

# OPTION-ÉTUDES CHÂTEAUGUAY : a 'shared schooling' program

## Perspectives d'avenir – Looking Ahead What Now for French Immersion?

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## Objectives of this presentation:

1. Present the characteristics of the OEC program
2. Briefly define the theoretical framework and research-action
3. Present an analysis of some of the program's impacts

# The Characteristics of OEC

- Enables **common schooling** (in the same class) of anglophone and francophone students in **secondary 1 and 2**.
- Half of the year is done in a francophone institution and the other half in an anglophone institution.
- Half of the students come from the anglophone school system and the other half from the francophone school system.
- They study together during geography, history, art, ethics, and physical education classes (instruction is done either in French or English or alternating) and are separated by mother tongue for language classes (French and English), science and mathematics. **Bill 101 is thus respected.**

# The Theoretical Approach

- Allport's **Intergroup Contact Theory** stipulates that four conditions are essential for harmonious intergroup contacts :
  - presence of standards of equality;
  - the perception that the members of the different groups have equal statuses;
  - Interlinkages are created through a cooperative approach;
  - the presence of common and unifying goals.
- During contacts between francophones and anglophones in Quebec, one must take into account the particularities linked to the linguistic nature of these contacts, notably the effect of the feeling of competence in the second language on the anxiety of the participants during contact (Côté, 2005; Pagé et al., 2007).

# The Action-Research

I had three simultaneous roles of trainer, guide and researcher

A constructivist approach with mainly qualitative exploratory methodology

The participants from 2008 to 2014:

- approx. 150 students
- 7 teachers
- 4 directors
- 1 coordinator
- 6 families (2 years of follow-up)
- approx. 70 parents

Data collection tools:

- individual interviews
- family and group interviews
- log book
- participants' observations
- online and paper surveys

# Main Results

## Observation #1

**The conditions for positive intergroup contacts are present in the program.**

1.1 Teachers create, to a large extent, pedagogical activities that create common unifying goals.

1.2 Both languages are perceived as having, overall, the same status (same value, same importance) in the program.

1.3 Standards favourable to contacts are explicitly expressed by all authority figures.

1.4 The cognitive mechanisms observed counteract the cognitive process of categorization 'francophones' / 'anglophones'.

1.5 Teachers use strategies to reduce student anxiety related to the use of a second language and contacts with students in the other school system.

# Main Results

## Observation #2

**The program fosters the feeling of gaining language skills.**

*Au cégep, je suis en anglais Niveau 2 ; j'ai 89 %... je suis 27 % au-dessus de la moyenne. C'est quelque chose qui est rendue facile pour moi, fait que c'est MA matière!*

*(speaking about the members of his fraternity) we all go to English school so we all speak English, but my French is higher than my sisters and brothers and they're just in regular Billings.*

*You know, they are speaking to their classmates, basically, and whatever French, English, it didn't really matter, so they did some switching, now (name of son) has a facility with that, but there are other students who are unable to do that.” (parent)*

*Quand une personne a besoin de se faire servir en anglais, ça ne me dérange pas de répondre en anglais; car j'ai appris la langue et je suis à l'aise avec, et au besoin je l'utilise.*

*Maintenant je trouve que c'est plus spontané de parler anglais. Auparavant, c'était plus planifié là, quels mots dire ... maintenant c'est plus naturel!*

# Main Results

## Observation #3

**The program fosters the development of positive inter-community relations between students.**

### **Linguistic composition of OEC participants' network of friends:**

Before OEC : their network of friends was **largely composed of speakers of their native language**

For students in the Francophone sector: 97,22 %

For students in the Anglophone sector : 90,91 %

During OEC : their network of friends became a **mix of French- and English-speakers:**

For students in the Francophone sector : 63,64 %

For students in the Anglophone sector : 63,89 %

After OEC : their network of friends remained a **mixture of French- and English-speakers :**

For students in the Francophone sector : 40,91 %

For students in the Anglophone sector : 38,89 %



# Main Results

## Observation #3

**The program fosters the development of positive inter-community relations between students.**

*On ne se voit pas souvent. On a gardé nos contacts. Quand on se voit même après deux ou trois ans [...] on se parle comme si on s'est vus hier! [F-09-11-M]*

*But, Option-études friends are better friends! ... I still see them a lot. [A-11-13-M]*

*J'ai aussi des amis qui m'ont été présentés par des anglophones d'OEC, qui sont plus amis avec moi que ceux qui étaient dans le programme. [F-10-12-M]*

*I have it like half-half. My friends are English and French, but most of my friends who are French live in Montreal and up until now I couldn't get there so whenever I get in Montreal I would speak French, but mostly hang around with my English friends. [A-10-12-M]*

# Main Results

## Observation #4

**Rapprochement with the members of the other group does not create a detachment from the original group, in terms of identifying with it.**

**A supra-identity was created, but linguistic identities remained the same**

*One, two years together so we became a family! [A-11-13-F]*

*Yeah family ... There was a special bond in OEC! [A-11-13-M]*

*Je trouve que c'est l'amitié qu'on avait, on était soudé, genre. C'est fou, la chimie qu'on avait!!! Si une personne avait un problème [...] on sait qu'on va être là pour l'aider. [F-09-11-M]*

*On est devenu comme proche, comme une famille! [F-09-11-F]*

# Conclusion

The pilot project is conclusive and is ready to be exported:

It provides a positive a positive inter-community experience (with an inclusive identity, without opposition to the original identity)

It expands the student's network

It cultivates open-mindedness toward the 2<sup>nd</sup> language and motivation to learn the 2<sup>nd</sup> language

It improves competence and the feeling of competence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> language