Using Curriculum-Based Measurement Procedures to Assess French Reading Performance of K-3 French immersion students

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The issues

- Many children around the world, bilingualism is a fact of life
- Bilingualism is not a well understood phenomena
- The gap in research knowledge poses a problem for educators who must assess and educate students from bilingual environments
- Best practices on the course and processes of language and literacy development are lacking
- This study looks at issues of biliteracy

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Few studies to detect problems

- Few studies have looked at French reading skill development among French immersion students (Jared, 2008, Genesee 2007).
- There continues to be little empirical data available on the specific reading disabilities of French immersion poor readers (Wiss, 1993).
- The identification of a struggling bilingual reader is often difficult, and educators bear the burden of untangling complex issues (Lundberg, 2002).

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Developmental Biliteracy

(Reyes & Halcón, 2000)

- Developmental biliteracy is the process of learning to read and write in two languages simultaneously
- Early detection of reading difficulties among students learning to read and write in two languages simultaneously warrants well-focused research because currently little is known about:
  1. initial biliteracy reading outcomes
  2. factors predicting successful reading outcomes
  3. preventing early reading deficiency among bilingual students
- The knowledge gained from such research could make substantive contributions concerning the process of biliteracy development in the early grades.

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Lack of assessment tools

- Too often, students’ educational needs are delayed due to a lack of useful assessment tools.
- To address this need, a battery of French language screening tools assessing the early skills of phonological awareness and the alphabetic principle was developed.

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IDAPEL INDICATEURS DYNAMIQUES D’HABILETÉS PRÉCOCES EN LECTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compétences pertinentes à la lecture précoce</th>
<th>Les épreuves IDAPEL*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La conscience phonémique</td>
<td>Facilité à Reconnaître le Premier Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le principe de l’alphabet et les connaissances alphabétiques</td>
<td>Facilité à Segmenter les Phonèmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La facilité de lire un texte imprimé avec précision</td>
<td>Facilité en Lecture Orale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La compréhension de texte</td>
<td>Une combinaison de deux épreuves: Lecture Orale et Rapport Oral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IDAPEL: Trousse d’outils d’évaluation diagnostique, standardisées; les épreuves sont chronométrées d’une minute.

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The measures were modeled after DIBELS
These English literacy measures were developed based on measurement procedures used for curriculum-based measurement (CBM).
The DIBELS measures function as indicators of student progress toward reaching an outcome and are recognized as strong predictors of later reading achievement (Good, R. H., Kaminski, R. A., Smith, S., Simmons, D., Kame'enui, E., & Wallin, J. 2003; Kaminski, R., Cummings, K. D., Powell-Smith, K. A., & Good, R. H., 2008; Baker, S.K., Smolkowski, K. et.al, 2008).
IDAPEL like DIBELS are designed to determine student progress towards a benchmark goal.
They identify quickly and early students at-risk of making sufficient reading gains
They are sensitive to growth and measure skill change over time
They are individually administered three times a year for screening
or more frequently for progress monitoring growth
and are used to evaluate the effects of intervention
The primary purpose of this three year study is to validate IDAPEL measures with elementary level French immersion students (English L1) in order to assess their L2 (French) literacy outcomes and reading achievement. Evaluating students with early reading assessments of the same construct should help identify struggling readers in either French or English.
Year 1 outcomes are presented
Canadian school district services a higher proportion of white students but a rapidly growing ELL student population
American school district services a large proportion of African-American students, a smaller proportion of white students, and a growing ELL student population
Both districts have an early total French Immersion model whereby students receive French reading instruction first at the K level
Targeted population includes K to 3rd grade students
American student population is 280
Canadian student population is 310
Means across year on French reading measures of phoneme segmentation (FSP), nonsense word (FNM) and oral reading (FLO)

<table>
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<tr>
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Correlational data:
The degree to which two or more IDAPEL measures are related and change together can inform us about the potential ability of the measure to predict later reading outcomes.

How well do the IDAPEL measures predict later reading outcomes?

In first grade, Facilité à lire des non-mots administered in winter correlated highly with Facilité en lecture orale at the same benchmark period ($r = .79; n = 83$).

In second grade, Facilité en lecture orale administered in the fall correlated highly with the same measure administered again in the spring ($r = .87; n = 81$).

In third grade, Facilité en lecture orale administered in the fall correlated highly with the same measure administered again in the spring ($r = .87; n = 47$).

DIBELS 2nd Grade Benchmark Goals for:

- NWF (Nonsense W. Fluency) ORF (Oral Reading Fluency)
  - F > 44 = low risk
  - W >68 = low risk
  - Established = 50 correct by end of 1st Grade

2nd Grade DIBELS Winter/Spring Outcome Performance:

- NWF ORF
  - Winter: 51.32 W: 65.33 S: 72.26

2nd Grade IDAPEL Winter/Spring Outcome Performance:

- FNM (Facilité Non-mots) FLO (Facilité en Lecture)
  - Winter: 42.12 W: 31.84 S: 41.68

With English nonsense word, students reached the English benchmark goal by Winter of 2nd Grade which means the skill is established later. The means of the English and French measure have a 10 point difference; this would indicate a fair understanding of the French Alphabetic Principle.
**Results**

Regarding indicators of reading performance for English learners learning to read in French:

Erdos et al., (2008) identified phonological awareness (blending) and knowledge of alphabetic principle (letter sound/letter name knowledge) in L1 are good predictors of L2 reading outcomes in French Immersion.

**Indicator of reading performance for English learners reading in French**

Nonsense word decoding is also an indicator of the alphabetic principle. Results of this study indicate that the French language nonsense word decoding measure (Facilité à lire des non-mots) may be relevant in explaining differences in students’ French reading skill. It may be that this skill is not well established in French by early second grade, and the measure itself may make important contributions to our understanding of French immersion students’ early French reading skills.

**Conclusions**

English nonsense word reading skill (established later than English only students) provides evidence for learning L2 oral language, L2 phonology and rules for reading the French language.

French nonsense word reading skill falls within close range of English nonsense word reading indicating students are moving along the French alphabetic principle continuum of knowledge.

Overall, results provide evidence that these students appear to be making progress in their knowledge of the French alphabetic principle (French phonology) and with French oral reading fluency skills.

**Plans for the three yeas of the study**

 ✓ To establish grade level benchmark goals or the level of skill indicative of adequate progress for this population of students for all of the current IDAPEL measures.

Longitudinal research examining the level of early literacy skills that are predictive of later literacy outcomes will help us establish these benchmark goals.

**Questions?**

Copies of presentation or interest in becoming involved with IDAPEL research, please contact me directly at:

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**Selected References**


Selected References


