



BEYOND WORDS



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A Word from the Commissioner

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Learning and maintaining a language: Exercise for the mind

by *Graham Fraser*

It was almost three decades ago, but I remember the incident vividly. My younger son, then in kindergarten in a French school in Québec City, was playing with neighbouring children in the lane behind our house when he was called in to supper. He turned to his friends and said "Il faut que je m'en aille"—I've got to go.

I was pierced with simultaneous pangs of envy and pride. I found myself thinking "I spent hours and hours in high school memorizing the various forms that take the subjunctive—and my son, who does not yet know what the subjunctive is, let alone that it follows 'il faut que,' has just rattled it off without thinking."

It was one of the many experiences I have cherished in my years of language learning: as a student, an adult, a journalist, and now as Commissioner of Official Languages.

For those of us who have not grown up learning a second language from parents or playmates, there are often difficult steps and stages, steep slopes and plateaus in the process. We all learn languages differently: some in a classroom, some in a social environment, some primarily from reading and reasoning, and others from listening and intuiting.

Sometimes, learning another language can seem totally hopeless—until there is a change of environment. In my last year of high school, I can remember feeling a chill when one of my teachers, a man of brutal sarcasm, said in a kind tone of unusual compassion that made his comment even more terrifying, "Fraser, you really have no gift for languages." A year and a half later, on a summer project in Quebec, I had a breakthrough—and went from being a mediocre student of high school French to someone who was able to speak and understand the language.

Learning a second—or a third—language involves entering another world, and learning a new code. For an English speaker, the mysteries of the use of "tu" and "vous" provide a glimpse into new complexities of social relationships.

But speaking a language is not, as some think, like riding a bicycle—a skill that, once acquired, is never lost. Rather, it is more like learning a sport: stop

practising, and the ability erodes; practise more, and improvement is almost inevitable. The old cliché applies: use it or lose it.

After three summer jobs in Quebec—one summer on an archaeological dig and two as an orderly in a mental hospital in the east end of Montréal—I graduated from university and went to work as a reporter in Toronto. My French began to deteriorate—but even just a weekend with friends from Montréal would result in an audible improvement. Eight years after I graduated from university, I moved to Montréal with my family, and plunged into reviving and improving my language skills. Once again, my ears seemed to swell as I listened to sliding vowels, diphthongs and unfamiliar expressions and tried to wrap my brain around the different accents and social gradations of language. The extraordinary Quebec monologist Yvon Deschamps had recently published a book with a collection of his best-known monologues, and, with the disc on the record player, I would read and re-read the transcriptions, marvelling at what he had created, and what he did to my ear.

I came to realize that learning and maintaining a language is like getting and staying fit: there are an infinite number of ways, almost all of them pleasurable, but, to paraphrase the running shoe manufacturer's slogan, you just have to do it.

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Special Feature**Working in your second language**

What do a star chef from Quebec, a French teacher from Alberta, a political journalist and a young employee at the Library of Parliament have in common? They all work in their second language. They tell us how they got their start in the world of the other official language.

Ricardo and Friends

by *Luc Boulanger, Montréal, Quebec*

You could say that Ricardo Larrivée is an artist: a brilliant culinary artist who has a talent for making friends. An expert in the preparation of simple and delicious meals, he enjoys cooking for his French-speaking viewers so much that he couldn't refuse his producer's challenge of hosting a cooking show in English. When you love people the way he does, can you really turn down the opportunity to come into the homes of millions of viewers through the magic of television? It's as impossible as making wine without grapes!

Discovering the Prairies

Ricardo Larrivée found his calling "by accident." At the end of the 1980s, after studying hotel and tourism at the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec in Montréal, he knew he didn't want to spend his life in an office and decided to enrol in Communications at Ottawa's Algonquin College. Two years later, the young graduate got a job as a technician at the French-language Radio-Canada station... in Regina, Saskatchewan. He spoke some English, but this bilingual position gave him the opportunity to perfect his second language. And so, the adventure began!

"I had just as many English-speaking friends as I did French-speaking friends in Regina. I even worked at establishing French schools in Saskatchewan and wrote for the French-language Saskatchewan weekly *L'Eau-vive*," he recalled.

After work, Ricardo kept himself busy... in the kitchen, of course! "In less than a year, I think that half of the radio station employees had tried my dishes." It was in Regina that he discovered the perfect recipe for making new friends: every weekend, he would invite people over for a delicious meal and a delightful evening. His bosses immediately noticed his love of cooking and offered him a weekly feature about international cuisine, for radio and later for television.

"My professional and adult life began in Saskatchewan. At 22, I was given the opportunity to earn a living talking about my passion: food. I also learned about multiculturalism, the natural wonders of the Prairies, the beautiful skies and the raw and unique landscape of the Badlands," recalled the popular chef.

The road to success

Back in Quebec, in the mid-1990s, Ricardo worked for the newspaper *La Presse* and the TVA show *Les Saisons de Clodine*. He met the love of his life, his partner Brigitte Coutu, a nutritionist, and they now have three adorable daughters.

From feature to feature and from project to project, this master of the kitchen has worked his way up the ladder of success. After giving his recipes and tips in French for a long time, including on his daily television show *Ricardo*, which he has been hosting for Radio-Canada for the last seven years, he now also has an English-language show, *Ricardo and Friends*, on the Food Network. His culinary magazine *Ricardo* is now published in both official languages and distributed all across Canada, just like his recipe books, his special issue magazines and everything else.

Two languages are better than one

When Ricardo was a child, his Italian godfather from New York, who was friends with his parents, spoke to him in English and Ricardo would answer back in French. "Today, I do the same thing with my three daughters," explains the 41-year-old father. "I speak to them in English at the end of the day, at dinner time. Each of them also gets a turn coming with me on my promotional tours to Toronto or Vancouver so they can learn about the Canadian reality. In my opinion, you shouldn't force a child to learn a language. It's better to show them how to appreciate the language, by proving that it is beneficial to master a second language. When my daughters see me talking passionately about cooking with strangers in the Maritimes or out West, they realize that it is an asset."

In one of the four kitchens that he has transformed into a studio, at his home in Chambly, Montérégie, the TV host often films several episodes in one day, going from English to French and vice versa. He knows that he still has things to learn, so he follows the advice of an English teacher who gives him private lessons several hours per week. "We work on my intonation so that it flows naturally on television, and also to stop me from translating from French to English in my head while I'm speaking. Since starting *Ricardo and Friends* in October 2006, I have enjoyed speaking English and playing with the words, synonyms and subtleties of the language more than ever. However, I don't want to lose my Québécois accent, because my accent reflects my personality!" he added, with a big smile.

Ricardo took a chance when he decided not to change his style just to appeal to English-speaking viewers. "I hope they like me as I am. If Céline Dion could do it in music, I can certainly try to do it in cooking!" he laughed.

Eat better, eat locally

Ricardo is a strong advocate for regional cuisine. He wants to use his new national platform to help promote diverse local cuisines to all of Canada. "We have to eat according to the region we live in, the nature that surrounds us. Our geographic location influences—or should influence—the way we cook. There is also the past and culture to think about. Quebec is more naturally influenced by Europe, while British Columbia is more influenced by Asia."

