

Intelligence and Early Mastery of the Reading Skill

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Abstract:

Summary overview of intelligence development in young children, coinciding with neocortex verbal areas development by means of mastery of the reading skill and of the state of children literacy development in the world.

Keywords: Pavlov, Chauchard, Korzybski, neocortex, verbal areas, conceptual thinking, comprehension process, intelligence, teaching methods.

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What is happening in Quebec in the field of education should be a warning to all societies tempted to neglect the adequate teaching of the mother tongue to a level of minimal autonomy in due course, i.e. at the latest in the first year of primary school, and to favour hasty specialization at the expense of the teaching of a broad general knowledge base in secondary school.

In relation with the importance of early learning of all verbal skills revealed by the analysis of the references on which this article was based, the author gave his opinion in an article published in a local daily newspaper, *Le Soleil* of September 22, 2021, on the state of language and culture teaching in Quebec; a state whose case study was at the origin of this research project on neurolinguistics 25 years ago, an issue that can potentially affect all languages and cultures:

[Qui sommes nous ?](#)

The English translation of the article published in *Le Soleil* is available below.

Other articles in the same research project:

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Who are we?

POINT OF VIEW / The idea came to me to give my opinion while reading that of Konrad Sioui expressed in his text entitled *Brûler le passé* (Burning the past), in *Le Soleil* of Saturday, September 18, 2021, about an exalted person who had been inciting people to burn books. I agree with him that no nation should tolerate that anyone who does not share their culture should have the arrogance of claiming to define it. I also agree with his conclusion that Quebecers are natural objective allies of the *First Nations* in the defence of our respective cultures and languages.

His text made me ask myself the title question. We often refer to ourselves as "the Francophones". I even read and heard more than once our own politicians and columnists refer to us as the "Francophone people". Really!

To be read also: [*Brûler le passé!*](#) (Burning the past!)

There are about 300 million French speakers on the planet. Oddly enough, apart from the common language, I search in vain for the common values I share with this universal "francophone people". In fact, these 300 million individuals are regrouped into a large number of local cultures, each rooted in its own history, that forged their local set of cultural values. A people is defined primarily by its language, of course, but mostly by its culture.

To know who we are, we must know where we come from. Personally, I know very well where I come from. My mother was Acadian, born in the United States, descended from refugees fleeing the mistreatment of British settlers in the 1700s and given land by the Maine authorities. My father was French-Canadian, born in Quebec, the descendant of a French settler who was given land near Quebec City in the 1650's. I am French-Canadian by culture, so I have very direct affinities with the two French-speaking peoples of North America.

But what is in fact this culture that differentiates us from other francophone peoples? The Acadians know it very well in their case, and they celebrate it joyfully every year on many occasions. They celebrate the cultural heritage that their history has forged, their common values.

I remember that the French-Canadians also joyfully celebrated every year our cultural heritage, which, beyond the popular language, was based on a formal mastery of our language, for which even the sports commentators had the greatest respect, on our history taught in high school, and on the great classical literature stemming from the Western socio-cultural heritage from which our culture was born.

For some of us, culture means primarily a high level of mastery of French, for others a deep knowledge and love of classical literature. For others, it is the literary and artistic production of our culture, from the touching poetry of Leclerc, Vigneault, Ferland, to that of our outstanding performers, Céline, Lara, Jerry, Marjo, to the talent of our incomparable musicians, Léveillé, Hill, our great actors, Brathwaite, Côté, Messier, our top scientists, Reeves, Marmet, Kerwin, our great athletes, GSP, Lemieux, Lafleur, our talented stand-up comedians, right up to the extreme self-deprecating parodies of *La Petite vie*, some episodes of which make us laugh so much, a modern legacy of the vaudeville of Jean Grimaldi's historical tours.

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In my case, it is also the privileged access that our language gives us to the important European scientific knowledge of the first half of the 20th century that still has not been translated into English. Few people are aware that, during this period, the most advanced researchers in certain fields were French, German, Russian, and that some of their discoveries are still unknown and not rediscovered by the Anglo-Saxon scientific community, particularly in pedagogy and related sciences. In short, I love everything about our culture.

How on earth did we become mere "Francophones", the last generation of whom knows nothing of our history and of our European literary and scientific heritage because it was never taught to them, and more than half of whom are considered functionally illiterate by the OECD? We are becoming a people of nine million "Francophones" in Canada with no specific culture, which the thirteen million descendants of the French-Canadian diaspora in the United States can no longer identify as the culture from which they emerged.

With the 1960s "*Parent Reform*", the requirement to learn French to the point of reading autonomy in the first year of elementary school, which had been compulsory and highly supervised before the reform, was dropped, as was the requirement for a more advanced mastery thereafter. This resulted in generations of children with an approximate knowledge of French, from which emerged in the 1980s the first generations of teachers with an approximate knowledge of French, unable to understand and teach the great classics of literature and to explain our history, which led to the disappearance of these courses deemed too difficult, including that of the history of our people, a situation that has only worsened since.

Ultimate manifestation of unawareness, our Minister of Higher Education is now preparing to ban the teaching of the history of Western civilization, the last remaining pillar of the three pillars of our culture.

For us to rediscover who we are and for our culture to survive, after 60 years of out-of-control drift, our successive Ministers of Higher Education must finally begin to entourage themselves with competent pedagogues who love our culture, who would advise them to reintroduce the teaching of French up to a minimal level of reading autonomy already in the first grade of elementary schooling with subsequent perfecting, as was done before the reform and as is done in all cultures that control well the literacy level of their population, a reintroduction of the teaching of our history and the maintenance of the teaching of the history of Western civilization and of its classical literature.

This is the price to pay for our culture to survive and for us to one day joyfully celebrate again the cultural legacy of our people.
