

What does it mean to support my child's bilingual identity?

Dr. Monica Tang, SFU (OFFA)

Presented to **CPF BC & Yukon Annual Conference 2023**

9:15 – 10am

October 20, 2023



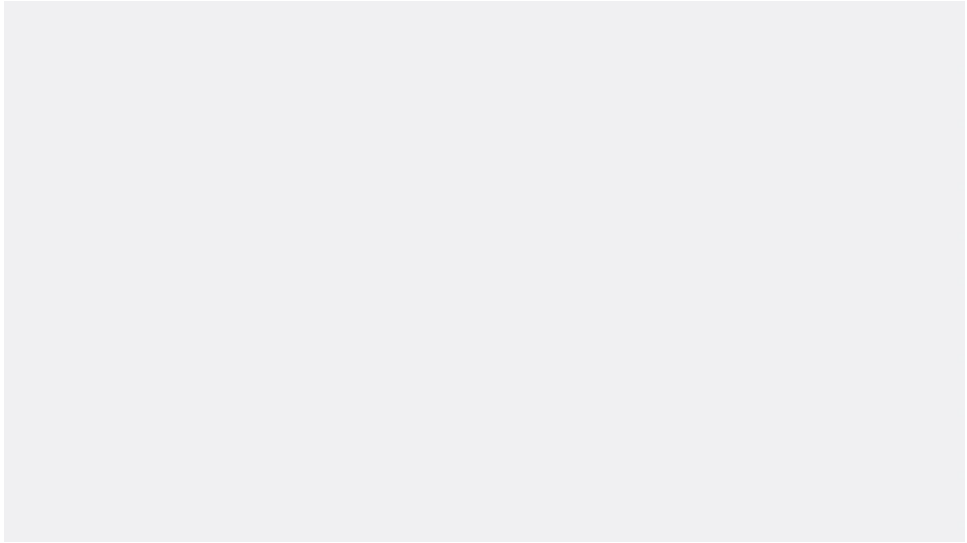
BUREAU DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES
ET FRANCOPHILES (BAFF)



« Mom, how French am I? »

« No offense,
Madame,
mais j'ai fini
avec le
français! »