The salt of the earth

The Ricardo whom millions of Canadians know through television is not just pretending to be nice. Far from acting like a typical star when the camera is off, he develops special relationships with everybody who crosses his path. The employees at the Montréal publisher of his magazines can vouch for this! When Ricardo arrives, he instantly lights up the room. He takes the time to greet, motivate and thank all of the employees, from the receptionist to the executives, to the graphic designers and sales representatives. He then goes to his television producer's office and, there too, he makes the rounds with the same warmth and attention.

The cream of the crop

His talent, charisma and good humour have made Ricardo a public figure loved by Quebec and the rest of Canada. But the key to his success is his generosity and his ability to bring people together. Ricardo is always surrounded by people. He is a team player, a family man and a person who really enjoys life. He loves the world and the world loves him back. With him, talking, cooking and eating in English, just like in French, is a piece of cake!

To find out more about Ricardo, visit:

www.radio-canada.ca/television/ricardo 🌐 (in French only)

www.foodtv.ca/ricardoandfriends 🌐

www.editionsgesca.ca/home.aspx 🌐

Magic words

by Scott Stevenson, Sherbrooke, Quebec

Tara Natter wasn't immersed in French as a child, but as a young adult studying in Alberta she certainly made the plunge. Now she works, writes and lives mostly in French.

The French second-language teacher published her first book, *Sabita et les mots magiques mêlés*, earlier this year. This family project, involving her French-speaking husband and children, is an important new milestone on the path Tara chose back in university.

A long and winding road

After one year studying in English, with a few French courses here and there, at the University of Calgary, "I accepted my friend Barb Luft's invitation to be her roommate at the Faculté Saint-Jean in Edmonton. Having made much progress in French since high school, I was still far from fluent," she said.

"I will always remember having to go to the language lab to perfect my accent," she recalled. My big task was to try to hear the difference between *u* and *ou*—two sounds which do not exist in English. Whenever I got the wrong answer, the computer would say to me, in English for some reason, "You dork!"

"Another tip from pronunciation class was to practise reading with a pen across my mouth held in my teeth. I needed to strengthen the French muscles in my mouth—and would do it religiously. I also remember Michel Corbeil patiently having me repeat *dessus* and *dessous*, putting his hands above and below the kitchen table at residence and Nhan laughing out loud at me for calling a green pepper *un poivre vert* and not a *poivron vert*. Nhan was definitely a tough cookie as a teacher, but also my best French supporter," Tara recounted.

"Jumping into French with both feet is a decision I will never regret. It has really paved the way for me. Although not a product of French immersion, I learned French thanks to being truly immersed with great Francophone friends."

Tara completed the remainder of her teaching degree in French at what is now the [Campus Saint-Jean](#) of the University of Alberta in [Bonnie Doon](#) (in French only), a French-speaking district of Edmonton. She also took a year to perfect her French and learn more about French culture by working as a nanny in Dijon, France.

But that's not where she met her French husband, William. "Many people assume that I met my husband in France, but I actually found him in Canada. We met at a Halloween dance at the French cultural centre near the Faculté Saint-Jean in October 1997. He was dressed up as a ghost and I was a gypsy. My husband was on an exchange with the University of Alberta with his engineering school."

The couple were wed in the south of France in 2000, and now have two children, Laura, 4, and Nicolas, 6. Since Tara and William speak French at home to the kids, French is their children's first language.

"They speak just as well as any other kids in France their age," she said, adding that her children's knowledge of both English and French is the same, thanks to school and friendships that are mostly in English where they now live in the Ottawa area.

“We have French immersion in Canada, but we don’t have enough resources,” she said. “I wrote this book mainly as a second-language tool.”

Learning made fun

The focus of the book is on having fun. “If you explain sounds and letters through magic, kids love that kind of thing. It’s hard to find educational books that are fun.”

The process of publishing the book was a family affair, including participation from a cousin in Vancouver. Husband William is the narrator on the CD version, and son Nicolas plays the sounds of the mythical one-eyed *copisson* creatures.

“In the schools, the kids love it and teachers want it. I go into the schools in medieval dress, teach the song in the book, and answer questions about writing and publishing,” she said. “I love that, getting out and meeting the kids, inspiring them. I’m trying to get people excited about French.”

Tara’s first language is a source of fascination for her audiences. “The kids ask me all the time: ‘Were you born French?’ I explain how I became bilingual, and that now I live with my husband in French.”

She describes learning a second language as a matter of motivation, something she had plenty of when she first jumped in with both feet. “I wanted to get into French because I knew there was a need for French teachers. I enjoy it. I love the sound of it. I love the culture. And I like having both, speaking in both languages with friends. I like sharing it.”

Tara Natter’s book is available in bookstores and at www.liriton.com, her publishing company’s Web site.

A bridge between the two language groups

by Réjean Paulin, Ottawa, Ontario

"I told myself that one of my strengths would be to build bridges between French and English Canada."

Today, the proudly Francophone and fully bilingual Daniel Leblanc explains, in English, Canadian politics to all of Canada in the *Globe and Mail*. His job is primarily to inform, but he also serves as a bridge between two of his country's language communities.

Capable of understanding and explaining Canadian politics in both official languages, Daniel always wanted to bridge the gap between both cultures. "When we become journalists, we sometimes look for our niche. We ask ourselves what we can bring to the profession."

His Francophone identity and openness towards the English language is the result of a journey that quickly enabled him to learn about Canada's cultural mosaic.

His last name, Leblanc, dates back to the early origins of French in North America. His ancestors are from Trois-Rivières. His parents, Levasseur on his mother's side and Leblanc on his father's side, are Franco-Manitobans. He was born in Ottawa but was still in diapers when his family moved to Quebec.

As a child, he regularly visited Manitoba and Nova Scotia with his parents. These trips opened up his eyes to the country's many cultural facets, from east to west. "This gave me a better understanding of Canada."

Leaving Ottawa before learning to speak could have distanced him from the English language, but his brother, who was three years older than him, made sure that did not happen... without even realizing it! "He had control of the TV remote and liked to watch Saturday morning cartoons in English."

Because of his big brother's influence, Daniel worked hard to understand this unfamiliar language at a very young age. He later studied English in an enriched program at Collège Saint-Alexandre in Gatineau.

Today, his language skills are a real asset to him on Parliament Hill. He can easily speak with someone in their language of choice.

He has developed a fairly clear picture of the two official language communities, which he feels are at the same time similar yet different.

They are similar because they are both based on shared social values, but different because each has its own values as well.

This is why some events do not have the same meaning everywhere. In his opinion, the sponsorship scandal is a good example. "There was something more Québécois about it because this ordeal was linked to Canadian flags and the national question."

He discussed the issue at length in his book *Nom de code : MaChouette*, which he wrote in French.

"I wrote the book in French because I experienced the inquiry in French. Also, I wanted to prove to myself that I could still do it."

