
Starting a Heritage/International Language School/Program

The following information describes in detail the necessary steps involved in establishing a heritage / international language school / program.

Issues such as types of programs, non-profit status, human resources, classroom resource acquisition, and objectives for program development are examined.

Background

The following are step-by-step suggestions for your consideration when planning for a new heritage/international language community-based program.

- determine whether there is a need for a heritage/international language program in your community.
- survey the community to determine the number of students who would enrol in your program.
- based on projected enrolment numbers, determine the number of classes and the different levels of instruction you intend to offer.
- decide on the number of instructors needed to begin your program and their required qualifications.

Note: *At the end of this section, you will find information regarding heritage/international language instructors.*

- consider where your language classes will be taught and the cost of the rental space (i.e. public school, community centre, multicultural society facility, church, etc.).
- investigate current curricula available for your target language from established heritage language programs in your geographic area as well as across the rest of the province and country (some of which may be available through your regional International / Heritage Languages Association) or from your home country. Any curriculum used in a heritage language program should be free of political, religious, and gender bias. This is especially true if you apply for any government funding.
- determine the cost of operating your language program. The following is offered as assistance:
 - ▶ if renting, the monthly cost;
 - ▶ the cost of teaching materials and related equipment;

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- ▶ the cost of learning materials for students, i.e. photocopying costs;
 - ▶ progress reports to parents;
 - ▶ newsletter production (where applicable);
 - ▶ honoraria;
 - ▶ school principal's or coordinator's salary (where applicable);
 - ▶ the cost of developing and preparing a curriculum (if one is not available); and,
 - ▶ miscellaneous items.

From all of this preceding information, a per student enrolment fee can be estimated. A key deciding factor for enrolment of students is ensuring that the tuition fee is affordable for the average family in your community.

Types of Programs and Facilities



Saturday School Programs

Saturday heritage/international language classes, using public school facilities, usually are housed in high schools. Since it is very expensive to open high schools on Saturdays, heritage/international language programs run their programs jointly with continuing education departments of school boards.

If a Saturday program is deemed the most suitable for your heritage language program, contact your local school board to determine whether continuing education programs are being offered in a local school and if space is available for classes such as yours. Many school boards have a policy on the rental of classroom space.

Your regional International / Heritage Languages Association can assist you if you wish to run language classes in your local school district.

It is important to note that school boards require a written contract before providing you with classroom space. Be prepared to submit the following information:

- ▶ enrollment numbers;
- ▶ names and address of all enrolled students;
- ▶ names and address of instructors;
- ▶ number of classrooms needed;
- ▶ a description of the curriculum to be taught;
- ▶ enrollment fees;
- ▶ honoraria (where applicable);
- ▶ proof that your school is a not-for-profit organization; and,
- ▶ proof of liability insurance.



After School Programs

Many school boards across the country do not charge for space between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm as many schools are open during these times. Most heritage/international language programs are held during these hours as most students studying a heritage/international language are already in the building.

To obtain space in an elementary or high school for heritage/international language programs, you must first approach the principal of the school in order to ascertain if space is available and if the school's policy allows for after school programs. It may also be necessary to go through the rentals department of the school board.

Note: *Be prepared to give them the same information as required for Saturday programs, if requested to do so.*



Evening Programs

In order to operate an evening heritage/international language program, contact the continuing education department of your local school board to confirm the availability of space and to request rental rates. The guidelines for operating evening classes are usually consistent with those of Saturday and after School classes.

Note: *Whenever using school classrooms, please remember that you are a guest in that space. Ensure that the classroom is left as it was found. This will help to produce a positive working relationship between the school and the heritage language community.*



Community Centres, Cultural Centres, Multicultural Societies, and Neighbourhood Houses

You know your community best! Facilities for your heritage language program may be available in the local Community Centre, Cultural Centre, Multicultural Society, or Neighbourhood House. You may also be aware of other facilities that may be available for language education classes. Enquiries may be made through the Public Library, or Multicultural Society/Immigrant Serving Agency in your area. Keep in mind that most of the above listed groups may charge rental fees. The fees will vary according to the size of the rental space, duration of class time, frequency of use, and use of associated facility equipment.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance is recommended for heritage/international language programs who receive funding from government sources. Many school boards in fact require that you have this type of insurance if you operate a program out of their facilities.

Your local/regional International/Heritage Languages Association can assist you with making inquiries as to the availability of group insurance rates for heritage language programs. The group rates are a cost-effective alternative to individual rates.



