

Conseil scolaire francophone
de la Colombie-Britannique

Literacy Plan

2009-2010

Submitted on July 15, 2009

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Words for speaking, writing and hearing... for each one of us!



Acknowledgements

The Conseil scolaire francophone encompasses every corner of the province; consequently, gathering the participants around one table was no small task, but one that was worth the effort.

This plan was written in collaboration with the following groups and organizations:

Réseau des directeurs francophones de la C.-B. (B.C. Network of Francophone Principals)
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 4227
Fédération des parents francophones de la C.-B. (B.C. Federation of Francophone Parents)
Educational Technology Sector
Community and Culture Sector
Elementary Education Sector
Secondary Education Sector
School Adaptation Sector
Aboriginal Studies Sector

The Conseil scolaire francophone would like to express its thanks for your valuable collaboration, and your time, commitment and passion. Together we can make a difference.

Literacy: Definition

In writing the last two plans, we used a rather generic definition of literacy that was formulated through group consensus. Here is this definition:

“Literacy can take several forms and therefore have different definitions. Thus we will speak of functional literacy, which can be defined as follows: skills required to be able to use writing and reading in everyday life and at work.”

After a discussion around the table, we reached the consensus that this definition was still appropriate, but that since it stated that literacy could take several forms, we considered it important to include input from each member of the group. The final result is a compendium that, in the end, represents a more complete picture of what literacy represents in the view of the committee.

The acquisition of a skill that enables everyone to communicate, understand problems, propose solutions... in all aspects of life.

...skills to develop in oral communication, reading and writing in order for students to achieve academic success and also workplace success as adults.

Learning, understanding, expressing one's thoughts, knowledge, experience and emotions.

Being able to read, write, speak, create and function in everyday life.

Development of the student and his/her knowledge.

The capacity to understand the world through writing and to become an integral part of society on the level of communication. Literacy is not restricted to letters, but also includes numerical symbols and the use of technology.

Everything that relates to children's learning in the areas of reading, writing and self-expression.

Areas of Literacy

The approach favoured by the CSF for its learners is literacy development encompassing three distinct areas of literacy:

Reading

Writing

Oral communication

These areas, while they are different, should be regarded as a whole and not be treated separately so as to focus on one area to the detriment of the others; nor should they be adapted for individual learners in order to reduce or minimize their scope. In addition, the ubiquitous concepts of language development must not be forgotten, including socialization, basic literacy training, and information and communication technologies in education, which underlie and provide an integral support for literacy. We would also like to emphasize the importance of the community's contribution to learners' integral and complete development. Literacy is not limited exclusively to the school setting, but concerns everyone.

Literacy and the Pédagogie 2010 (Education 2010) Project

In 2006, the Conseil scolaire francophone undertook an innovative educational project in order to meet the requirements of the district's strategic orientations. The project was given the name of *Pédagogie 2010* (Education 2010) and has the primary objective of providing quality education for all learners in a context of minority Francophone education; at the same time, it aims to improve the academic achievement of all students.

Pédagogie 2010 (Education 2010) is designed to be an educational project based on three components that work together to foster cognitive, emotional and social learning for all learners, as integral and supplementary aspects of education. We are referring here to education, educational technology and cultural education.

Educational Technology Component

The education technology component plays a paramount role in supporting learners and providing training for teachers. When the *Pédagogie 2010* project was launched, the CSF was convinced of the importance, and indeed the need to equip each learner as well as each teacher with a laptop computer. In the 21st century, it was inconceivable to limit education to traditional approaches and to overlook a paradigm that engages the learner in far more constructive and innovative ways.

For that matter, the educational tools used on a daily basis are all directly associated with the use of laptop computers.

Culture and Community Component

This component aims to foster the development of cultural identity among the province's Francophone learners through literacy, and to enable them to achieve their full potential.

It is important to note that studies on literacy show that children develop literacy behaviours at a much earlier time than Kindergarten, hence the importance of working with our partners in education to give a greater chance of success to the next generation. *The institutional and social challenges of Francophone communities can be summarized as the challenge of establishing for themselves a "community life" in the French language that can provide basic socialization contributing to the development of identity (Allard and Landry 1996. "Vitalité ethnolinguistique : une perspective dans l'étude de la francophonie canadienne" [Ethnolinguistic vitality: a perspective on the study of the Canadian Francophonie].)*

It has also been demonstrated that basic cultural education encourages oral communication, either through activities that develop self-awareness and awareness of others, or through the participation of each learner and teacher in exchanges based on authentic dialogue.