Daniel does not agonize over living his life in English, but he does not bury his head in the sand either. "I saw some of my cousins assimilate into the English-language community. It's a fact of life, it's something that... that scares us," he said, with a worried look in his eyes.

He tries to keep the same thing from happening to him by going back to his roots. He did it by writing his book in French, but his family and his city are his real haven. He and his wife live in Gatineau and they try to ensure that their three children, aged five, 10 and 14, live and grow up in French.

Conscious of the fact that, with considerable effort, a person can preserve his or her language and culture, he has a realistic view on the place of both official languages in Canadian politics.

"It's great to hear Michael Ignatieff ask a question in French and have Stephen Harper answer back in French, but let's not fool ourselves."

Based on his experience, he says that unilingual Anglophone journalists on Parliament Hill manage to do their job, even if they sometimes think they have missed something important in French. However, it is not unreasonable to believe that it is a lot more difficult for unilingual Francophones.

Yet his experience working for a daily English-language paper is for the most part a positive one, where Canada's linguistic vision is accepted. "I believe we have a good awareness of this issue at the *Globe and Mail*."

Daniel found what he was looking for when the newspaper wanted to hire a young bilingual journalist to cover parliamentary news. The opportunity came about in 1998, shortly after he finished his Masters degree in political science. He asked himself whether it had happened a bit too soon, knowing that this type of work is usually offered to a seasoned professional.

He has been sharing a world without linguistic barriers with his fellow citizens for 10 years now and his linguistic fluidity has paid off. In 2002, he received the Canadian Association of Journalists Award in the investigative journalism category. He was also a co-recipient of the 2004 Michener Award for meritorious public service in journalism.

In the end, the job he was offered came at just the right time.

Total immersion

by *Kevin Machida, Ottawa, Ontario*

From immersion programs to summer camps and employment exchanges between French and English Canada, there are many opportunities for Canada's youth to learn and live in their second official language. Experiences like these are a valuable part of growing up in Canada, because they allow our youth to acquire important skills for when they enter the job market.

"French immersion helped me improve my French and gave me a good sense of Canada's diversity by meeting other young people from coast to coast. Being bilingual has really opened up a lot of doors for me."

-- Katie Zeman

Today, Katie Zeman is fully bilingual and working at the Library of Parliament in Ottawa. She grew up in northern British Columbia, with Anglophone parents, and only got her first taste of the French language in Grade 6. After that, though, she took advantage of as many opportunities as she could to experience Canada's bilingual culture:

- Late immersion, Grades 6–12;
- [Encounters with Canada](#) 🌐, a one-week program in Ottawa that focuses on Canadian Studies;
- [Interchange on Canadian Studies](#) 🌐, a one-week bilingual conference that deals with a variety of Canadian topics;
- [Forum for Young Canadians](#) 🌐, a one-week conference and exchange opportunity in Ottawa that fosters leadership skills through the study of governance, democracy and citizenship.

While earning a bilingual degree in Canadian Studies at [Campus Saint-Jean](#) 🌐, the French-language campus of the University of Alberta, she continued to apply for summer jobs, like those listed below, that would allow her to work in both official languages:

- [Québec/Alberta Student Employment Exchange Program](#) 🌐 – bilingual tour guide at the Parc national de la Jacques-Cartier (Québec City);
- [Parliamentary Guide Program](#) 🇨🇦 – bilingual tour guide at Parliament (Ottawa);
- [Federal Student Work Experience Program](#) 🇨🇦 (FSWEP) – bilingual tour guide at Rideau Hall, the residence of the Governor General of Canada (Ottawa);
- [Student Guide Program in France](#) 🇨🇦 – bilingual tour guide at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

Her multitude of bilingual experiences both at school and in the job market has made it possible for her to always be surrounded by and to work equally in both official languages.

PORTRAIT

Rediscovering Acadia

by Mireille Leblanc – Moncton, New Brunswick

Some moments in life become engraved in a person's memory like words on a monument. For Donald DesRoches, two different events cemented his attachment to his language and his culture.

A double awakening

The first took place while he was a student at Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia. He paid a visit to the church at the [Grand-Pré National Historic Site](#), which commemorates the Acadian deportation. In this small stone church, surrounded by majestic willow trees, the name of each Acadian family deported from Grand-Pré is engraved on a series of bronze plaques. "My name is DesRoches, and although some people spoke French in my family, I never thought of myself as Acadian. I saw myself as a non-ethnic Canadian who spoke French. When I read the list of Acadian families that were deported, my eyes froze on the name DesRoches. My God, it was like discovering who I was! That was a defining moment," he remembers.

This sense of belonging was reinforced by another pivotal event that occurred one summer day, while visiting his paternal grandmother when he was still at university. He was sitting with his grandmother in her living room, making small talk. "Then, at one point, she turned to me and said, 'I guess you're the only one in the family who speaks French. I wish we could keep the language going in our family.' I remember that as if it were yesterday, and it hit me that she had a really strong attachment to French," he recalls.

English as a mother tongue

Donald did not always have this impression, because, even though his family had an Acadian background, they mostly spoke in English. He was born in 1965 in the small community of Barryville, near Miramichi, New Brunswick, and the only school in town was English. "Everyone in the community went to this English school. There was this idea that Acadian French was of a lower quality than the French we learned at school," says Donald, remembering the mentality that prevailed in the 1970s.

Up until Grade 12, Donald studied in English, but he took French classes whenever he could. He spoke English at home with his parents and his six siblings, and he sometimes spoke French with store clerks in neighbouring Francophone communities. His family attended the English-language church in town, but Donald would occasionally do a reading in French. So even though English was his mother tongue, French was always waiting on the sidelines.

Return of a romance language

When the time came to choose a university, Donald picked Université Sainte-Anne in Nova Scotia. "Maybe it was a form of teenage rebellion, since Université Sainte-Anne was pretty far from my parents," he says, laughing. "But it was also clear in my mind that, in order not to lose French, I had to speak it more often."

While studying science in this small Nova Scotia Acadian town, Donald met Lorna Burke. Lorna was enrolled in a French immersion program, and she would eventually become his wife. Born in Prince Edward Island, Lorna had also been raised in English, but had a fondness for the French language of her grandmother. After graduating, the couple settled in Prince Edward Island in 1986, and they now have two children, Mathieu and Chantelle. "Even though Lorna and I are two Anglophones, the language we met in, and the language we communicate in, has always been French. There was never a question what language we'd raise our children in!" Donald exclaims.

Nesting in both languages

Mathieu and Chantelle have always spoken French with their parents. Donald and Lorna have worked hard to promote the French language at home, with a French-speaking babysitter and French DVDs. Even their computer runs on French Windows software. Technically, their children are not entitled to attend school in French because their parents' first language is English, but Donald and Lorna asked the school board for an exemption so they could enrol their children in a French-language school. Since they live in a province where English is spoken by the majority, the DesRoches children have easily learned English in school and in their community. "We would like our children to be fluent in both languages. Lorna and I had to work hard to learn a second language, and we now want to give that language to our children," he says.

