

Obstacles in the Implementation of Bilingual Education Programs; the Case of Quebec, Canada

Etienne MARCEAU

INTRODUCTION

Second language education is about much more than just teaching another language; it is about developing and shaping students' cultural identity and world view. Notably different from other academic subjects, it implies learning about a different social group and either welcoming or rejecting it. This makes second language education sensitive to the influence of history (especially colonialism), politics, economics, mainly. As a society, we make important choices regarding the education of our children, but too often these decisions are taken considering costs and electoral stakes instead of education principles. These power dynamics are worthy of consideration because they influence and shape the next generation's identity. In bilingual or second language education, a natural confrontation exists because the language and culture of two different social groups are taken into account. In Canada, there is a long history of duality between the French and English speakers. The question of learning each other's language is delicate because of the historical and cultural baggage that each group carries. In this era of globalisation, learning a second language should be the norm, and Canadians should be advantaged by their context. It should not be too

difficult to achieve some level of bilingualism through exchange programs and second language immersion programs in schools. These projects are simple enough to organise since they already exist elsewhere, and human resources should be plenty in this country with both French and English speakers. Regrettably, due to several political, social, and economic factors, the implementation of English immersion programs has been facing several obstacles in the province of Quebec.

This paper does not intend to prove the benefits of bilingual education or immersion programs. These benefits have been proven through a number of studies already, from second language acquisition to neurolinguistics perspectives. Instead, the scope of this paper is to analyze which factors are holding back implementation of bilingual education and immersion programs, notably in the province of Quebec. Since bilingualism seems within reach, we must consider why the Ministry of Education is not making these programs part of the standard curriculum. There are myths persisting beyond what scientific research proves, and this paper attempts to explain why the situation seems to have reached an impasse.

HISTORY

The history of Canada is marked by a French-English duality. First colonized by France and then by England, to this day Canada remains two distinct nations in the eyes of many of its citizens; the French speakers mostly reside in the province of Quebec, while the rest of Canada mostly speaks English. The Quebec culture was shaped by its French heritage, starting with the legal and education systems. This means that there are basic differences from the rest of Canada at the foundation of its society. For this reason, the province of Quebec has often claimed more power

for provincial governments, which has made Canada “perhaps the most decentralized federation in the world” (Forsey, 1982). The French-English duality certainly brings in a rich and diverse cultural heritage, but it also carries its fair share of issues, starting with languages. Canada is a vast country, and the province of Quebec alone is 1,668,000km², about four times the size of Japan¹. This means that Canadians can live all their life without meeting someone who speaks the other official language, and that the French minority is actually a majority in its home province. However, if Canadians want to grow strong as a nation, a minimum of bilingualism is required. The situation is that Canada is a country with two official languages, not a bilingual country. There is an *official bilingualism*, a term used to describe the policies and laws that ensure that the federal government conducts its business and serve Canadians in both languages. The nuance is crucial, and the expression usually used to describe this duality is *two solitudes*, by the title of a novel written by Hugh MacLennan, in which he describes a struggle to balance both cultural identities. Many residents of Quebec have always seen themselves as being different from the rest of Canada, and this idea is still at the center of their cultural identity.

POLITICS AND LANGUAGE

In Canada, education is under provincial jurisdiction. There is no federal Ministry of Education, like the Department of Education in the United States, for example. This means that each province is free to implement its own policies and to collaborate with other provinces (or not). Historically, the federal government has been a strong supporter of bilingual education programs, and many schools across Canada offer complete French immersion

¹ <http://www.gouv.qc.ca/FR/LeQuebec/Pages/Accueil.aspx?pgs>

(with some variations), with as many as 342 000 students enrolled in 2011 (Hutchins, 2015). However, since laws are different in Quebec and since there is no federal agency overseeing education, there is an unequal use of education rights versus elsewhere in Canada. Also interesting to note, the government of Quebec has never formally approved of the enactment of the Canadian Constitution. Such approbation is not necessary, but to this day it remains a political issue in Quebec. The *Constitution Act, 1982*, explains that:

The right applies asymmetrically because section 59 provides that not all of the language rights listed in section 23 will apply in Quebec. Specifically:

- In Quebec, a child may receive free public education in English only if at least one parent or a sibling was educated in Canada in English. (underline has been added)
- In the rest of Canada, a child may receive free public education in French if at least one parent or a sibling was educated in Canada in French, or if at least one parent has French as his or her mother tongue.