Education Component

The education component supports the implementation, within the context of the *Pédagogie 2010* Project, of six tools for acquiring functional literacy:

- 12 reading strategies
- Phonological awareness
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Francization
- CMEC kit
- 44 writing strategies

Teachers and administrators have all had the opportunity to take workshops and receive specific training in the first four tools, and they will have the chance to expand their knowledge when workshops are offered regarding the implementation of the CMEC kit, and the use of writing strategies in the classroom.

It should be noted that these workshops take into account the various aspects pertaining to special needs children.

Importance of the Relationship between School and Parents

The education of each of our students concerns all of us. How can we facilitate a home-school partnership that will ultimately result in a greater chance of success for everyone? It is not a matter of pointing a finger at anyone, but rather emphasizing elements that can assist children's learning.

- Providing a smooth transition between elementary and secondary teachers (continuum)
- Having parents become more involved at school (especially at the secondary level)
- Providing support for the parents of designated students
- Parents need concrete tools to help children who are experiencing difficulties.
- 1, 2, 3 allons-y! – a very good project that has proven to be a successful practice
- Modelling positive and active behaviours.
- Reading during the summer
- Role of the parents in providing motivation and support
- Consolidating the relationship between parents and teachers
- Reading every evening
- Providing better follow-up concerning the child's results (BCeSIS)
- Explaining that the transfer of cognitive abilities in English and French can occur easily.
- Intellectual stimulation is important
- Literacy snapshots – designed to attract the attention of parents in the school newsletter: parent section, etc.
- Having book exchanges during Parent Advisory Council meetings
- Taking into account the child's personality (differentiated teaching)
- Promoting Tire-Lire to new parents
- Library for young children
- Importance of making parents feel welcome in the school

In preparing this literacy plan, we observed the importance of being open to the different communities and organizations around us. Several joint projects are already underway, and others will follow:

First Nations Peoples: It is important for our schools to become involved in joint projects with the various Aboriginal groups found in our different regions. The expertise of these different groups would supplement our classroom teaching and would help to better assist and support our Aboriginal students who are experiencing difficulties.

SCFP: Finding a tool for measuring the progress of students with learning disabilities. Along with educational technology, the Kurzweil software would become the key element in learning.

FPFCB: As we are responsible for preschools and daycare centres in school settings, we would like, with their help, to undertake a comparative study of the Francization rate of 3- and 4-year-old students who attend preschool, compared to those who do not.

Progress Update

Just as when we submitted the 2008-2009 literacy plan, we would like to emphasize that the working group decided from the outset not to use the FSA results as indicators of academic progress. Instead, we will use the general profile of the CSF as well as the curriculum organizers found in the Ministry of Education's learning taxonomy (underlying the achievement of FSA objectives).

READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Identifying	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Producing inferences	Demonstrating critical thinking
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WRITING SKILLS

Summarizing

NUMERACY SKILLS

Numbers	Patterns and Relations	Shape and Space	Statistics and Probability
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Student answers on FSA tests will therefore be analyzed using an overall portrait of the data gathered, as well as by extracting the results associated with the indicators only for the skill areas mentioned above. This rigorous analysis will give the education team a better idea of how to plan educational workshops that will serve classroom teachers.

Progress Indicators Used

In addition to the provincial results and the curriculum organizers from the taxonomy, we will also use the data provided by each school, still pertaining to the organizers that were mentioned previously, as well as analyses of various district tests: phonological awareness, ESL and Francization. It is important to mention that we collect similar data to the achievement indicators, but it is obtained from surveys conducted among teachers in order to determine the success level of the six tools used in the classroom.

Results and Analysis of Data

Phonological Awareness

“Phonological awareness designates the ability to separate words into sounds, which makes it possible to manipulate, add or remove syllables, and even to understand rhymes.”

(Daniel Baril <http://www.petitmonde.com/iDoc/Article.asp?id=28846>)

Used more specifically in Kindergarten and Grade 1, phonological awareness is one of the six tools that the CSF supports. We can compare student progress through the initial test and the end-of-year test.