Comparing his children's situation to his own childhood in Barryville, Donald sees how society has evolved. "I think it was easier for us than it was for our parents. Speaking two languages is now looked upon positively. In my parents' time, it had negative connotations, or people were ambivalent about it. Society has changed. I think that we've done well, and we're happy with our decision. Our children are bilingual and they have access to both our languages and both our cultures," concludes Donald. He believes that everyone should learn at least two languages, and he even hopes to enrol his children in Spanish or Mandarin classes.

FOCUS ON A COMMUNITY**Maillardville: The Coquitlam's Francophone community**

by Robert Rother, Vancouver, British Columbia

You can't find Maillardville on any map of British Columbia no matter how hard you look. However, this community does exist, both physically and in the imagination of British Columbians, for whom it symbolizes the French fact west of the Rockies.

French roots

The village of Maillardville was born when the owners of the Hastings Mills sawmill began to worry about an undisciplined workforce. In 1909, they sent a delegation to eastern Canada to recruit French Canadians, who had a reputation for being good workers with sound morals. An initial contingent of 110 people answered the call and took the train westward.

Once they arrived at their destination, the pioneers settled on the shores of the Fraser River, on a site that they had to clear, and built a Francophone workers' village like those they left behind in the east. Shortly after they arrived, they started building a school and a church, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, which became the heart of the first French-language parish in British Columbia. In 1912, the village was named Maillardville in honour of the founding parish priest, Reverend Father Edmond Maillard, OMI. Over the years, the children of the pioneers grew up and continued to clear land in the area, so nearly 100 years later, the French language and traditions have survived.

New beginnings

Time passed and the village, previously isolated on a hill, has become part of the city of Coquitlam, a suburb of Vancouver. The Francophone core has fragmented with each wave of new allophone and Anglophone arrivals, who eventually formed the majority. However, the Francophone flame has continued to burn brightly, because Maillardville is reborn every year through the Festival du Bois. This cultural event mobilizes all the resources of the old founding community, giving it its status as a Francophone area.

Hard times

Over the years, economic conditions have created turmoil in Maillardville, whose location makes it a gateway to Coquitlam. The situation has become worrisome, as in all small communities that see their economies decline.

Coalition for the future

But a corner was turned in 2006 when Johanne Dumas, executive director of the Société francophone de Maillardville, began approaching merchants and business people to ask them to support the cultural activities that she wanted to organize. One thing led to another, and she also began contacting elected officials of the City of Coquitlam and provincial and federal government public servants. Finally, Maillardville's status as a Francophone community helped it attract influential political and economic allies who met to discuss the future of the community.

Since then, a coordinated effort has helped develop a sociocultural revitalization plan for the community, funded by Western Economic Development. In the short term, the plan sets out beautification projects such as installing wrought iron decorations and changing the colour of the street furniture from the usual green to a more distinctive black; these projects have been completed. In the long term, it aims to retain the unique character of the community through sustainable development: rebuilding the Francophone village, attracting Francophone businesses, especially Quebec companies, and creating a Latin quarter. Through this plan, the stakeholders want to develop the tourist potential of Maillardville to distinguish Coquitlam from the neighbouring municipalities.

A long-term endeavour

Everyone realizes the revitalization plan will take 10 or 20 years to complete and will require considerable investment. Nevertheless, confidence is high. Residents are also participating in their community's revitalization process. In the summer of 2007, they took part in a workshop to design public spaces and urban structures, and some are members of a working group that meets every month and is chaired by municipal councillor Richard Stewart. No other community in Coquitlam has its own working group to promote its development.

We are walking hand in hand with the community.

— Jennifer Wilkie, Manager, Corporate Planning, City of Coquitlam

The City built partnerships with the Francophone community in order to take concrete measures, which have multiplied since 2006. The municipal council funded a project to brand Maillardville in 2007. Currently, City representatives are working on developing the Francophone Village project, an Olympic edition of the Festival du Bois, which will highlight Canada's Francophone community through cultural events in 2010. This kind of partnership between an official language minority community and a municipality is rare in British Columbia. It deserves to be celebrated because the entire region can benefit from it. Johanne Dumas is convinced of this. "If the City keeps this community in mind, we can do something. The projects will move forward. I am certain of it."

Favorable circumstances

The convergence of three catalysts led to a partnership between the City and the Francophone community of Coquitlam. "The \$400,000 from Western Economic Development helped. It was a catalyst," said Jennifer Wilkie, manager of corporate planning for the City of Coquitlam. "Then there are the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games being held in Vancouver, which pushed us to see how Coquitlam could benefit." The third catalyst came from the political milieu. "Council gave the community a voice," said Ms. Wilkie, who added that the City did not wait for these first two catalysts to consider Maillardville a unique neighbourhood that helped define Coquitlam. Her colleague, Therese Mickelson, manager of corporate communications, agrees. "Maillardville is at the core of our history. We've become a multicultural city over time, but our roots started in Maillardville and in First Nations communities." According to Jennifer Wilkie, the City's effort to brand Maillardville is part of this. "Most people would recognize that preserving Francophone culture is worthwhile."

One heritage

A descendant of one of the first families to move to Maillardville, municipal councillor Richard Stewart has lived in Coquitlam all his life. He believes that the tide is turning in favour of the Francophone community. "Coquitlam has come a

long way in what Coquitlam's first Francophone pioneers meant to this community. Our heritage was disappearing, but only the Francophones were lamenting that. And now we are catching up." According to Mr. Stewart, municipal councillors are paying close attention to the measures taken by the federal government, and this new attitude is surprising to many.

As a son of Maillardville, Richard Stewart is touched by this recent solidarity. "There are days when it brings tears to my eyes. When I think we're going to make it. There have been attempts before. Now we finally have Council on board. Take last night for example. A delegation from Maillardville came before Council to sing "Gens de Maillardville" on *Gens du pays*. That wouldn't have flown 10 years ago!"

Links

[City of Coquitlam](#)

[Revitalization of Maillardville by the City of Coquitlam](#)

[Demographic profile of Coquitlam](#)

[Festival du Bois](#)

[Société francophone de Maillardville](#)

[Maillardville as seen by others](#)

[History of Maillardville](#) (in French only)

[History of the Francophone presence in British Columbia](#) (in French only)

[Olympic Games - Vancouver 2010](#)

LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD

Francophones in the land of uncle Sam

The vast American territory has been populated by waves of immigration. People from all over the world have gone to the United States in search of a brighter future or, in some cases, against their will.

Who has not heard of the Deportation of 1755, when thousands of Acadians from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were uprooted from their homeland? This most tragic event led to the introduction of the beauty of the French language into the United States.

