Increased communication with parents, teachers, and other stakeholders

The surveys and focus groups highlighted a need to enhance our communications with the FSL community. To address this, we reviewed and updated the French Programs page on the Department of Education website, developed and implemented a communication strategy for French Programs, and offered more face-to-face information sessions for parents. We continued to expand our informative video series with two videos that promote French Immersion to parents and students. To keep parents informed of French cultural activities in their children's schools and communities, we've also developed a cultural activities web page, FrancoFUN, which will be launched for the 2016-17 school year.

French Immersion Expansion

In its 35th year of existence, a second elementary school began offering a French Immersion kindergarten class in response to the **increasing demand for French Immersion** programming in Yukon. After hearing from parents through our FSL Parent Survey, the Department expanded this program at Selkirk beyond kindergarten, creating a dual-track program at the school.

11 French monitors

Yukon welcomed **11 French Monitors** from the Odyssey program, which brought French culture into all of Yukon's schools. Through their work with classroom French teachers, the monitors cultivate an appreciation of the French language and culture. In 2015-16 we launched a new initiative that brings a French Monitor to our rural schools without a French program, giving these students the opportunity to discover francophone culture through interactive activities in their communities. French monitors also helped students track their language journey in their new **Passeport culturel**, where they record the Francophone events and activities they experience.

Authentic French cultural experiences for all Yukon's students

As we heard from students during focus groups, they seek meaningful experiences in French that allow them to use the language authentically and discover francophone cultures. The **French Cultural Activities Fund** gave students the opportunity to experience cultural events such as plays, sugar shacks, taffy pulling, musical performances and workshops in their schools. We also brought together the FSL learner community through our annual signature events: a Francophone artist's tour of Yukon schools, Chante-la ta chanson (for elementary students) and Secondaire en spectacle (for secondary students). Together, these events promote a sense of belonging to the FSL community. Partnerships with **French for the Future** and **L'Association franco-yukonnaise** make these events a success.

Local capacity building

To build capacity amongst our French teachers, we've developed in-Yukon expertise on pedagogy and assessments. Early and Late French Immersion teachers received training on balanced literacy and assessments. They also learned about the neurolinguistic approach teaching strategies. New Intensive and Post-Intensive French teachers received their Intensive French Certification, and Intensive teachers received training on assessing Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) and on marking written assessments. Additionally, individualized classroom instructional support was provided to French teachers by consultants throughout the year. We supported inquiry learning networks, giving teachers the opportunities to collaborate on best practices that support students. Immersion teachers also benefit from membership in the professional organization *l'Association canadienne des professeurs d'immersion*.

Student assessments

The French Programs unit supports teachers with multiple forms of assessment that assist parents, teachers and learners by providing feedback on students' learning and help shape their learning moving forward. Oral proficiency interviews, and writing and reading assessments were conducted with Intensive and Immersion students in accordance with the assessment matrix. The data collected will allow us to recognize trends, direct teaching strategies, and identify areas to develop.

DELFL

In spring 2016, we offered grade 11 and 12 FSL students the opportunity to write the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELFL) exam, an international language certificate that tests language proficiency. With the DELFL, we aim to motivate students to continue studying French until graduation so they can showcase their language abilities in a tangible way for post-secondary schools or future employers. This first offering provided important feedback that will make the DELFL accessible to more students.

National partnership building

Through our partnerships at the national scale, Yukon works with other jurisdictions to advance French instruction and keep Yukon's pedagogy at the leading edge. In 2015-16, the French Program's unit took on a leadership role, acting on rotation as Chair of the committees of the *Pan-canadian Project on FFL & FLS*, which tackle issues surrounding FSL & FFL education that are common across Canada. This ensures both that Yukon's voice is heard, allowing us to share our experiences and best practices, as well as learn from other jurisdictions. Yukon also participates in the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, the Official Languages programs of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (including Odyssey, Explore and Destination Clic), the PPCFLP and PPCFLS Steering Committees, the ACFL Council of Governors and the National Tripartite Committee on FFL Education.