Successful Implementation of Heritage/International Language Programs in Canada: Selected strategies & Case studies in Alberta

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Successful HL/IL programs in Canada: Selected Strategies & Case Studies in Alberta

- SAHLA, IHLA and community-based language education programs.
- The importance and value of teaching and learning heritage / international languages. How community-based HL/IL education has contributed greatly towards multiple literacies for children and adults,

- Alberta-based examples of strategies and practices that best aid the development of multiple literacies for the province, and the many cognitive, educational, cultural, social and economic benefits that languages education brings to our province, including our educational institutions and our workforce. Language education policies, programs, trends and issues from Alberta Education, as well as local school districts. How schools, academics, community organizations and government policies assist in this development.
Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association

SAHLA’s mission

SAHLA is a Calgary-based non-profit educational umbrella association founded 26 years ago in 1985 whose mission is:

To lead, advocate and provide resources for the promotion of international & heritage languages education.
Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association

SAHLA’s vision

Every student in the province of Alberta will have the opportunity to access and learn an International Language as part of their basic education.

• Alberta Education helped this vision to become very close to reality in 2006, when 52 out of Alberta’s 62 school boards introduced a languages requirement starting at grade four!

• Community-based language programs through SAHLA & IHLA continue to be a strong and vital source for teaching & learning many different languages.
Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association

SAHLA’s role

- SAHLA plays invaluable unduplicated role in bringing diverse language and cultural communities, schools, principals and teachers together, teaching 38 languages to over 6,000 students.

- **Share curriculum and best teaching practices** between linguistic and cultural communities.

- **Develop, enhance and promote our rich linguistic and cultural diversity** through community-based language schools.

- **Advocate for effective language policies and programs**, to benefit students both at public school and community levels.
## Some of our schools...

**Chinese Academy**
- established in 1997
- celebrated its 13th anniversary this year.
- **1925 students** (K-12)
- **88 teachers** (10 certificated)
- 54 volunteers
- high school Curriculum developed provincially and recognized by AB ED.
- Mandarin & Cantonese
- includes martial arts, speech, writing & singing competition
- operates in a public school on Saturday mornings
- *Largest community language school in Alberta!*

**Eritrean Language School**
- established in 1990
- **105 students**
- **10 teachers**
- 9 volunteers
- grades 1-10
- curriculum developed locally, looking ahead for curriculum to be recognized by AB ED.
- Tigrigna language
- includes soccer & dance programs
- operates in a public school on Saturday afternoons
Some of our schools…

John Paul II Polish School
- established in 1934
- celebrated its 75th anniversary this year.
- **433 students** (K-12)
- **31 teachers**
- high school Curriculum developed locally and recognized by Alberta Education
- operates in a Catholic school on Saturday mornings

Armenian School
- established in 2009
- **10 students**
- **2 teachers**
- grades 1-8
- curriculum developed regionally
- operates in a cultural centre on Saturdays/Sundays
U of C - Continuing Education
Teaching Second Languages
Professional Development Certificate
in partnership with SAHLA

LEVEL ONE
4 Courses total = 130 hours
All 4 courses offered in class & on-line nationally

- Pedagogic Fundamentals – 40 hours
- Teaching Specific Language Skills 1 – 30 hours
  (Reading/Writing/Grammar/Vocabulary)
- Teaching Specific Language Skills 2 – 30 hours
  (Speaking/Listening/Pronunciation)
- Assessment and Materials Development – 30 hours

LEVEL TWO
4 Courses total = 130 hours
All 4 courses offered in class & on-line nationally

- Teaching Second Languages - Foundations – 40 hours
- Teaching Second Languages - Methodology – 30 hours
- Linguistic Structures – 30 hours
- Teaching Culture – 30 hours
International/Heritage Languages

• Since language & culture are inextricably linked, learning languages can contribute to awareness of one’s own **cultural identity** as well as **intercultural understanding** between different groups in several ways. **Together, multiculturalism and multilingualism are part of an inseparable family.** Reinforces **Canadian multicultural identity** and strengthens our country’s way of life. The result is social cohesion, which includes:
  - cross-cultural awareness, understanding, respect and harmony, peace-building & civic participation.

• **Language is the most vital communication skill in society.** It is necessary for everyday life & is related to every single part of our community. Contributes towards the **social, cultural, educational and economic development** of the Alberta/Canadian society:
  - International relations & cooperation
  - International trade
  - International development
Vision: an Alberta where all citizens feel a sense of belonging and pride, and participate in cultural and recreational activities that reflect their diverse heritage and enrich their lives.

Mission: To ensure Albertans have the opportunity to share, express and experience culture in a province that respects the past, celebrates the present and welcomes the future.

“Culture is who we are, what we value, what we consider beautiful, how we spend our leisure time and how we think about and treat others.”
Benefits of Second Language Learning:
Alberta Education

**Intellectual Potential**
- Students fluent in two languages score higher in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence.
- Students studying a second language are superior in divergent thinking tasks and in memory ability and attention span.

**Scholastic Achievement**
- Second language students have higher test scores in reading, language, and mathematics.
- Each additional year of second language training creates a greater positive differential compared to students not receiving a second language.

**Effect on First Language**
- Second language education significantly strengthens first language skills in areas of reading, English vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills.
- The earlier the start, the greater the positive effect on the first language.

**Citizenship**
- Students studying a second language have superior cross-cultural skills and adapt better to varying cultural contexts.
- Students studying a second language display greater cultural sensitivity.

**Economic Potential**
- There is an urgent requirement for qualified speakers of languages other than English in areas of science, technology, medicine, and global commerce.
The Effects of Learning a Third language for students whose First Language is not English.

1) Learning a 3rd language is aided by proficiency in the 1st language, and acquired skills can be transferred among the languages spoken.

1) The acquisition of a 3rd language is a common occurrence around the world. The number of trilinguals in Canada and in Canadian schools is growing.
Alberta Education
Provincially Developed Languages Programs
in addition to French (FSL), Immersion & Aboriginal languages

- **International Languages Programs**

- **Bilingual Programs (4 different languages)**
  - Chinese, German, Spanish and Ukrainian

- **Language and Culture Programs**
  -(8 different languages taught in public & community HL schools)
  - Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Punjabi, Spanish and Ukrainian.
Alberta Education

Locally Developed/Acquired

Jr & Sr High School Language Courses.

-38 different languages – taught in community IL/HL Schools

- do not duplicate provincially authorized courses, further develop & cultivate the unique interests & abilities of students, to foster educational improvement and excellence through innovation at the local level to meet the unique needs of a local community.

The Common Curriculum Frameworks for International Languages: Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) for Collaboration in Basic Education can used as a guideline.

- The Govt of Alberta has recognized the multicultural nature of the province through the Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act.

- Accordingly, Alberta Education encourages school authorities to develop second language courses to meet the needs of the local community when such courses are not available as provincially authorized courses.

- www.education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/learnlang/.aspx
Calgary Board of Education offers the following language programs:

- **French Immersion, FSL Spanish, German and Chinese Bilingual, Chinese, German and Spanish Language and Culture, Cree & Blackfoot**

**The CBE International Certificate**

- Recognizes & values the significant contributions, work & experiences that IL/HL students have accomplished throughout their CBE journey.
- Provides credit from HL/IL study towards high school certificate
Calgary Catholic School District offers the following language programs:

- French (FSL)
- French Immersion
- Spanish
- Spanish (Bilingual)
- Italian
- Japanese
- Chinese - Cantonese
- Chinese - Mandarin
- Polish