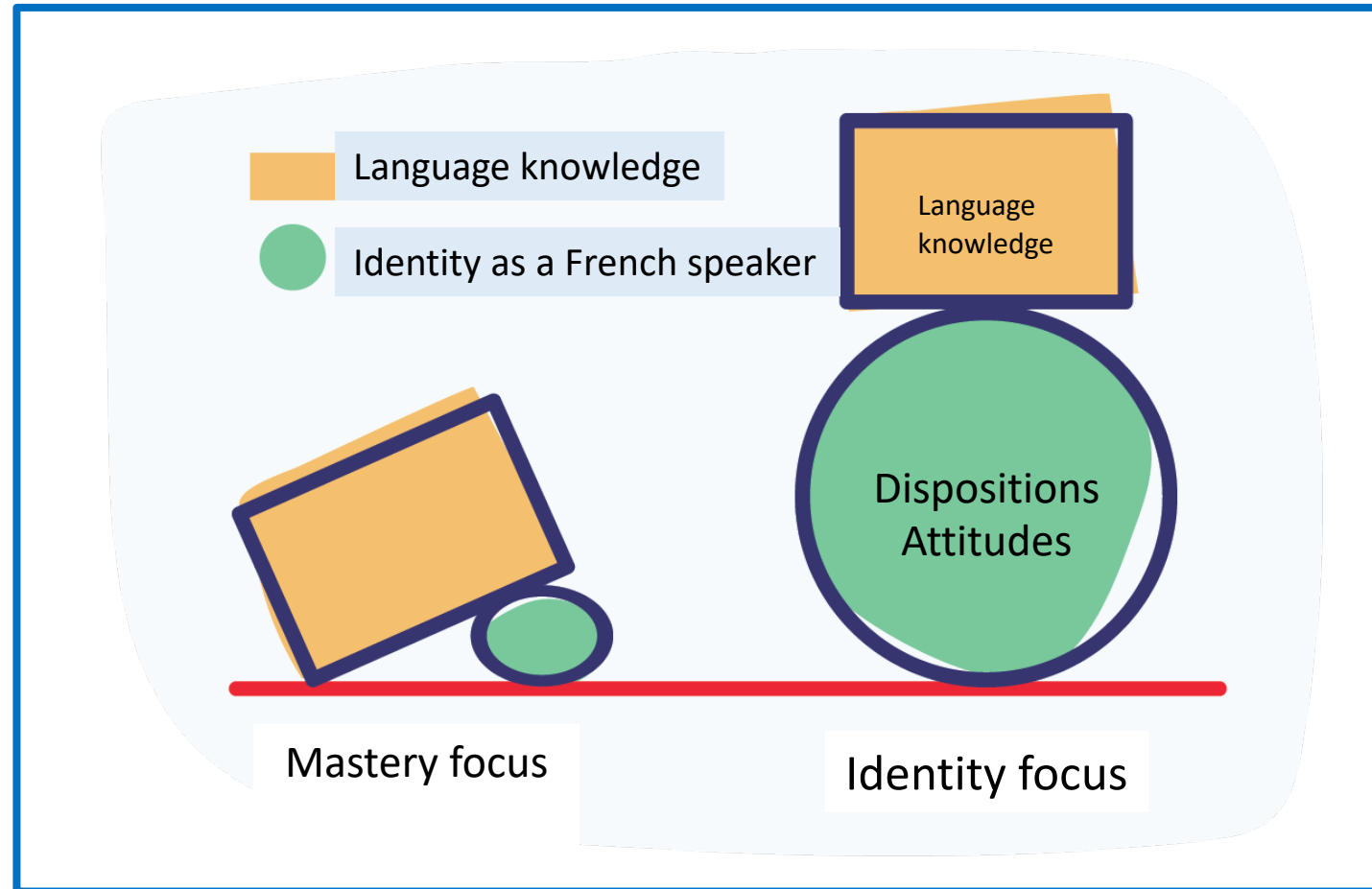




Graphisme par : Flavie Dufrenne – grr@greatdesign.com
Animation par: Gaëtan Nerincx – gaetannerincx@gmail.com

What are the
real and
unspoken goals
of learning a
language?

What are our goals in French Immersion?



What creates lifelong bilingualism...



... is not only the
amount of French one
knows at a given
point in time,

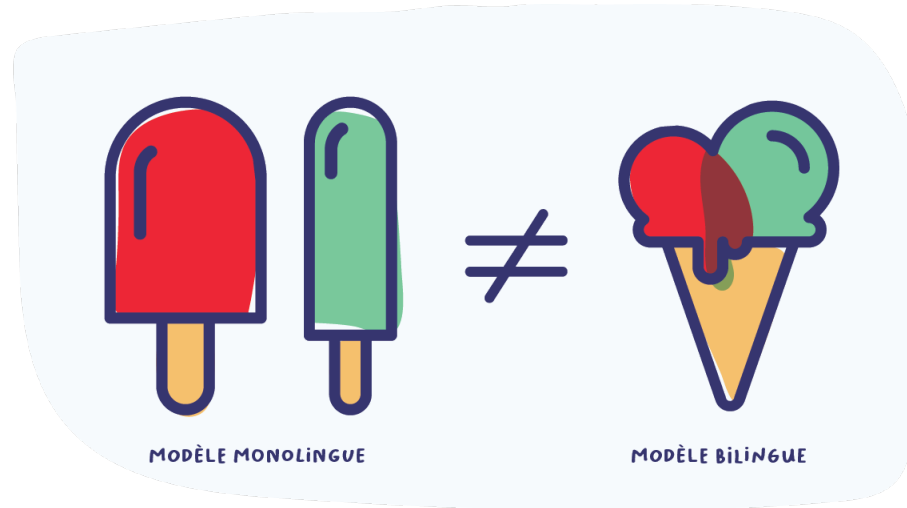
...but rather one's
disposition and
attitudes towards
language learning.



