



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Study French language, methodology, and current francophone culture at the Centre Linguistique in Besançon, France while living with a French family.

Name: Michèle Cassavante

Other Team Members:

Program: The Blake School Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001

Location Visited: Besançon, France

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: This summer I attended classes for one summer session held in July at the Centre Linguistique Appliquée in Besançon, France while simultaneously living with a French family. This program, housed by the Université de la Franche-Comté is known for its strength in training teachers of French throughout the world. I was only one of two Americans among several hundred other teachers of French from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. It was fascinating to discuss with others the role that language plays in education, the support and value that their governments offer their teachers and the multiple ways to teach and create strong programs. We were busy from sun up to sundown with classes beginning in early in the morning and ending each day with late afternoon forums and cultural offerings every evening. One of the most fascinating courses I took was a corporal understanding of language and how we can use our bodies to pattern learning. Staying with a French family afforded me an opportunity to continue my learning, to meet others and to discover personal histories. There is nothing equal to this experience.

Career Impact: In order to perform at the best of my abilities, there is a need for renewal of the target language in the country of origin that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. By creating an immersion experience I became more proficient in my language and was able to revel in the passion that I find in French. The courses widened my understanding, which in turn, helps me to be a better teacher and bring a dynamic energy to my students and into the classroom. A totally unexpected discovery was when I learned of the huge role that people from this area played during the time of the France's Occupation in World War II. Franche-Comté, unknown to me, was a major area of the Resistance what with its dense forests in the Jura and the Swiss border not so far away. As I met with various people, personal histories of families and their role in this movement came forward. I know a fair amount of this time period however I discovered so much more with each individual's experience. Besançon houses one of the most extensive museums on the Deportation and the Resistance that I have seen in France. These stories and histories will continue as I share them with my students and colleagues.

Classroom/Community Impact: My language skills and my confidence are stronger due to this experience, thus I bring a renewed energy to the classroom. Classes that I have attended have had a direct impact on how I use and develop language with my students. It has been fun and surprising for all of us. Due to the fact that the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée in Besançon supports the teaching of French as a Foreign Language for teachers throughout the world, the many bookstores in that city have a wealth of support materials that I cannot find here in the US. Thanks to the Fund for Teachers, I was able to bring home new material that supports a different pedagogical approach and practice from what is traditionally provided here in the US. I have been using these and other materials from day one of this school year to help my students be as well prepared as their counterparts throughout the world and to ensure a stronger language foundation for them. Personal stories enrich the curriculum and my students comment on how these classes widen their horizons and help them look at social issues beyond our borders.

Open Response: Thanks to contacts made during my study this past summer, my school will now be involved in a future exchange with several classes from a lycée in Besançon. The first group is to arrive in fall of 2011. In my continuing efforts to reach other French teachers, I presented a session at our state conference in October 2010 on the benefits of the CLA experience in Besançon, as well as the gifts and opportunities through the Fund for Teachers. My hope is to bring this information to the Central States Conference - a 17 state Midwest Conference for foreign language teachers. In my advance classes we will be incorporating themes and works of literature used at this summer program, specifically linked to immigration and identity. In all levels I continue to build on and use what I learned from the class on the body, phonetics and language - the methodology that incorporates body movement into language and sound. Supporting our goals of proficiency, the FLE materials that I purchased abroad, the same ones that are being used by other teachers

of French throughout the world, have been shared with other teachers. And, they are now being incorporated into our classrooms at my school.

Quote: I only wish other teachers could fall in love again with language much the way I did last summer.

Photos:



Crossing le Pont Battant on my way to classes



A morning class that introduced us to the heart of the city



Gathering with fellow teachers from around the world



Using our bodies to pattern language sounds and practice



Saying goodbye to my host family



Spending time with a little one - the universality of play



Children at play - summer camp



an idyllic scene from the heart of France