Criminal Record Checks

In certain jurisdictions across Canada, recent provincial legislation requires that persons working with children must undergo a criminal records check. The RCMP and local police authorities conduct these checks. As there is a per person cost for a criminal record check, your local/regional International/Heritage Languages Association may assist in investigating the possibility of accessing group discount rates for our member heritage language instructors.

Note: *While heritage language instructors have not currently been identified as one of the groups required to obtain a criminal record check, the legislation is being periodically updated.*



Non-Profit Society Status for International/Heritage Language Schools/Programs

Do heritage/international language schools/programs have to be registered as non-profit societies?

If your program currently rents or intends to rent space from a school board, public agency, or community organization, you may be required either to be a non-profit society or to be directly accountable to a non-profit group with an existing board of directors. Heritage/International language funding sources may also require non-profit status as a condition before approving grants.

How does a heritage/international language school/program register as a society?

Establish a board of directors consisting of parents, instructors, and any other persons interested in language education. Draft a constitution and elect a board of directors. You must elect at least five directors.

In British Columbia, contact the Registrar of Societies and submit a request for information/application to:

Telephone Enquiries: 604.660-2421 (Greater Vancouver) or 1-800-663-7867

Web: <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/crsocieties.htm>

To obtain a copy of the Societies Act, visit the BC Corporate Registry web site referenced above..

In Alberta, contact Service Alberta: Corporate Registry - cr@gov.ab.ca

Telephone: Phone: 310-0000 (toll-free anywhere in Alberta); 780-427-2711 (outside of Alberta);
Registries Information (Note: Includes Corporate Registry information): 780-427-7013

Web: <http://www.servicealberta.ca/847.cfm>

Note: As a non-profit organization, your board should meet several times per year, keep the minutes of all meetings, prepare an annual financial statement, and conduct an annual general meeting. The board of directors is directly responsible to its membership. Non-profit societies must file with the Registrar of societies on an annual basis.

Human Resources



Heritage/International Language Instructors

The instructor is probably the most important element in a heritage/international language school. The learning and enjoyment that children obtain from their school experience is dependent largely on the instructor.

Instructors in heritage/international language programs are not required to have formal training in education. Nevertheless, it is important to select the instructor carefully and to attempt to find the best person for the job. Below are some criteria to use in selecting an instructor:

- ▶ fluency in the target language - the instructor should speak the language fluently. Although formal knowledge of grammar is not essential, his/her spoken language should be free of grammatical errors. An ability to read and write the language fluently is also important, particularly for instructors of advanced classes where written expression assumes greater importance.
- ▶ affection for and understanding of children - the instructor should enjoy the company of children and understand their needs. These needs may vary considerably depending upon the students' ages. Very young children aged 4 to 7 may need an affectionate, maternalistic instructor. Teenagers aged 12 to 14 may need an instructor who can provide firm discipline while maintaining a sense of humor. Patience is an essential quality of all instructors regardless of the age of their students. In some cases an instructor will be suitable for one level but not be able to cope with another.
- ▶ teaching skills which correspond to the expectations of parents - in some cases parents expect Canadian teaching methods to be used; in other cases they expect methods similar to those used in the country of origin.

While some parents do expect the use of traditional methods, it is important to remember that students are accustomed to the methods used in Canadian schools. For example, in Canadian schools students are usually allowed to move around the room without asking the instructor's permission, are not expected to stand when answering questions and are taught using activities and games as well as lectures.

Moreover, attendance at heritage language schools is generally voluntary, not compulsory. Therefore, a compromise between traditional and Canadian methods may be in order. The instruction methods used in the classroom should be designed to hold students' interest and attention. If students enjoy their heritage language experience they, will learn more easily and attend classes more regularly.

In most cases instructors for heritage/international language schools are usually drawn from the immediate community. The amount of the salary varies according to school's budget and takes into account both teaching time and preparation time. While the salary is often quite low, it does represent a tangible recognition of the instructor's very valuable contribution to the school.



Supervising an Instructor

The heritage/international language school operator/Board of Directors has (have) a responsibility to establish general policies regarding curriculum and instruction. The instructor is responsible for interpreting these policies on a daily basis in the classroom. Occasionally a situation arises where the parents as a whole or the board of directors are not satisfied with the teacher's work. This is always difficult to handle since the teacher is often a member of the same ethnocultural community that finds his/her work unsatisfactory. A management group which represents the parents and interprets their wishes regarding the school is recommended. The existence of such a group makes dealing with an unsatisfactory instructor much easier.

This group can determine whether dissatisfaction is general or whether it is coming from just one or two individuals. Dealing with the instructor collectively helps reduce the possibility of a personality conflict between the instructor and one board member. In general, the existence of such a group helps ensure that decisions regarding the instructor are made on a professional rather than a personal level.