Since the tests are administered in May, the district results will be available in August and will be added for the new school year. We can, however, make the following observations concerning the test results:

- *92% of the students tested in September obtain a better score on the test in May.*
- *As soon as students are away from the school environment (during the summer and winter holidays), their language level tends to decrease.*
- *Again this year, “counting the sounds” seems to be the task that presents the greatest difficulty for students. We think that one of the reasons is that to successfully perform this skill, children have to identify a final sound that is sometimes silent.*

Reading Tests for Grades 3, 6 and 9

In May and June 2009, a district-wide reading test was given to most of the students in Grades 3, 6 and 9. The way in which the test was administered was, by and large, different from the FSA tests in that the students were identified only at the local level, whereas the district received information and data based on the group as a whole.

Once again, as a basis for comparison, we used the same achievement indicators as for the FSA tests. The district results for each of the groups will be available in August 2009. The preliminary results already indicate to us, however, that the difficulties encountered for each level are, in fact, similar to those in the FSA tests.

Grade 3

Identification	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Inference	Critical Thinking
78%	68.5%	63%	58.4%	55%

Grade 6

Identification	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Inference	Critical Thinking
78%	64.3%	73%	65%	61%

Grade 9 (results not available due to insufficient number of students)

Identification	Comprehension	Vocabulary	Inference	Critical Thinking
%	%	%	%	%

We can therefore assert that, for the second consecutive year, students have significant difficulty with the following two skills:

- Inference
- Critical thinking

It appears important to us to continue developing the latent cognitive process of reading strategies. The primary objective is for students to use the markers observed in a text for making the necessary inferences to understand this text. To do this, students must have a good knowledge of practical vocabulary. In this regard, analyses indicate that throughout their school years, Francophone students in minority environments build two parallel, distinct vocabulary banks, one in English and the other in French, and that it is therefore normal for some difficulty with inference to occur. We have noticed, however, that these problems tend to disappear as students reach higher grade levels in school.

FSA Results: Amalgamated Results for the CSF

Grade 4	CSF		Province	
	Meet	Do not meet	Meet	Do not meet

	expectations	expectations	expectations	expectations
Comprehension	70.5%	29.5%	77%	23%
Writing	78.5%	21.5%	76.5%	23.5%
Numeracy	72.5%	27.5%	74%	26%

Grade 7	CSF		Province	
	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations
Comprehension	79%	21%	74%	26%
Writing	85.5%	14.5%	74.5%	25.5%
Numeracy	78%	22%	71%	29%

In spite of the convincing results on a general level, and as is done with the tests given in Grades 3, 6 and 9, it is important to analyze the skill areas of each element assessed in order to understand the level of difficulty encountered by most students. This analysis is done by the EDUDATA group, which will provide the data only in mid-July, therefore after this plan has been submitted. We will therefore add the results in August. This data constitutes the foundation of our professional development action plan.

Results for Aboriginal Students

Our Aboriginal student population is small (as of February 2009, 286 students for the entire district, representing about 7% of our total student population), and thus the number of students writing the tests is not very representative:

Total of 32 students in Grade 4

Total of 37 students in Grade 7

Although our comparative results for the FSA tests (the only comparative assessment available) indicate that our Aboriginal results are comparable to the provincial results, and even exceed them, we believe that it is important to continue to develop the Aboriginal fact. In so doing, we will go beyond teaching folklore and will be able to focus instead on the concepts of Aboriginal literacy. Here are a few examples of successful practices proposed by the working group:

- Visual arts: using Aboriginal legends.
- Providing training for Aboriginal studies teachers.
- Presenting exhibits in library display cases to draw people’s attention and raise awareness about Aboriginal culture and heritage.
- Identifying French Canadian/Aboriginal resources.
- Holding Aboriginal celebrations in the schools and inviting Aboriginal people to take part.
- Linking the educational strategies used in our teaching to Aboriginal culture: dance, music, etc.
- Inviting Aboriginal authors to speak to the students.

Grade 4	Aboriginal students in the CSF		Aboriginals students throughout province*	
	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations
Comprehension	56.5%	43.5%	62.5%	37.5%
Writing	72.5%	27.5%	62.5%	37.5%
Numeracy	72.5%	72.5%	57.5%	42.5%

Grade 7	Aboriginal students in the CSF		Aboriginals students throughout province*	
	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations	Meet expectations	Do not meet expectations
Comprehension	76%	24%	58.5%	41.5%
Writing	77%	23%	60%	40%

Numeracy	69%	31%	51%	49%
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* A percentage of students do not appear in the data.