These measures ensure that children of immigrants will have to join French schools in Quebec. However, none of these education language rights precludes parents from choosing to send their children to a private school in the language of their choice; it applies only to public education. Because of these, the federal government can do little more than to issue recommendations.

After years of opposition between Quebec and the rest of Canada, some parts of the Quebec society have developed an institutionalised opposition

to anglicisation. Quebec high school students are taught about the Durham Report of 1839² that recommended assimilating the French Canadians, whom Durham called “people with no literature and no history”, by massive immigration of British citizens who would drown a minority-to-be of French speakers (*The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*, retrieved in 2016). Inevitably, the way history is taught is influenced by the teacher’s political views; as an example, my high school history teacher was openly separatist, and sure enough, by the end of the course, all the students in my class disliked Canada and were convinced of the necessity for Quebec to become independent.

Quebecers always felt that they have to protect their language in the middle of English-speaking North America; “there are many who see it as a threat to French”, explains Gérald Larose, a prominent defender of the French language (Hamilton, 2012). A threat implies a difference in power, a relation between a majority and a minority groups. The separatists fuel their discourse with ideas of Quebec becoming an independent country, where French speakers would become the majority. The idea is not impossible, but if Quebec becomes its own country, it is worrisome to consider if it will discriminate against its English speakers. What would become of the minority groups (immigrants, First Nations, etc.) since the idea seems to go toward separation and discrimination rather than toward tolerance and reconciliation.

In order to protect the French language, the Charter of the French Language³

² Officially the *Report on the Affairs of British North America*

³ Commonly referred to as “Bill 101” in English.

was enacted in 1974 by the René Lévesque government and his (separatist) *Parti Québécois* (Winer, 2007, p.492). The Charter was needed at a time when French speakers were put at a disadvantage by the English-speaking business owners and by the federal government who was taking decisions based on the Canadian majority, but now it is the sole reason why English immersion programs in Quebec are not a reality yet; it stipulates that all instruction shall be given in French, except for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and some specific exceptions (Charter, 1974, article 72; Winer, 2007, p.493). Ironically, the Charter starts with “Her Majesty enacts as follows:” and was granted (British) Royal assent, as all laws in Quebec (The Charter, 1974).

Then, in 2010, the Liberal government of Jean Charest took everybody by surprise when he bypassed the forbidden term *immersion* to announce an intensive English program soon available for all sixth grade students (MELS, 2011). However, since it is against the law to teach other subjects than English itself using English, content-based courses could not be possibly taught. The best solution, according to the Minister of Education at the time, was to teach all the academic subjects in five months, and then to teach only ESL for the second half of the year as some kind of “English Camp” (MELS, 2011). This idea was far from winning unanimous support. Luc Papineau, a teacher, complained to the newspaper *The National Post*: “what teacher will want to prepare two groups of students for exams in half the time?” (Hamilton, 2012). Other teachers have doubts that every student can be successful in their academic subjects, especially students with learning disabilities (Hamilton, 2012). At the same time, let us not forget that French immersion is legal and current in Quebec and in the rest of Canada (Winer, 2007, p.492). Quebec resident should question if

their government is honestly providing its next generation of citizens with all the tools necessary for its success in the 21st century.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES

The place of English in Quebec has always been controversial, or even taboo. It triggers emotions that are at the core of Quebecers' identity. For that reason, the public opinion plays an important role in political decisions regarding educational reforms. Like elsewhere, reforms are typically unpopular, even when everybody agrees that change is needed. A common complaint is that money and politics are put ahead of students' needs. The Ministry of Education of Quebec is often accused by teachers of making politics rather than education its priority. A reason for this is that the Minister of Education is usually a politician, not a teacher. Therefore, the primary goal might be to get its party re-elected instead of finding real solutions to the problems in the Quebec school system.

In reality, the role of leader of education in Quebec has proven extremely difficult to fulfill; this year (2016), yet another Minister of Education, Sébastien Proulx, has been appointed. Mr. Proulx is the sixth Minister of Education of Quebec in five years. Reasons why the position has become a revolving door involve constant cuts in education and raise of tuition fees (which prompted a year-long strike in 2012) that made the Minister(s) highly unpopular (Greig, 2015). These have poisoned the relation with the population, especially teachers, who see that the choice of a Minister of Education does not seem important as to name someone who will defend a political party's ideology. Most Ministers of Education have been career politicians without expertise or experience in education, especially at the primary and secondary level. The Minister of Health is always a doctor, yet

the Minister of Education is practically never a teacher. This does not help to create a trustworthy and credible relation between the government and the population, and neither does it lead to meaningful education reforms.

