

L2RIC Open Statement in Support of Minority, Indigenous and Heritage Languages –
Nov. 14, 2022

The Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L2RIC) in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) is directly involved in research and teaching in a range of topics related to language education. As researchers at L2RIC, we support and value the use, the learning, and the preservation of minority and Indigenous languages in our province. **We are committed to the promotion of bilingualism and multilingualism and of linguistic and cultural diversity in NB.**

On April 12th L2RIC sent a letter to the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) as a response to the *2021 Review of the Official Languages Act of New Brunswick: Report on Second Language Learning*. In our original letter, in addition to speaking directly to French second language (FSL) programming, we underscored the fact that we are part of an increasingly diverse province which includes a variety of linguistic and cultural groups. As per recommendation #1— to adopt the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), we uphold the principles of plurilingualism and the nurturing of plurilinguistic identities. In particular, we highlighted the **importance of protecting French as a minority language** with French language education that is culturally infused (e.g., recommendations #2, #9, #16). As language educators and researchers, we understand that it is crucial to stand together as allies to protect and preserve minority languages. One way to do this is through effective FSL programs such as French immersion. Moreover, in our letter, we **emphasized our support for initiatives to revive, revitalize, and strengthen Indigenous languages and cultures**. Research points to the crucial role of language in ensuring that the individual identities of Indigenous persons are respected and valued and that Indigenous communities thrive. As allies, L2RIC wishes to express gratitude to those who work tirelessly toward language revival and revitalization.

Finally, L2RIC also **supports the welcoming of newcomers into our schools, giving them quality opportunities to learn the province's and country's official languages** (e.g., recommendation #14) while also learning with, from, and about Indigenous peoples. We do this along with the evidence-based understandings that the valuing of heritage languages and cultures will support the academic, social and linguistic success of newcomers to the province. In order to uphold and uplift all of these integral linguistic and cultural components of our province's social fabric, we need to be caring, thoughtful, and conscientious.

As a research team at L2RIC, we are not only passionate about matters relating to FSL education, but also about research relating to the promotion of language and culture in minority, Indigenous, and newcomer contexts. What is clear to us from years of work in the area of language teaching and learning is that any language program must be intentional and must be responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of the learners involved.