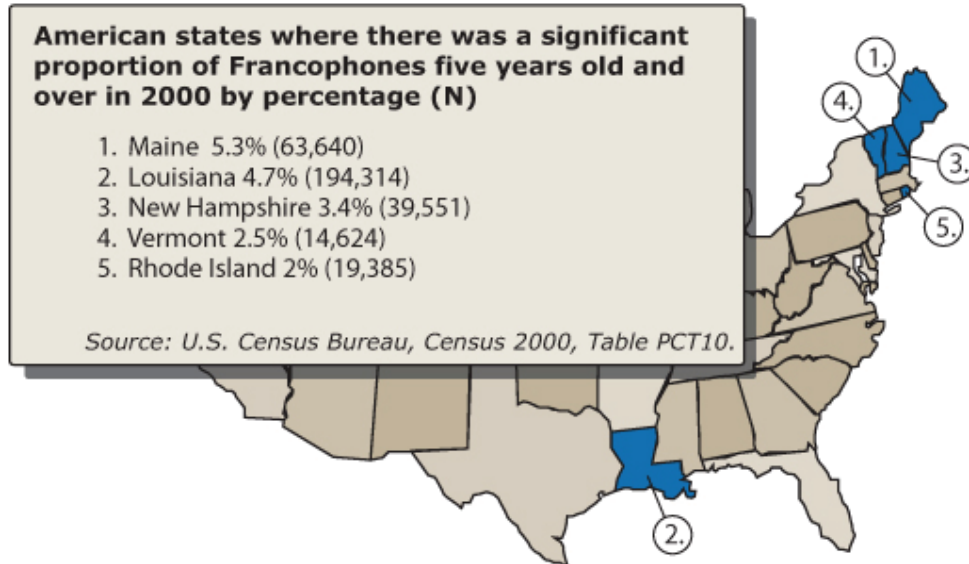
A great deal is said today about the low birth rate in Canada as a whole, and more specifically in Quebec, where immigration is essential to compensate for the demographic deficit. But in the early 1800s, Quebec's birth rate was so high that, as a result of the economic situation at the time, it was very difficult to feed so many mouths. Thousands of French-Canadian families left for New England, attracted by industries seeking labourers.

These Francophones integrated into the host country, but made sure to pass down all aspects of their cultural and linguistic heritage to their descendents. They were able to do this for awhile, but, not surprisingly, time, distance and the Anglophone majority eroded the vitality of the French lineage. What about today? Is there a Francophone presence in the land of Uncle Sam?

Some figures

According to the 1990 census, 1.93 million Americans five years old and over spoke French at home. Ten years later, the number fell to 1.64 million. In 2006, according to the American Community Survey, there were slightly fewer than 1.4 million people speaking French at home. Therefore, in 16 years, the number of Francophones fell by 28%.

French is losing ground to other languages spoken by today's immigrants—namely Spanish, spoken by more than 34 million Americans in 2006, and Asian languages such as Chinese, Filipino (one of the Philippines's two official languages) Vietnamese and Korean. Before 1960, 68% of Francophone immigrants to the United States were from Canada. Between 1960 and 1969, the rate declined to 37% and went down to only 8% between 1970 and 1979.



Francophonie in all its states

Francophones are scattered throughout the United States, from North to South and from East to West. In 2000, the 194,314 Francophones in Louisiana accounted for 4.7% of the population. They are the descendants of the Acadians who were forced to leave their homeland during the Deportation and today make up the largest Francophone community in the United States. New York state and California are next with 180,809 and 135,067 Francophones respectively, mainly from Europe. Florida follows thanks to the French, Québécois and Caribbean people who flock there.

However, when we look at the proportion of Francophones in each state, Maine has the highest concentration with 63,640 Francophones, accounting for 5.3% of the state's population. As is the case elsewhere in New England, a large number of these Francophones have roots in Canada as a result of the proximity of Quebec and New Brunswick.

Francophone institutions

For a long time, Catholic parishes were the nucleus of Francophone communities. In addition to holding religious celebrations in French, the church also ensured the well-being of its congregation, organizing various social activities centred around choirs, pastoral services, women's groups, clubs for men, boy scout and girl guide troops, sports teams and charity work.

Saint Joseph, the first Francophone parish in the United States, was established in Vermont in 1850. Other parishes soon followed. Today, the mass continues to be celebrated in French in 58 parishes, which are almost always bilingual or trilingual, as the members of these congregations also speak Spanish, Creole, Italian, Vietnamese or Portuguese, in addition to English.

The United States has about a dozen Francophone schools, mostly private, that are attended by Francophones from overseas, and 90 French immersion schools. The seven French-language dailies in existence in 1911 have gradually disappeared. The last one, *L'Indépendant*, published in Massachusetts, became a weekly in 1962, a few months before the presses stopped.

A culture that is still alive

One would have thought that the dispersion of such a small number of Francophones in such a vast Anglophone and multiethnic country would have resulted in the loss of this rich culture. Against all expectations, unshakable Francophones continue to carry the torch.

For 26 years, Biddeford, a small city in Maine, has come alive in French during [Kermesse, a Franco-American festival](#). The descendants of French-Canadians who moved there nearly 200 years ago celebrate the heritage of their ancestors—their language, their faith and their culture.

In Lewiston, Maine, the [Franco-American Heritage Centre](#) organizes activities in French for the community, including the Festival Franco-Fun. For three days, festivalgoers celebrate their pride in being Francophone through food, song and dance.

Speaking French to survive

Statistics clearly show that there is cause for concern. French is becoming an increasingly minority language in the United States. Franco-Americans cannot rely on their government to protect their language and culture. For more than two centuries now, the United States has adopted language policies that promote English. Beginning in the 1850s, many states, including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, California and New York, limited the right to vote to citizens who were competent in English. Today, 26 states have legislated the official and exclusive status of English. Most of the others recognize this *de facto*.

As is the case elsewhere in the world, French will not survive unless it continues to be spoken, taught, sung and loved. Fortunately, being a minority does not necessarily mean Francophones will disappear. In fact, there are many Francophones in the United States who have their heart set on preserving their rich culture. Despite their demographic weight, Franco-Americans can be proud of their ancestors who transmitted that which was most precious to them. It is now up to them to safeguard this treasure: their language.

Languages spoken at home by at least one million people five years old and over, in 2000 and 2006

Language spoken	2000 Census			2006 Survey		
	Number	%	Ranking	Number	%	Ranking
English	215,423,557	82.1	1	224,154,288	80.3	1
Spanish	28,100,725	10.7	2	34,044,945	12.2	2
Chinese	2,022,145	0.7	3	2,492,871	0.9	3
French	1,643,838	0.6	4	1,395,732	0.5	5
German	1,383,442	0.5	5	1,135,999	0.4	7
Filipino	1,224,241	0.5	6	1,415,599	0.5	4
Vietnamese	1,009,627	0.4	7	1,207,721	0.4	6
Italian	1,008,370	0.4	8	828,524	0.3	9
Korean	894,063	0.3	9	1,060,631	0.4	8

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2000*, Table PCT10 and *American Community Survey 2006*, Table B16001.

We would like to thank Edmund A. Aunger from Edmonton, Alberta, for the statistical data provided.