Let us come back to former Quebec premier Jean Charest, a Liberal (i.e. not a separatist), who tried to implement an optional intensive English program in all elementary schools of the province of Quebec by 2015. Throughout the election campaign, his rival Pauline Marois from the *Parti Québécois* (the main separatist party) campaigned against Charest's program. It is difficult to know if this influenced the vote, but sure enough, Ms. Marois was elected, and immediately the project was adjourned with all the content regarding the intensive English program removed from the Ministry of Education's website⁴. On top of this, Ms. Marois wanted to stop the instruction of ESL in first and second grades in primary schools for now, and possibly in third and fourth grades in the future (Radio-Canada, 2011) despite studies suggesting that an earlier immersion is more beneficial (Genesee, 2009; Spada, 1991). Additionally, Pauline Marois attempted to extend Bill 101 to CEGEPs (Junior Colleges unique to Quebec) and universities as well, meaning that Francophones would not be allowed to attend English universities, despite having two major universities offering education in English in Montreal (McGill and Concordia universities). Later, she retracted her proposition, realising that blocking access to two of the best universities in the country for a majority of Quebecers was perhaps not the best investment for Quebec's future (Lessard, 2012).

Looking at these examples, it becomes clear that politics are the main

⁴ <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/>

driving force of ESL reforms, and that quarrels between French and English in Canada are not only a thing of the past: “It is still not uncommon for an ESL teacher to be challenged by students who flatly state that their parents are against them learning the so-called language of the enemy and to face school administrators who are unsupportive of ESL instruction.” (Winer, 2007, p.493).

I have faced similar challenges, especially during my practicum as a student teacher. In-service teachers would openly say in front of the students that learning English was only necessary in Montreal (the biggest city in the province of Quebec and the most multicultural). At the end of my practicum, the coordinator wrote a report criticizing my command of both French and English, mentioning pronunciation and grammar mistakes “typical of a non-native speaker” even though we had been talking in my mother tongue. Dr. Jill Brook, Professor in charge of TESL practicums at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), was not surprised by this situation, adding that ESL student-teachers are regularly victims of this kind of preconceived ideas (Personal Communication, March 2010). Student teachers of other academic subjects typically do not face such criticism, especially if there is a lack of teacher in their field, as it is the case with ESL. Winer (2007) explains: “the ESL teacher is often the sole English speaker in an entire school of Francophones” (p.494). For instance, in Lac St-Jean, a region of Quebec traditionally separatist, the local board of education published a report after experimenting with an intensive English curriculum project. The report showed that once again ESL education was victim of preconceived ideas; even if the results were positive, with performance in French remaining the same while English performances raising from averages of 65% to 94% (Hamilton, 2012), many non-ESL teachers disapproved of the project,

complaining of a feeling of poor personal achievement (Lac-Saint-Jean, 2011). The complaints are therefore based on persistent prejudice rather than on empirical evidence.

As demonstrated, some Quebecers hold personal negative beliefs toward the English language that are hard to change. Because people living outside of large cities might have never encountered someone from a different cultural background before, it is difficult to raise their awareness to the opportunities that learning another language can bring to their children, especially when this language is spoken by the majority group, seen as threatening. As everywhere, there is a dichotomy between small and large cities, and the media play a negative role in the discussion by exaggerating situations in order to promote interest toward their radio or television programs. Mentalities do not change overnight, even when evidence is clearly displayed; it is deeply rooted in people's identity.

SELF-APPOINTED “EXPERTS”

As Quebecers who are separatists are also often unsympathetic to the English language, a group called *anglaisintensif* (“IntensiveEnglish”) was created by citizens against intensive English instruction (according to their website www.anglaisintensif.org). In reality, their website and publications show that they stand against instruction of English at large, and their documents are simply not credible in a debate about a language education reform. First, they are written in a casual language, using colloquial expressions and slang. They also contain grammar mistakes. For example, in a document titled *Présentation anglais intensif obligatoire* (“Presentation about Compulsory Intensive English”) (2012):

1. « L'anglais *gruge* de plus en plus de place » (p.7);

“English eats up more and more space”.