Two different ways to define bilingualism

Monolingual model:

- Languages are separate.
- We often compare our L1 with the L2.
- We often notice the deficits of our L2 (and miss noticing the strengths).
- A bilingual person is seen as the sum of two monolingual people.



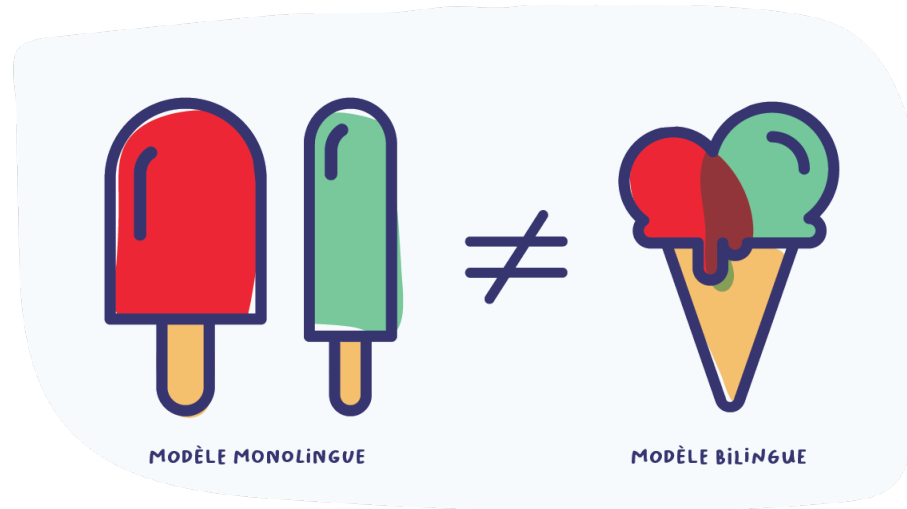
Bilingual model:

- Our languages influence each other. It is possible to choose to use only one of the two in a given context, but both languages are always present to a certain extent.
- Once we learn a second language, it affects how we see ALL languages. We are constantly making metalinguistic comparisons.
- A bilingual person isn't the sum of two monolinguals, but rather one whole person.

Two different ways to define bilingualism

Monolingual model:

