

# **The Evolution of Perception: Attitudes Regarding French Language and Culture Within Canada as Turning Points**

**Concept(s)** Continuity and Change

**Prepared for Grade(s)** 10

**Province** NB

**By** Robert Chapman

**Time Period(s)** 1900-present

**Time allotment** 2 x 60 min classes

## **Brief Description of the Task**

Has Quebec and French language identity changed within Canada in comparison to the last fifty years? Students will analyze the recent (Nov. 27/2006) controversial motion passed (266-16) in The House of Commons "recognizing Québécois as a nation within Canada" and Stephen Harper's statement to the CBC the evening after the vote that "I think tonight was an historic night...Canadians across the country said 'yes' to Quebec, 'yes' to Quebecers, and Quebecers said 'yes' to Canada." Students will analyze the motion and the Prime Minister's statement and research the perceptions of Canadians in terms of Quebec's identity and French language within the Canadian context and determine whether or not the status quo has been maintained with respect to the issue (continuity) or whether or not there has been a historic change in terms of Quebec and French culture within Canada.

## **Required Knowledge & Skills**

1. This task will require students to be able to compare and contrast items and to be able to comment critically (written and verbal) with regard to their understanding of continuity and change as it relates to the given task in question. Students will eventually read through copies of the CBC story posted online at [www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/11/27/nation-vote.html](http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/11/27/nation-vote.html) and will engage in pursuit of the given task question. Assisting in this, students will be given the Then and Now activity from page 86 of Mike Deno's and Roland Case's Teaching about Historical Thinking (to introduce continuity and change -- that, or a similar activity) and a timeline of events revolving around Quebec national identity.
2. Students must also be familiar with Quebec's struggle for empowerment (Chapter 17 from grade nine Canadian Identity textbook) so that they are familiar with the themes of the textbook that relate to this task.
3. Access to computers in the classroom and having technological competency relating to this would also be of benefit. Students will also be required to identify point of view -- assisting in this will be an activity on page 275 of the Canadian Identity textbook that has several examples of points of view relating to the issue of bilingualism in Canada.

## **Detailed Instructions**

### 1st Class: Introduction to Continuity and Change (60 mins)

1. Introductory Activity: Introduce the pervasiveness of continuity and change to the students. This can be done in a number of ways -- the then and now activity (black line master) from page 86 of Deno's and Case's Teaching about Historical Thinking is a good one to use, however, if this is not available, then simply create your own activity where you list fifty to one-hundred physical items (some of which are relatively new and some of which have endured the test of time and some that are in-between) and ask the students to identify if the physical items were around 200 years ago. This will introduce continuity and change and how Canada has changed in that span of time in terms of the use of these physical items. Get the students to compare their results with you verbally in class (15 minutes or so).

2. Do the identifying point of view skills toolbox activity from 275 of the grade nine Canadian Identity textbook. This activity gets the student to, through exposure to various quotes that are relevant to viewpoints about Canadian bilingualism as an issue that has changed over time and is relevant to Quebec nationalism, to 1) identify an/the issue, the speaker/writer, and the historical context; 2) identify which arguments or aspects of the issue are emphasized by the writer/speaker; 3) identify which arguments or aspects of issue are not emphasized by the writer/speaker; 4) identify any biases or stereotypes; and 5) based on the four previous steps, describe the point of view of the speaker/writer. Get the students to complete this for homework and have it ready to be handed in to class the next day (quotes that are used in the textbook are attached below if teachers don't have access to that particular text • 15 minutes or so)

3. Hand out the timeline of events in Canadian history that relate to Quebec sovereignty and bilingualism and Canada (see attachment with this task) or read through pages 269-274 of the Canadian Identity textbook. After this is complete, ask the students for personal opinions/observations regarding these events listed by the timeline or the textbook as they relate to whether or not Quebec national identity has changed (15 minutes or remainder of class), and to have these opinions/observations written down with respect to changes regarding Quebec national identity and bilingualism in Canada and ready to be presented in class the following day for homework similar to the opinions that they read about in the previous activity. To be more clear, ask the students to write a letter to the editor (similar to one of the voices listed from the above activity and is attached in the identifying points of view link below) to someone who is impartial to the idea of Quebec national identity (non-Canadian) and indicate how change has occurred over time based on the timeline of events that is given and/or the selected reading from the textbook (listed above).

### 2nd Class: Turning Points (60 mins)

1. Introductory Activity: In groups, get the students to compare their letters that they wrote from the previous class to see how each of them undertook the assigned task then ask a group leader to quickly present findings from each group to the rest of the class (15-20 mins).

2. While the students are still in their groups, hand out photocopies of a printout of the CBC article from <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/11/27/nation-vote.html> . Ask them for initial observations regarding the material (reader-response) verbally in class. Then ask the students in their groups to identify the different points of view mentioned in the piece and to write them down and then to share their observations with the class (15-20 mins).

3. For the remainder of the class, in a quick demand writing piece, get the students to leave their groups and to on an individual basis formulate an opinion based on the vote of the House (in a likewise fashion to the points of view skills toolbox activity from page 275 of their textbook -- see 1st Class Lesson), comparing the content of their letter to a non-Canadian regarding change over time and how this event is related to that letter, and whether or not they feel that this is, in fact, a turning point in Canadian history. Indicate that these responses will be turned in for an assignment the next class (or give them a few days to work on it...however it fits into your class plan).

### **Outcomes**

1. The primary provincial (general) outcome that is relevant to this task is that students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the past and how it affects the present and the future (Time, Continuity and Change) -- the sixth conceptual strand from the General Curriculum Outcomes of the Foundation for the Atlantic Social Studies Curriculum (page 12).

2. Of secondary relevance is the fourth conceptual strand (Culture and Diversity) where students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of culture, diversity, and world view, recognizing the similarities and differences reflected in various personal, cultural, racial, and ethnic perspectives (page 12 of the same document).