Gruger is a slang word meaning gnawing, eating away at something.

2. « *Les Québécois sont une population déjà très compétente en anglais!* » (p.8);

“Quebecers are a population already very skilled in English!”

Here, the semantic of population is wrong; the collocation of *Les Québécois* could be *un peuple* or *une nation*.

3. « Les *profs* d'anglais sont *pour* » (p.38);

“ESL teachers are in favour”

Profs is the short, casual form of *professeur* (teacher), and *être pour*, is an Anglicism for “to be in favour”.

The title itself denotes a lack of honesty tainted by sensationalism since the program was never meant to be compulsory. This group added this misinformation to make the parents feel that they are being deprived of their freedom and are being imposed this English program no matter if they want it or not. However, the reality is quite different.

Secondly, their claim that ESL teachers are in favour of stopping the program and that the Quebec population is already very skilled in English are unlikely accurate and not based on evidence, which makes the rest of their protestation identically doubtful. Thirdly, their website does not cite sources to support many of their ideas, confirming that they are generalisations of their own opinion. The group reacts strongly against the Minister of Education's publications, but rely on fear of assimilation and testimonies

from frustrated school teachers and separatist parents rather than peer-reviewed publications. While in-service teachers must be consulted, the group *anglaisintensif* uses quotes from only two teachers who refute the studies made by respected researchers in education such as Patsy Lightbown, Nina Spada, Claude Germain, Fred Genesee, Jim Cummins, etc. Moreover, the quotes that they use are often short and end abruptly mid-sentence, which makes them look like they have been taken out of context. The documents available on their website under the tab “research and studies” state that “experts say” or “studies show that” without showing any references, which resembles more newspaper articles than peer-reviewed ones (Présentation anglais intensif obligatoire, 2012). Lastly, the group condemn that the Ministry of Education promotes its intensive English programs based on only twenty studies since the year 2000 (Présentation anglais intensif obligatoire, p.24, 2012). Arguably, twenty studies in about fifteen years pointing in the same direction certainly deserve some credibility. Clearly, their arguments appeal to people who already share their opinion. It seems that people against instruction of English rely on their emotions and beliefs rather than on facts; like a faith. That might explain why the discussion has not given the expected results, despite years of research and positive outcomes from projects in Canada and elsewhere.

RESEARCH DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

Today’s research on immersion programs in Quebec is the continuity of what has been done since the 1970s across Canada. It is therefore possible to observe long-term effects, namely how much the students of the 1970s have benefitted from said programs now that they have become adults. Fred Genesee (2007B) says that the results of recent studies confirm those of the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, language acquisition studies published in

Quebec during the last 10-15 years (Germain, Lighbown & Spada, Netten, 2004) agree that immersion has not had any negative impact on first language acquisition; in fact, some slight improvements have even been observed in some cases, including students who were considered weak or at risk from the beginning. Genesee's results go against the myth that students with learning disabilities could not keep up with an intensive English program. Genesee also observed that at-risk students are not disadvantaged in their first language learning and academic development compared to students in monolingual education programs. In fact, all the students who received an intensive instruction in their second language have improved their writing skills in their first language (2007B). So far, no study has proved any loss of abilities in the first language or academic difficulties in other subjects (Germain, Lighbown & Spada, Netten, 2004). According to Jim Cummins from the University of Toronto, when learning two languages, the first language actually benefits from the second rather than being detrimental to its development (Cummins, 2009). One widespread myth among Quebec monolingual parents is that the children will be confused if they grow up learning two languages. They interpret children mixing French and English in their speech as a mistake and a sign of confusion. Genesee (2009), however, says that evidence from his research clearly indicates that code-mixing is not a sign of confusion or learning difficulty, but rather a natural way for children to fill the gap in one of their developing language lexicon by using knowledge that they have in another language.

Regarding the format of the intensive program, the model suggested for public schools in Quebec was a transitional bilingual program where the students spend their first few years of schooling in their mother tongue before gradually transiting toward classes in their second language. This

method ensures that literacy skills have been acquired before learning a second language since those skills are transferable (Cummins & Hornberger, 2010, p.21). Intensive programs should be preferred to regular ESL courses as “in foreign language settings, shorter periods of concentrated instruction are more effective than drip-feed exposure, and students with a wide range of academic ability can benefit from intensive instruction” (Lightbown, 2001, p.599). Similarly, a research conducted by McGill and Concordia universities in 2003 on the development of oral proficiency in sixth grade ESL intensive programs concluded that “this approach is to be considered if we want students to be functional in their second language by the end of their high school studies” (Turner & White, 2003, p.22).