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Francophone Louisiana

- Did you know that the word "Cajun," often used to refer to the Francophone community of Louisiana, comes from the word "Acadian?" The Francophone descendants of the Acadians expelled from Canada by the British in [1755](#) are called "Cadiens" in French, which was pronounced "Cajun" in English. But the Cajuns are not the only people who speak French in Louisiana. Creoles, descendants of the earliest French and Spanish colonists, also speak the language of Molière.
- According to the Web site of Professor [Jacques Leclerc](#) (in French only), French retains some legal status in Louisiana, for historical reasons. From 1682 to 1803, French was *de facto* an official language and, by far, the dominant language throughout Louisiana.
- Have you ever wondered what Cajun French is? Are there typically Cajun expressions? For answers to your questions, look on the Web site of [Louisiana State University's French Studies Department](#).
- [Radio Louisiane](#) calls itself "the voice of French America." Established by the [Council for the Development of French in Louisiana](#) (CODOFIL), this radio station offers typical Louisiana programming. CODOFIL also supports a number of Francophone organizations that contribute to the vitality of French in the state.

Florida with a French-Canadian twist

Even though English has been the official language of Florida since 1988, there has been an explosion of French over the past several years. This is explained, in part, by a massive influx of [snowbirds](#), Canadians who spend the winter there. Some businesses even fly the Canadian flag to let people know they provide service in French.

- [Le Soleil de la Floride](#) (in French only), *Le Vacancier de la Floride* and *Carrefour Floride* are a few of the newspapers published in French. The Québécois daily [La Presse](#) (in French only) is also distributed in Florida from November to April. This year, more than 60,000 copies found their way south.
- [Destination Soleil](#) (in French only) is a virtual showcase of Francophone Florida, with 5,000 texts in its archives, including an impressive list of Francophone associations in Florida.
- In 1992, the Mouvement Desjardins opened its first branch, the [Desjardins Bank](#), in Florida. Two years later [Natbank](#), a subsidiary of the National Bank of Canada, was established in the state. The [RBC Royal Bank of Canada](#) provides banking services for Canadians in the United States through about 30 branches in Florida and other south-eastern states.

Maine

Maine is the state with by far the largest Francophone presence—about 5% of the population. Many signs attest to this strong presence. For example, it is not unusual to find French family names that have lost their accents or have acquired English pronunciations. An author from the state's Jay region, Adèle St. Pierre, writes about this situation in her article "[What's in a Name?](#)"

It is true that Maine's geographical location has a lot to do with the Francophone presence, but history has played a part too. In 1604, four years before the foundation of the city of Québec, Samuel de Champlain's boat landed on an island off the coast of Maine, which he named Mont Désert (now part of [Acadia National Park](#)). At the beginning of the 19th century, a number of Québécois and Acadians settled in Maine to find work in the expanding construction, forestry and textile industries.

Today, there are other reasons for the continuing French presence in Maine. For example, the state has not adopted English as an official language, and in 2002, it even established an annual Franco-American day, during which the Pledge of Allegiance is recited in French and the national anthem is sung in English and French. The [University of Maine, Fort Kent](#) promotes the advantages of knowing French as well as English.

Based on the census of 2000, [Wikipedia](#) lists several Maine communities whose population is more than 50% Francophone, including [Madawaska](#) (84%) and [Frenchville](#) (80%).

Sources: www.francomaine.org/English/Pres/Pres_intro.html and www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/amnord/maine.htm (in French only)

HATS OFF...

English, French and music in harmony at the NAC

by *Scott Stevenson – Sherbrooke, Québec*

French and English and music share much in common at the [National Arts Centre](#) (NAC), where linguistic duality now plays centre stage.

“Well, it’s plurality really: we have a third official language, and that’s music, a language every Canadian can understand,” said [Boris Brott](#), Principal Youth and Family Conductor at the NAC. “We are not just bilingual, we are multicultural. That makes Canada very special. We are an example to the world. I’m very proud of Canada, and the NAC embodies that approach.”

About two years ago, the NAC began giving linguistic duality a more prominent role by increasing the integration of Canada’s two official languages—and two official language communities—into its internal planning and programming. There are still English events and French events, but now there are also many events where French and English are intertwined.

In its effort to raise the level of bilingualism in its programming, the NAC created a very Canadian model for the full integration of English and French, as well as music, into the public dialogue.

The [TD Canada Trust Family Adventures](#) with the NAC Orchestra were already bilingual, but informally. “The level of bilingualism was not high enough,” said Anne Tanguay, the NAC’s Official Languages Champion. “We needed to increase the ratio of French in the script. It was about 25% in French; now it’s roughly 40%.”

The motivation was not only to serve audiences in Canada’s two official languages, but also to fill the NAC’s 2,100-seat Southam Hall. During the one-hour Family Adventures concerts, the host and conductor speak a mix of English and French when the 60-musician orchestra is not playing.

This is an example of one of those fairly rare bilingual events where the message is not repeated by translating from one language into the other; rather, part of the message is given in English and part is given in French—something that is still relatively avant-garde, even in Canada.

Does the approach work? The NAC asked its English-speaking and French-speaking audiences—children, friends, parents and grandparents—in a survey earlier this year: 89.6% of Anglophones said they were satisfied or very satisfied; 100% of Francophones said the same.

“The beauty of those answers is that there is an acceptance of bilingualism and a desire for it,” said Anne Tanguay. “There’s something to be said for linguistic duality in that message.”

“We are not just bilingual, we are multicultural. That makes Canada very special. We are an example to the world. I’m very proud of Canada, and the NAC embodies that approach.”

--Boris Brott

The NAC's new approach, as reflected in the Family Adventures series, reaches well behind the scenes.

In 2006, the organization tightened up its overall management of official languages "to ensure the quality of French within the organization, and the coordination of all aspects regarding official languages," said Anne Tanguay.

"We developed a more integrated vision of official languages... People within the organization are aware, and they want to do more. Official languages are always on our radar. We don't implement a project forgetting about the French-language side of it."

"The NAC seeks to be a truly national organization, and therefore believes strongly in promoting the performing arts everywhere in Canada," she added. "Recognizing that the arts are a privileged means for Anglophones and Francophones to express their identity, the NAC places linguistic duality at the centre of each of its activities."

The NAC is a Crown corporation. A total of 72% of its employees are Anglophone and 28% are Francophone.

Boris Brott does not fit easily into either of those groups. His mother tongue is French, but he attended school in English in Montréal. Today, he speaks five languages—"all of them very badly," he confesses, no doubt facetiously.

In the Family Adventures concerts, he weaves in and out of each language.

"We talk about solitudes in Canada, but we need to emphasize the all-inclusive nature of our audience, the multicultural nature of audiences," he said. "Canada is inclusive of all backgrounds. The language of music transcends those differences."

And linguistic duality "leads to greater dialogue between members of different cultural groups," said the Commissioner of Official Languages in a speech in Ottawa last February. "Linguistic duality favours respect, acceptance and empathy"—a message the Commissioner has been spreading across Canada since taking office in 2006.