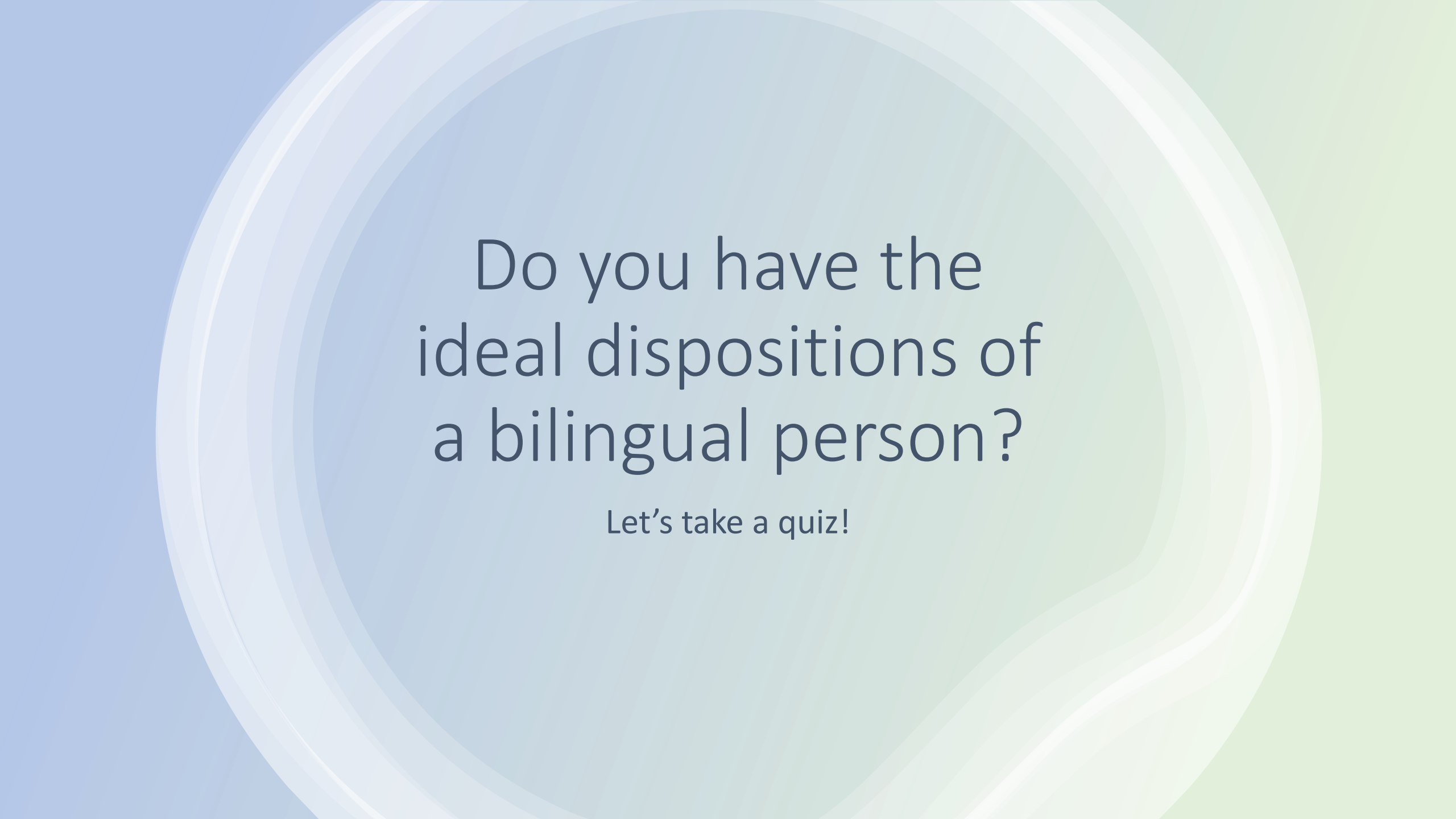
- Languages are separate.
- We often compare our L1 with the L2.
- We often notice the deficits of our L2 (and miss noticing the strengths).
- A bilingual person is seen as the sum of two monolingual people.



Bilingual model:

- Our language influence each other. It is possible to choose to use only one of the two in a given context, but both languages are always present to a certain extent.
- Once we learn a second language, it affects how we see ALL languages. We are constantly making metalinguistic comparisons.
- A bilingual person isn't the sum of two monolinguals, but rather one whole person.

A bilingual person is one that functions in a bilingual environment. Not necessarily one that makes no mistakes in their L2/L+.



Do you have the
ideal dispositions of
a bilingual person?

Let's take a quiz!

Part 1:

Perception of my linguistic identity

I consider myself bilingual and have a healthy relationship with all of my languages.

I choose to use my L2/L+ (French) whenever possible and do not shy away from these opportunities

I see myself as a legitimate user of my L+ (French), even if I make mistakes.

I understand that learning an L+ is a lifelong adventure and I choose to make it an important part of my life.

Part 2:

Perception of my linguistic competence

I am aware of both my strengths and weaknesses in my L+ and I am ready to work to improve.

I am ready to take linguistic risks in my L+ in various contexts.

I am aware of the conditions upon which I am open to receiving corrective feedback on my L+.

Challenging myself to use my L+ in increasingly complex situations gives me pleasure and satisfaction.

Part 3:

My intercultural competence

I have a curiosity and a fascination for everything « FRENCH »!

In exploring French culture(s), I think about my own values and my world views.

I appreciate the value of getting to know the Other, and to be « decentered » as I reflect on how I perceive the Other.