ECONOMICAL ISSUES: RESOURCES

Before engaging the whole education system into any reform, it is necessary to estimate the resources available, financial, material, and human. The cost is often the determining factor of any public project; the cheapest option, rather than the best option, wins. In the case of Quebec, teaching various academic subjects in English would require a second set of textbooks for each subject. Because the intensive English program would be optional, many students would still follow the regular curriculum in French. In addition, since the Quebec curricula differ from the ones of other provinces, buying already existing textbooks is not an option. This means that new textbooks will have to be commissioned, and each time a new edition is available, or if the Ministry of Education decides to use a different textbook, it would require buying both French and English versions. To this day, no estimated costs have been disclosed, so we can only speculate on the numbers. However, considering the 360 million (Canadian dollars) cuts in education in 2015 (Greig, 2015), this is not a realistic scenario,

at least for now. A solution would be to adapt the curricula to resemble the ones in other Canadian provinces, but this idea will more likely meet a fair share of resistance since it will be incompatible with Quebecers' nationalist identity and might be perceived as an attempt to assimilate the French-speaking minority.

Another significant obstacle to the implementation of an intensive English program across the province is the scarcity of certified ESL teachers in Quebec. According to Montreal university UQÀM's website⁵, there is a shortage of ESL teachers, and consequently many part-time teachers of other academic subjects (for example Geography or Religious Studies) take up ESL classes in order to become full-time. This situation is prevalent in smaller cities where English-speaking teachers are difficult to find. Back in 2012, the former Minister of Education mentioned that 1235 additional teachers were required to meet the needs (Breton, 2012). It would be logistically impossible to have all these teachers ready for the upcoming school year, considering that the Bachelor of Education in Teaching ESL takes four years to be completed in Quebec, regardless of previous studies or experience.

A solution would be to recruit in other Canadian provinces. "*Come and Teach English in Québec*" announces a document on the Ontario College of Teachers' website⁶. The document, signed by the Quebec Ministry of Education, is written in English, while the Quebec Ministries do not usually translate their publications or websites:

⁵ [http://www.etudier.uqam.ca/ programme?code=7176#Perspectives](http://www.etudier.uqam.ca/programme?code=7176#Perspectives)

⁶ www.oct.ca

“Between now and the 2015—2016 school year, all Grade 6 students in Québec will be required to take an intensive English Language course. [...] To join, you will be required to meet certain conditions and to write a language examination. You may also be asked to enroll in a training program for teachers of English as a second language. This microprogram, which comprises five courses, is funded by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport du Québec (MELS).”

La Presse newspaper revealed that the Ministry of Education bought for thousands of dollars of advertisement space in universities in Ontario and British Columbia (Breton, 2012). One thing is sure; the government at the time initiated this recruitment before knowing if the resources necessary to put in place such an ambitious project would even be available. The last sentence of the quote especially, which assures that training programs for out-of-province teachers will be funded by the Ministry of Education, is quite surprising. One must consider how Quebecers would react to such a use of public funds, especially after a two-semester long student strike against underfunding and rise of tuition fees in 2012. Recruiting outside of Quebec instead of training its own people and using Quebec taxpayers' money to do so would challenge Quebecers' nationalist feelings, who might feel that the government's priority is the success of its agenda above the prosperity of its own citizens.

In order to avoid hiring outside of the province, former Quebec premier Jean Charest suggested to hire bilingual teachers who are not licensed by the Ministry of Education of Quebec to teach ESL, explains Lysiane Gagnon, journalist at *La Presse*, in her article « *l'unilinguisme pour les pauvres* » (“Monolinguisism for the Poor”) (2011). Clearly, this solution