Dismissing an instructor should be viewed as a last resort. Before this step is taken, there are several other things which can be done:

- ▶ be sure that your expectations are communicated clearly to the instructor. It is difficult for an instructor to change their teaching style if what is expected is not clearly stated.
- ▶ provide instructors with as much training/skill development as possible.
- ▶ assess whether an instructor might be suitable for another age level. An instructor who cannot maintain discipline in a class of teenagers may function quite adequately with adults or small children. When a school has more than one instructor, it may be possible to trade teaching assignments.

If it proves necessary to dismiss an instructor, it should be done as kindly as possible. Do not enumerate the instructor's failings, simply put the dismissal in terms of an arrangement which did not work out.



Instructor Training / Skill Development

Your local/regional Heritage/International Language Association's annual conference brings together language learners, instructors, administrators, government officials and representatives, school district representatives, and community members from across your province. It provides formal sessions/workshops on specific classroom techniques, methodology, and pedagogy. In addition to providing opportunities for instructors to take part in skill development, the conference also provides opportunities for instructors to meet informally to discuss common problems and concerns.

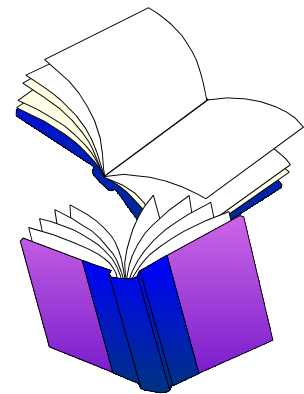
Many schools which have more than one instructor hold regular monthly instructors' meetings. The primary purpose of these meetings is to talk over problems and to discuss ways of handling particular situations which tend to arise in the classroom. They allow new teachers to learn from more experienced ones.

Talking with other instructors, whether they are teaching the same language or a different one, is an effective way to learn. Informal networks of heritage language instructors should be encouraged and supported.

Classroom Resource Identification and Acquisition

Instructional Materials

Textbooks and workbooks are an integral part of most instructional programs. Supplementary reading books provide an important means of reinforcing learning and increasing reading comprehension and vocabulary. All printed material used in a heritage/international language school should be consistent with the curriculum objectives of the school. As well, reading level and interest level should be considered. Reading level refers to the students' reading ability: are they beginners or can they read fluently in the target language? Interest level refers to the type of material which will hold a student's interest. A seven year old and a 17 year old may have the same reading level, but their interest levels will be totally different.



Audiovisual material such as films, tape recordings and records can be very useful in the classroom. It is important that the teacher view or listen to these materials before using them with students to be sure that they are appropriate.

There are several sources of instructional materials for heritage/international language schools in your province: the country of origin; the public library system; the Internet; your provincial Ministry of Education; the regular school system; resource libraries; the Canadian Languages Association (CLA); and, originally developed materials.

Country of Origin

Countries vary in their accessibility. Materials can be obtained from some countries, such as those in Western Europe, quite easily. In other cases, political, economic or geographic factors make it more difficult to obtain material.

Materials from the country of origin have the cultural flavor of the country in which they were written. Examples and illustrations are drawn from situations common in that country. Design and typeface may be quite different from that which is usually found in North America. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. It helps children learn about the country from which their parents or grandparents came.

However, if the books are very different from those that the children are familiar with, or if children cannot relate to the examples used, the books will not hold their interest or attention.

When ordering books from the country of origin, it is sometimes necessary to order from a catalogue without seeing the materials. This makes it difficult to assess reading and interest levels, and there is a chance that the materials, when they arrive, may be unsuitable.

Public Library System

Public libraries have collections of books, records and films for both adults and children in different languages. Some public libraries and branch libraries in other parts of the province also have materials in languages other than English. Administrators, teachers and students from heritage language schools can borrow these books for the usual loan period if they wish. Some public libraries may be willing to make special extended loan arrangements for heritage/international language schools. If you cannot find books in your language at your local or public library, ask a librarian, since books of this type are sometimes shelved separately.



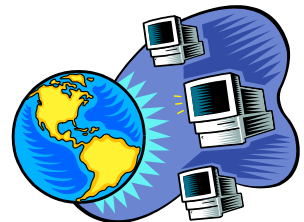
If your local library does not have materials in your language, ask them to consider purchasing some. Public libraries tend to consider purchasing materials in response to public interest and request. Be sure that you make your needs known to your local librarian.

Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education has set up a fantastic resource of multilingual resources access through their provincial library and literacy office.

Their Multilingual Library Services Coordinator, Jian Wang, can be contacted for more information:
jian.wang@gov.sk.ca

Internet

The web is becoming an increasingly useful tool for the identification and acquisition of language classroom materials and resources. Various local/regional Heritage/International Language Association's web site serves as a good starting point for those both familiar with the Internet and also for those needing some assistance.