French and English are music to the ear, then, at the NAC, where linguistic duality means more than fulfilling obligations and demonstrating respect—it also means filling concert halls

MAIN EVENT**Franc-au-jeu!**

by *Christine Dallaire – Ottawa, Ontario*

As we all know, participating in sports is good for your health and the arts can broaden horizons. But did you know that sports and the arts can also contribute to community development? And did you know that sports, the arts and community pride make a great combination? Here's proof—the Jeux de l'Acadie, the Jeux franco-ontariens and the Canadian Francophone Games enable Canadian youth to take part in athletic and artistic competitions, while showing their pride as Francophones.

Acadian origins

The [Jeux de l'Acadie](#) (in French only) were created in 1979 in New Brunswick to encourage the use of French and to promote Francophone pride in young people through athletic competition. The Games quickly became a resounding success. Since 1980, athletes from Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia have participated in the Games, helping to establish a solid Acadian institution.

A resounding success

The success of the Games is undeniable: to date, more than 80,000 young people have taken part in the regional games, where winners are chosen for the [finals](#), and every year the various committees of the Société des Jeux de l'Acadie recruit over 3,000 volunteers to help organize and run the activities. Many Acadian leaders have emerged as a result of their participation in this athletic event, giving rise to a broad network of activities and exchanges in French.

A community gathering

With the Jeux de l'Acadie, sports have become a tool for community development, contributing to a strong, supportive and thriving community of Francophone and Acadian youth in the Maritimes, who are proud of their language and culture. The finals, which attract over 1,000 athletes and as many volunteers, are like a big party for many participants and organizers, a place where they can build new friendships and rekindle old ones. In this friendly atmosphere, everyone feels like part of the big "Jeux de l'Acadie family." As a sports and Francophone festival, the finals not only bring together the young participants, but also the parents and friends who fill the stands at competitions and during opening and closing ceremonies, sports buffs who watch the Games on Radio-Canada, enthusiastic fans who check the news for competition results and, in particular, citizens of the host city who support the young people as volunteers and spectators (and often as both at the same time).

Francophone Games in Canada

[Jeux franco-ontariens](#) (in French only)

[Jeux de la francophonie canadienne](#) (in French only)

[Jeux de l'Acadie](#) (in French only)

[Jeux francophones de la Colombie-Britannique](#)

[Jeux francophones de l'Alberta](#) (in French only)

[Jeux du Québec](#) (in French only)

Building pride through sport

Because of concern about the rate of assimilation of Francophone adolescents, the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française (FJCF) created a national task force in 1990 that published, in 1991, a report titled *Vision d'avenir*. The task force found that sports can contribute to community development, and can instill a sense of pride and belonging in young Francophones.

More games from Coast to Coast

Because of these findings and the success of the Jeux de l'Acadie, the FJCF proposed in 1991 that sporting events be organized in other Francophone communities in order to establish pan-Canadian finals. Since 1992, other Francophone games have been created by youth associations in Western and Northern Canada like the [Jeux Francophones de la Colombie-Britannique](#) and the [Jeux francophones de l'Alberta](#).

Ontario: Home to many talents

The [Jeux franco-ontariens](#) (in French only) were created in 1994 under the auspices of the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO). Rather than follow the example of the Jeux de l'Acadie, which adhere to the conventions of organized sport, the FESFO opted for a model that acts as a springboard for talented youth and builds on the interaction among participants. As a result, athletic activities are not the primary focus of the Jeux franco-ontariens. They represent only one aspect of a multidisciplinary festival that shines the spotlight on talented young people, whether they are athletes, clowns, visual artists, actors, improv artists, musicians or singers, as well as on directors of school boards and on student groups.

This large gathering is also unique for the role the young people themselves play in organizing the Games. Although they have less of an impact on community development than the Jeux de l'Acadie do, the Jeux franco-ontariens also contribute to the promotion of Francophone identity in Ontarian youth. The Games have quickly grown to a considerable size and have earned an enviable reputation. Approximately 800 participants and volunteers between the ages of 14 and 18 take part each year, and the event has become a true youth festival, with all the intensity that is generated when a large group of teenagers gets together. The young people appreciate the opportunity to show their Francophone pride, and their enthusiastic comments are proof of how important this event is for them.

Come one, come all

The FJCF, for its part, continued to work to establish pan-Canadian athletic competitions. These efforts paid off in 1999 with the first [Canadian Francophone Games](#) (in French only). It goes without saying that the Games could not be called the Canadian Francophone Games if they were restricted to young people in minority Francophone communities. The FJCF therefore opened up the competitions to all young Francophones and francophiles, whether they come from a small community or from Quebec.

Consequently, the Canadian Francophone Games give youth across Canada a chance to interact. Over a thousand young people participate in various aspects of the Games (sports, the arts and leadership), which combine the multidisciplinary features of the Jeux franco-ontariens and the organized sports of the Jeux de l'Acadie. Following the example of the Jeux de l'Acadie, the Canadian Francophone Games encourage community development: a large number of host community institutions and Francophones help organize the event, which reinforces and improves their own organizational abilities.

The success of the Jeux de l'Acadie, the Jeux franco-ontariens and the Canadian Francophone Games confirms that sports, the arts and leadership go hand in hand with the promotion of Francophone identity in young people. This winning combination inspires youth as well as the community as a whole and, above all, it fosters a sense of belonging among Francophones.

From "chiac" to "français"

By Mireille Leblanc – Moncton, New Brunswick

Originally from Grande-Digue, New Brunswick, Joël Bourgeois participated in the [Jeux de l'Acadie](#) (in French only) in 1984 and 1985, setting records in every one of his six track and field events. These excellent results heralded an athletic career, and Joël represented Canada in [steeplechase](#) at the Olympics in Atlanta and Sydney.

He jokingly refers to the Jeux de l'Acadie as a mini-Olympics for Acadian youth, with its colourful opening and closing ceremonies, the athletes' village and the delegations that come from all across the Maritimes. The Games are much more than an athletic event, however, and since the first finals in 1979, they have helped build Francophone pride in Acadia. "It wasn't cool to speak French in Moncton in the 1980s, and the Jeux de l'Acadie made an incredible difference in the way French was seen by the youth of my generation. Back then, it was a big deal for a teenager who spoke 'chiac' [an Acadian dialect] to spend a week at the Jeux de l'Acadie where the only language spoken was French," remembers Joël.

Today, his daughter Naomie is growing up in a totally different environment. To her, it is completely normal to live in French, and for Joël this is living proof of the Games' heritage. For Naomie, the Jeux de l'Acadie is only one of many athletic, cultural and linguistic events, and like all Francophone parents, Joël Bourgeois is happy to see that.

Joël Bourgeois is now a community ambassador for the RBC Olympians Program. He works to promote the Olympics' message of excellence, cooperation and leadership.

The “time of his life”

By Mireille Leblanc – Moncton, New Brunswick

If Vincent Poirier had to pick his favourite part of the summer, it would be without a doubt the weekend of the [Jeux franco-ontariens](#) in June. Vincent’s passion for the Games dates back to 1999, the year he took part in the theatre improv event. He returned a year later and was completely hooked. Since then, he has been a referee and a host, and these days he is still there, as the coordinator of the improv event.

“I grew up in Ottawa, where living in French is much easier to do than in other parts of Ontario, but the Jeux franco-ontariens were still kind of a wake-up call. I became aware of who I was, and of how important it is to speak French,” recalls this young professional actor.