could only work in Montreal, she writes, where bilingual teachers are not difficult to find. However, the reality is quite different in the rest of the province. In fact, some have attributed the failure of ESL in the Quebec school system to the poor second language proficiency of the ESL teachers outside of Montreal: “in hearing more second language spoken by their first language-speaking classmates (and often a French-speaking teacher), students come to produce a distinct accent, a version of the second language that is almost a dialect or a creole”, laments Graham Fraser, current Commissioner of Official Languages in Canada (Fraser, 2006, p.192). Some might wonder why Quebec cannot find English speakers easily, being in the middle of an English-speaking country. The answer is simple: the Ministry of Education does not recognize the teaching license issued by other provinces or other countries (MELS, 2012). Fraser (2006) explains: “we have international teacher exchanges – a teacher can go to England or Australia, where teachers literally swap jobs (and homes) with colleagues in other countries, and do not lose their job security or their pensions. But we don’t have interprovincial exchanges” (p.199). The lack of cooperation between the Quebec government and government of other provinces seems to be the origin of this lack of human resources, an inconceivable situation for provinces of the same country. The present system keeps teachers from other provinces and qualified immigrants from accessing teaching jobs in the public education system in Quebec; not many people will accept to go back to university for four years when they are already certified teachers. Also, this is not a realistic scenario financially for anyone with dependants. What is seen here as a lack of human resources available might in fact be due to poor management of existing resources rather than a real shortage of qualified teachers. This protectionism is isolating Quebec and is an incomprehensible mentality in this era of globalisation.

CONCLUSION

Canadians, especially Quebecers, keep actively refusing a bilingualism that is within their reach. The reasons for resisting learning English are mostly due to past historical events and unsupported beliefs, often used by Quebec nationalist groups who want to promote the separation of Quebec from Canada. No matter what our opinion is about the place of Quebec in Canada, any society should do its best to provide its children with the best chances of success for their future. There is still a long way to go before witnessing the birth of an full ESL immersion program in Quebec, let alone a good one; the law itself needs to be amended to allow immersions, Quebecers need to stop seeing English as the language of the enemy, and the elected government has to be in favour of such initiative, to start with. Also, a considerable amount of money would be needed. Research and pilot projects around the world prove that children can benefit from bilingual education and a multilingual environment; yet, it is difficult to stop a government from prioritising its own political agenda. The separatist party and their supporters claim to be worried about the children, but their main concern seems to be protecting their own political interests. The reality is that outside of metropolises, very few people are fluent in both official languages.

The current Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, elected in 2015, brings a new sense of hope in that aspect. His father is responsible for the implementation of official bilingualism and major institutional reforms while he was himself the Prime Minister (1968-1979 & 1980-1984) (English, 2009). The Trudeau family embraces bilingualism, immigration, and multiculturalism; values that hopefully will help to position Quebec and Canada as key players of a global 21st century. The Trudeaus have understood

that a primordial factor to consider in the ever-changing face of Canada is immigration; not only is it a major contributor to Canada's population, but this flux of new people also brings in new ideas and calls for a different cultural identity, a more global society. What it means to be Canadian or Quebecer is called to change.

The challenge now is to spread those ideas across the province, not restrain them to the metropolises, with the danger of ghettoization. A solution would be to fund already existing linguistic exchange programs such as *Explore*⁷. This would allow young people from anywhere in Canada to have access to a second language immersion. Allowing Canadian teachers to teach in any province of the country, also, would prevent a shortage of trained second language teachers. Another idea that is getting momentum this year is the creation of a National Institute of Education. Languages and curricula may be different, but principles of education should be the same across the country. In that respect, a non-partisan group of teachers, university professors, educators, and administrators in education are asking for higher standards in education. They are exasperated that the Ministry of Education of Quebec listens to parents' opinions and to "pedagogical myths" to create policies, making some of their approaches, techniques, and entire programs not based on any empirical scientific evidence (Royer, 2016; Brodeur, M., Gagné, A., Gascon, H., et al., 2015).

More than anything, a change in the mentalities is what is needed the most. Naturally, measures should be taken to ensure that English instruction would enhance students' both languages, and not diminish their command

⁷ <http://www.myexplore.ca/en/>

of the French language. Practitioners (teachers) must be supported in the implementation of new programs, especially something as ambitious as a full-scale immersion. If Quebec chooses to go in that direction, then educators, school management, and policy makers (the Ministry of Education) need to be on the same page and actively promote those changes in order to be successful with the parents who might not be sold to the idea. Hopefully the next generation will be more open to the world and will understand what asset bilingualism represents. Meanwhile, education needs to be independent from politics to ensure no hurried curriculum reform after every election; a separation similar to what was successfully done with the Catholic Church and the provincial government in the 1960s during the Quiet Revolution, *la Révolution tranquille*, a period of major changes that have positively modernised the Quebec society.

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