In 2008-2009, the terms of the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement were finalized. The Agreement will be signed in October 2009 and will provide a reliable document for schools, with common objectives that pertain to Aboriginal education. Many of these objectives also relate to the culture of different First Nations throughout Canada. Literacy is at the heart of this plan, and we are beginning a large-scale purchase of Aboriginal books and resources that will subsequently be the subject of professional development provided to teachers working directly with this clientele.

District Priorities for 2007-2010

District priorities are based on the four underlying principles of literacy found in the recommendations of the Ministry in its document *Read Now BC*.

The CSF is therefore emphasizing:

- The importance of preschool-aged children being ready to begin school with a sufficiently high knowledge level
- Increasing the number of students who can read at a satisfactory level
- Increasing literacy skills of adults so that they can enter and succeed in the job market.

- Increasing the number of Aboriginal students with a satisfactory reading level.

District Priorities for 2009-2010

Few changes were made with regard to priorities. This decision was motivated by two reasons: firstly, we are completing our last year of strategic orientations at the CSF; secondly, the long-term and short-term objectives still represent challenges, but they are in the process of being achieved.

Long-term Objectives // Progress

- **Develop formative achievement tests that include identification and progress of special needs students, support for learners and teachers and, finally, diagnosis.**

This test will be ready in June 2010.

- **Establish a continuum of knowledge and skills.**

This project will begin in September 2009 and should be completed in June 2011. It has a broad scope and requires very careful attention to detail.

- **Build a provincial network of educational “leaders” with the goal of improving students’ achievement and literacy levels.**

This objective is underway, and our network of leaders is expanding each day. This still represents a challenge as we have to face a staff turnover rate of between 25 and 40%.

- **Increase literacy activities in the family setting and for early childhood.**

A great deal of focus has been placed on this objective throughout the current year, and this will continue in upcoming years. While there are still steps to be taken, we are headed in the right direction, and communication between the Fédération des parents francophones de la C.-B. and the CSF is excellent. A number of collaborative projects have been initiated, and several workshops were also given.

Short-term Objectives // Progress

- **Improve student achievement in the area of literacy (reading and writing).**

There continues to be improvement in the results for students reaching or exceeding the criterion level for areas of knowledge measured by the FSA tests. It should nevertheless be noted that this progress is linear rather than comparative, since we began our literacy plan in 2007 and the CSF will only be able to compare the progression in 2011 when the first Grade 4 cohort will have reached Grade 7.

We can, however, use other external data, such as:

- provincial exams in Grades 10 and 12;
- testing in Grades 3, 6 and 9;
- the percentage of students who obtain their Dogwood Diploma;
- the number of students with official ESL and FSL designations from the Ministry of Education (this number tends to decrease in proportion to the services received);
- the results from local in-house tests.

- **Implement learning tools for literacy, supported by information and communication technologies in education.**

Two learning tools were added to the existing four, bringing the total number to six. Many other tools are available, but it is not practicable for the team of educational consultants (only three members for the province) to develop skills for each of them; therefore, we believe that it is important to limit ourselves to promoting and especially supporting the tools that seem to be most closely linked to our reality as schools in a minority environment.

- **Develop and implement different teaching models for secondary students, in order to continue to increase success rates.**

We will begin the International Baccalaureate Program (IBO) in four of our secondary schools by September 2009. The interest in this program is such that we have already received more than six requests to introduce the "Middle Year Program" (early secondary). We have also continued to implement a school-to-work transition program for youth (ISPJ). This program enables students who are not planning to attend university or college to make the most of their time in high school by participating in workplace practicums and thus obtaining letters of recommendation to enhance their portfolio. We have also piloted a "welcoming class". We had noticed in one of our regions that a number of immigrant families were registering in our school, and that we were simply not managing to provide an equal chance of success for these children, as they were not accustomed to the B.C. educational system or the customs in this country. This class helps to address the problems that students are currently experiencing, and subsequently to provide a smooth transition to "regular stream" classes.

Workshops were also provided to teachers in the areas of educational technology and cultural education in order to increase their skill level in using the computer as a tool, and to convey the importance of improving their understanding and skills for working with a Francophone clientele in a minority environment.

- **Increase the number of students who obtain their Dogwood Diploma**

We have had an increase in the percentage of students who obtain their diploma.