Over the years, Vincent has seen this same awakening in other young people who participate in the Games. “And this awareness stays with them for the rest of their lives. Really, that’s the biggest impact of the Games,” says the proud Franco-Ontarian.

As a young participant, Vincent remembers the Jeux franco-ontariens as “the time of his life.” The energy generated during this annual get-together of Franco-Ontarian youth is unstoppable, and all participants leave with strong friendships and a renewed sense of pride in their language and culture.

Vincent Poirier still participates in the Jeux franco-ontariens as coordinator of the theatre improv event. He enjoys a professional career as an actor and improv artist, most notably as part of the troupe [Improtéine](#).

From participant to organizer

By Mireille Leblanc – Moncton, New Brunswick

In 2005, Céline Bégin had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of representing Alberta at the most elite Francophone games in the country, the [Canadian Francophone Games](#) 🌐. This young athlete from Falher, Alberta, loved the high calibre of the volleyball competitions, and will never forget the energy and pride she felt at this major gathering of Francophone youth. “I saw that there are more Francophones in Canada than I had imagined,” she said. Born in an official language minority community in Alberta, Céline discovered, through the Games, that she was not the only person to experience this reality.

She therefore did not hesitate one second when she had the opportunity to apply for a summer job coordinating the 2008 Canadian Francophone Games held in Edmonton in August. Working behind the scenes made her realize thousands of logistical details go into coordinating this kind of event and an immense amount of teamwork is necessary to coordinate provincial and territorial delegations. However, one thing remained constant, and that is the spirit of the Games, which was alive among both participants and organizers. “The Games give young Francophone Canadians an opportunity to experience sports, the arts and leadership in French. They have the chance to display their talents before the rest of the country, which instils in them a sense of pride and a desire to showcase and promote their Francophone culture,” she said. This was the case for her in 2005, and Céline Bégin has not hesitated to pass on this message to the 2008 participants.

UNDER STUDY

Graham Fraser calls for stronger leadership

Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, submitted his second [annual report](#), which was based on the theme of leadership, on May 29, 2008.

The Commissioner's analysis over the past year shows that the implementation of the Official Languages Act has reached a plateau and that the federal government as a whole is still having difficulty resolving systemic problems. "The government continues to support Canada's linguistic duality in principle; however, this support has not led to a global vision in terms of government policies and the public service," said Mr. Fraser during a press conference. "A clear global vision and coherent leadership are necessary if federal institutions are to meet some of the challenges related to official languages," he added. Mr. Fraser showed leadership in his annual report by presenting a renewed approach to his role as ombudsman of official languages. This new approach rests on two principles: a lasting and more effective resolution of complaints, and the prevention of problems that give rise to complaints.

The [seven recommendations](#) made by the Commissioner aim to improve the government's coordination of its efforts related to official languages and achieve a greater number of concrete results.

Ontario's [French Language Services Commissioner](#), François Boileau, also published his [annual report](#) on June 17, 2008. Michel Carrier, [Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick](#), will release his annual report in November.

The importance of the arts and culture in official language communities

The arts and culture play a key role in developing a strong sense of belonging and creating a dynamic community life. Minority Anglophone and Francophone communities are no exception. A healthy cultural and artistic environment is at the forefront of their development.

The [study](#) published by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages describes the various types of support provided by the federal government to the arts and culture sector of official language minority communities. This study also attempts to provide a better understanding of the challenges facing these communities.

The Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, made a series of recommendations to improve the current situation and help the arts and culture thrive in the communities. An important recommendation to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Josée Verner, has already produced results. In fact, the Harper government included the arts and culture in its Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013: Acting for the Future, which is a follow-up to the Action Plan for Official Languages that expired on March 31.

Community Revitalization: Trends and Opportunities for the English-speaking Communities of Quebec

In order to increase awareness of issues facing the English-speaking communities of Quebec and to mobilize its leaders, the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) convened at a national conference from February 29 to March 2, 2008 at the Université de Montréal.

Over 200 community leaders and government partners took stock of recent challenges and accomplishments. They also had the opportunity to suggest courses of action in key vitality sectors such as demography, health, education, justice and leadership.

The conference [proceedings](#) were published with the assistance of the Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises, a key partner of the event.

Vitality indicators for three English-speaking communities in Quebec

What is the situation of English-speaking communities in Quebec? What vitality objectives have the communities set for themselves?

This [study](#) on the Lower North Shore, the Eastern Townships and Québec City identified two priority sectors for all three communities: youth and health services.

Published in June by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the study provides tools to communities to plan developmental activities, foster partnerships with the public sector and measure results.

The study on three English-speaking communities in Quebec identified objectives that also apply to, in some cases, the Francophone minority communities.

Second-language learning opportunities at Canadian universities

The Office of the Commissioner has undertaken a study on second-language learning opportunities at Canadian universities.

Interest in this issue is partially a result of the high number of graduates of immersion programs and other French-as-a-second-language learning programs who are currently studying or about to begin studying at the post-secondary level. The new socio-economic situation created by globalization and the skills required for the knowledge economy, including language skills and openness towards other cultures, are also important factors.

The study's objective is to enhance student's knowledge of the opportunities that they have to develop their second language skills while pursuing their post-secondary education and preparing for their career.

The results of this study will provide a much clearer picture of what Canadian universities offer in terms of second-language learning.

DID YOU KNOW?

True or false?

Among Francophone youth from 15 to 19 years of age, the percentage of bilingualism is higher in New Brunswick than in Quebec.

Answer: True

According to the 2006 Census, nearly 73% of New Brunswick Francophone youth in this age bracket are bilingual. In Quebec, in the same segment of the population, this rate is 41%.

Interestingly, the situation is reversed among Anglophone youth: in Quebec, 83% are bilingual, while in New Brunswick the rate is 35%.

Bilingualism rates of youth aged 15 to 19		
	Francophones	Anglophones
New Brunswick	73%	35%
Quebec	41%	83%
Canada	46%	15%

For further information on the linguistic profile of the country, [visit the Statistics Canada Web site](#) 🇨🇦.

Source: 2006 Census, Statistics Canada

SPEAKER'S CORNER

Q - Tell us how you learned your second language.

LANGUAGE SECTION

When do I use ***fewer*** versus ***less***?

Find out by reading the new linguistic reminder.

<http://www.bureaudelatradsuction.gc.ca/index.php?lang=english&cont=849> 🌐

USEFUL LINKS

Web sites that contain useful language resources

Portal for teaching and learning Canada's official languages

LangCanada.ca provides teachers and students with links to over 3,000 teaching resources and 500 educational institutions.

www.langcanada.ca

Radio Canada International

Radio Canada International (RCI) promotes awareness of Canada around the world through radio broadcasts in nine languages. RCI also produces English and French lessons tailored to children from 7 to 12 years old.

www.rciviva.ca

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers

The Web site of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) is an indispensable resource for language teachers who are looking for classroom activities, teaching material and information on events related to second languages.

www.caslt.org