I identify with a French-speaking linguistic community, regardless of my level of mastery of the language.

Participating and contributing to this linguistic community gives me pleasure and pride.

I enjoy following French social media, attending French cultural events and being surrounded by French-speakers in my everyday life.

Part 4:

My sense of belonging



In what ways and in what settings are these dispositions cultivated over time?

1) We (parents) need to stop asking the question « Is my kid bilingual? » and start from the assumption that they are because they function in bilingual environments.

2) We (teachers, CPF) can emphasize opportunities to use French (but as parents, forcing the issue does not help).

3) We (teachers, CPF) can create a POSITIVE image for the French Immersion « accent ».

4) As parents who don't speak French, or are perhaps NOT bilingual, **do not be threatened** by the development of a linguistic identity that may be dissimilar to yours.

I consider myself bilingual and have a healthy relationship with all of my languages.

I choose to use my L2/L+ (French) whenever possible and do not shy away from these opportunities.

I see myself as a legitimate user of my L+ (French), even if I make mistakes.

I understand that learning an L+ is a lifelong adventure and I choose to make it an important part of my life.

1) We (teachers, CPF) could create opportunities in which L+ learners can take risks and challenge themselves (but as parents, pushing them to take risks can often have the opposite effect).

2) We (as fellow bilingual people) can highlight the inherent joy of taking risks in the L+.

3) We (as fellow bilingual people) can reflect on our receptivity (or lack thereof) of corrective feedback.

I am aware of both my strengths and weaknesses in my L+ and I am ready to work to improve.

I am ready to take linguistic risks in my L+ in various contexts.

I am open to receiving constructive corrective feedback on my L+.

Challenging myself to use my L+ in increasingly complex situations gives me pleasure and satisfaction.

1) We (all) can encourage this curiosity and model an appreciation of cultures that are different from mine.

I have a curiosity and a fascination for everything « FRENCH »!

In exploring French culture(s), I think about my own values and my world views.

I appreciate the value of getting to know the Other, and to be « decentered » as I reflect on how I perceive the Other.

I identify with a French-speaking linguistic community, regardless of my level of mastery of the language.

Participating and contributing to this linguistic community gives me pleasure and pride.

I enjoy following French social media, attending French cultural events and being surrounded by French-speakers in my everyday life.

1) We (teachers, CPF) can make more visible this French-speaking community for Immersion students (and remove the word Francophone)

2) We (teachers, CPF) can make French (social) media sources more easily accessible and emphasize the inherent pleasure in using them (as bilingual people).

Ideal Dispositions of a Positive Bilingual Identity

PERCEPTION DE SON IDENTITÉ LINGUISTIQUE

« I am bilingual »

I consider myself bilingual and I have a healthy relationship with English.

I make efforts to use my French as often as possible and do not avoid situations that require that I speak in French.

I see myself as a legitimate speaker of French, even if I make mistakes.

I know that learning a language is a long journey and I accept the challenge!

PERCEPTION DE SA COMPÉTENCE LANGAGIÈRE

« I can and wish to improve »

I know my strengths and weaknesses in French and am willing to work to improve.

I am ready to take linguistic risks in various contexts.

I can describe the conditions in which I can get constructive feedback.

I enjoy using my French to express myself in increasingly complex situations.

COMPÉTENCES INTERCULTURELLES

« Learning about other cultures helps me practice decentering »

I enjoy discovering French cultural elements.

By exploring other French cultures, I think about my own values and about my World views.

I appreciate the value of getting to know the Other, and to decenter myself by thinking of my perspectives on the Other.

APPARTENANCE À UNE COMMUNAUTÉ LINGUISTIQUE

« I feel a sense of belonging »

I identify with a community of French speakers, regardless of my skill level.

I enjoy participating and contributing to this community.

I enjoy consuming French (social) media, attending cultural events and communicating with Francophones in every day life.

Merci!



BUREAU DES AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES
ET FRANCOPHILES (BAFF)

Monica_tang@sfu.ca