In addition, the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) has a number of useful links and resources.

http://www.caslt.org/resources/modern-lang/index_en.php



Your Local/Regional International/Heritage languages Association's Resource Library

Your local/regional International/Heritage Languages Association have resource centres open to all at their office locations. Many publications and documents are available (some free...some at a recovery cost) for reference and assistance with language classrooms.

Many local/regional International/Heritage Languages Associations also have available free Internet access for individuals who do not have ready access to the Internet. Just phone and make an appointment.

A List of Regional CLA Affiliates Across Canada

British Columbia

SAIL BC www.canadianlanguages.ca/sailbc



The Society for the Advancement of International Languages (SAIL) is a provincial non-profit organization that actively promotes cross-cultural understanding through heritage/international language instruction and education.

Edmonton, Alberta

IHLA www.ihla.ca

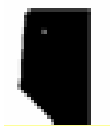


The International and Heritage Languages Association's primary objectives include: supporting and promoting heritage language education; assisting in the development of heritage language curriculum, teaching resources and materials; and, supporting heritage language teacher training and skill development.

IHLA's supports the view that international language education increases the level and respect and appreciation for multiculturalism and the diversity of Canada's peoples.

Calgary, Alberta

SAHLA www.sahla.ca



The Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association (SAHLA) is a non-profit umbrella organization whose mission is to lead, advocate and provide resources for the promotion of international/heritage languages (IL/HL) and cultural education. SAHLA represents over 30 community-based language schools teaching 36 languages to over 6,000 students, both children and adults.

SAHLA is governed by an elected board of directors and operates through the dedication of volunteers and staff. Together with our sister organization NAHLA, SAHLA represents over 80 language schools and 12,000 language students across Alberta.

Saskatchewan



SOHL www.heritagelanguages.sk.ca

Diversity of languages is what the Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages is all about. We are a provincial non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the study and teaching of heritage languages. That means we concentrate on languages other than Canada's official languages of English and French.

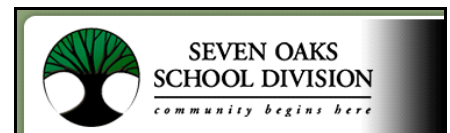
SOHL operates as an umbrella organization for groups, schools and individuals across the province.

Manitoba

Seven Oaks School Division - Winnipeg www.7oaks.org/divisional_languages.aspx

Learning an Additional Language in the Seven Oaks School Division

When making educational choices for their children, more and more parents are recognizing that knowing an additional language is an important skill in today's ever-shrinking world – and will be even more important in their children's future. Consider the many advantages!



Students in the Seven Oaks School Division have the opportunity to study in more than a dozen different languages. During the *regular school day* parents may choose to have their children receive instruction in one of three languages in addition to English. These programs are offered at several schools within the school division. Students are strongly encouraged to enter the program at the Kindergarten or the Grade 1 level.

Ontario

ILEA www.ilea.ca



The International Languages Educators' Association of Ontario (ILEA) provides a forum for the exchange of information, resources, best practices and relevant news pertaining to International Languages education and other related topics. ILEA members include: Language educators and supporters; School Boards Faculties of Education; Organizations supportive of ILEA's mission; Embassies and/or Consulates.

ILEA members believe in the importance of a multilingual society and promote the benefits of the learning and teaching of International Languages for all ages in schools across Ontario, Canada.

Ontario

OCSB - Ottawa <http://continuingeducation.ottawacatholicschools.ca/content.php?doc=23>

Language classes are a growing trend in the capital. In Ottawa more than 60 language courses are offered by the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and the Ottawa Catholic School Board.



These programs are offered to all Ontario residents regardless of their language background. Every year, more than 10,000 students participate in courses provided by these two school boards.

Ontario

OCDSB http://www.ocdsb.ca/Secondary_Websites/continweb/international_lang.asp

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board offers International Languages (Elementary and Secondary) through Continuing Education. The IL Program is mandated under the Ministry of Education. Communities work in partnership with the school board in order to provide high-quality instruction in non-official languages.



Québec

QHLA - AQLO www.canadianlanguages.ca/qhla-aqlo

The Québec Heritage Language Association was founded in 2007 in order to promote, preserve and enhance the learning of heritage languages in the province of Québec. Among its objectives, the QHLA promotes activities such as training for international/heritage language teachers, publication of teaching and learning materials, networking, and other similar initiatives.



For more information about the preceding, contact:

info@canadianlanguages.ca

www.canadianlanguages.ca