

Toward a Better Bilingualism.

Description

There is a conflict going on between the Anglophone and Francophone community primarily over language. That's nothing new.

Let's concentrate then, on the science of learning language. The following are excerpts of a position paper entitled "Why Anglophones in New Brunswick will remain unilingual" by a Francophone who lives in New Brunswick and has extensive experience in language education and proficiency testing:

- Francophones have less difficulty learning English (ESL) than they do learning their own language, written French, that is.
- when anglophones learn English (1), simply put they're dealing with a much simpler language than French, not to mention all the exposure and usage of a language extending worldwide in business and in societies in general.
- English is easier for all, for Francophones included.
- For Francophones learning English in northern NB, the Acadian Peninsula, for instance, not quite the same degree exposure to English, but still plenty of exposure in their daily lives such as the internet, TV, news media, society in general, friends and neighbors, business, etc. English is all around us, so much so that more and more pre-schoolers pick it up even before they've even begin taking classes, not so for anglophones where FSL is concerned.
- French is a very complex language The fact that it is highly scientific and precise makes it so, but unfortunately, because of that, one can hardly learn to write it properly unless a lot of time is spent on the grammar, not at all the same for English.
- We all know that so far, the goal by Anglophones to try and reach that minimum intermediate plus level of proficiency has been a rather elusive dream, and very often a frustrating and discouraging venture, one that in my estimation will continue to be so.
- the situation is complicated by the fact that an intermediate plus level of proficiency is too high a standard for the non-professional workforce.
- I personally believe that Francophones are too focused on Anglophones becoming bilingual as if their own survival depended on others rather than on themselves. I, for one, always believe that language should be a personal choice with no expectations from others, but then again, I don't expect others to share this view. For those Francophones who tend to argue that where there's a will, there's a way, I contend that this simplistic view is short sighted and that the problem is far more complicated than that.
- it is obvious that anglophones in NB can expect that French is not only here to stay, but will continue to thrive and be a dominant political force which will likely push forward the notion of disproportionate and unfair treatment of anglophones, a notion very far from the minds of Francophones. Too bad the

two can't meet to discuss this key issue.

So there you have it, the truth. This truth has been and continues to be ignored because it suits a sarcastic narrative that we often hear
“can't get jobs?, just learn French”.

The reality of these statements is highlighted when Francophone leaders and educators talk about Francophones losing their French language. We say it over and over, if Francophones can't hold on to their language, we sure as hell won't as a second language.

What we are saying is that bilingualism needs to take into account these realities about the science of language and develop a bilingualism that works for Anglophones and Francophones.

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