

Education Française à New York (EFNY) Community-Based Program

Background Information

Organization: Education Française à New York (EFNY)

Program address: 270 1st Ave., Suite 8F; New York, NY 10009. Courses are taught in public schools PS 363, PS 58, PS 10, and PS 59.

Web address: www.efny.net

Contact Person:

Name: Florence Nash

Title: Founder

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Type of organization: We are an after-school program for elementary school students who are native French speakers. We also have some French as a second language classes. Both are at a cost with some scholarships when needed.

Languages/dialects taught: French

Courses: Pre K – K; Grades 1 – 5/6; We are also working on the creation of a new bilingual school as well as middle school after-school classes for native French speakers.

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: The goal of the program is to see the Department of Education open several dual language elementary programs, and to create one new bilingual French American school.

Type of program: Heritage Language; Immersion; Bilingual; Exploratory; After-school

Program origin: The first after-school programs opened in September 2006. EFNY was founded as a not-for-profit organization made of French-speaking parents whose children attend New York City Public Schools.

Parents' expectations for the program: EFNY is an affordable program teaching French speaking children reading, writing, grammar and aspects of French-speaking cultures. Socialization in French is also crucial for children to maintain their culture.

Comments: Language and culture can only be maintained within a social structure. In addition to grammar skills, children need to play, laugh, and argue with French-speaking friends. This is why EFNY promotes the creation of a bilingual public school.

Students

Students: First-generation immigrants 2%; Second-generation immigrants 90%; Children of interethnic marriages

Countries of origin: France; West and North African countries; Belgium; Switzerland; Quebec

Total student enrollment: 120

How the program identifies heritage speakers: Any child who speaks French fluently and knows how to read in English can enroll. We also have classes for young (pre-reading) French speakers and for Anglophones.

How the program determines the language background and language proficiency of students: We use home language surveys. We trust the parents when they say their child is fluent. If a student turns out to have difficulty, we suggest a French as a second language class.

Percentage of students who complete the program: 98%

Percentage of students who continue to study the heritage language after completing the program: It is too early in the program's history to determine. There is no structure allowing the continuation of the students' French studies.

Possible reasons for student withdrawal: Six hours of French a week may be a lot for some young children, especially if they have several other activities. Another possible reason is academic difficulties.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: There is some resistance at the beginning. Real fluency and interest come very quickly, as our programs are very playful and include recreation time.

Instructors

Number of instructors in the program: 12

Languages in which instructors are proficient: French; English

Proficiency level: English is their second language.

Credentials: Teachers have French teacher certification with a BA degree for French as a second language. They are native speakers with elementary school training in a French speaking country. They must also have experience teaching French to young children, training in language teaching, early education, psychology, arts, music, or social work.

Professional development opportunities for instructors: We encourage teachers to become certified in New York State to be able to teach in dual language programs.

Instruction

Total contact hours per week: 3-6 hours

Times per week: 1 or 2 days

Student grouping: By age and language level

Language skills

English skills: Listening; Speaking; Reading; Writing

Heritage language skills: Listening; Speaking; Reading; Writing; Playing and thinking spontaneously in French

Levels of language proficiency reached by the end of the program: French speakers learn reading and writing as well as proper grammar. Anglophones learn basic language skills and understanding. Young French speakers enrich their vocabulary and begin sounding out words.

Culture

Aspects of culture taught: History; Customs; Folktales; Songs; Rhymes; Social and cultural norms; Literature

Kind of student identity fostered by program: Multiculturalism

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program: Playful instructions; Interaction; Games

Materials

Comments: Teachers use a combination of materials that they think is appropriate to the group.

Insights and Future Directions

Insights to share with others: The only way for a child to remain bilingual is to be schooled in a bilingual and bicultural school. That is why EFNY is developing a proposal for such a school within the public school system. In the case of French, the difference between knowing the language orally and knowing how to write it is considerable. Only children who are schooled in French will be able to write in French fluently.