Scientific Knowledge Regarding Student Performance in Reading Following the Development of Innovative Practices of French Canadian Professional Learning Communities

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Research context

Francophone minority context (population outside of Quebec)
What are the characteristics of teaching in literacy at the preschool and primary levels in a French Canadian minority context?

- Legal dimension: Canadian charter of rights and liberties (article 23): the communities’ right to an education in one of the official languages, including French, for parenthood.

- Sociological dimension:
  - Linguistic duality and minority
  - Feeling of linguistic and cultural assimilation
  - Public francophone services absent or in development
  - Predominance of the popular English culture
  - Cultural “poverty” of francophone minority contexts

Moreau, Leclerc (August, 2007)
Research context

Francophone minority context

Educational dimension - Characteristics of school services
- Students’ high attraction towards the popular English culture
- Crucial role of the school for the defence of the French culture and language - cultural and linguistic identity constructed
- Family environment, often with exogamous parents where the English culture is predominant (Landry 2003, Landry et coll. 2006)
- Clientele of heterogeneous students with regards to culture and language (Landry, Dallaire et Deveau, 2006; Guérin-Lajoie, 2006)
- Educational environment characterized by:
  ✓ a lack of resources in French,
  ✓ geographical isolation,
  ✓ frequency of multiple level classroom,
  ✓ heteroclite clientele,
  ✓ the challenge of professional development,
Research context

Francophone minority context

Characteristics of the programs

- Teaching program in French as opposed to a bilingual program
  (voir les recensions de Faucher, 2001; et de Barro Zecker, 2004)

- Adapted teaching program: support francization and preventive intervention (preoccupation for oral language and cultural identity)
Research context

Francophone minority context

Characteristics of the programs

- Program focussing on cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies (Nadeau, 2002):
  a) systematic description of the taught strategy,
  b) a right to do mistakes,
  c) employing successful practices,
  d) retroaction,
  e) pedagogical progression- scaffolding,
  f) usefulness of the learning strategy- and
  g) transfer of the strategy.

Moreau, Leclerc (August, 2007)
Research context

Francophone minority context

Characteristics of the students

(Analysis of results obtained at the PIRS of students between the ages of 13 and 16, in Landry and Allard, 2002)

- Language difficulties: the more the student’s real-life experience is dominated by English, the more frequent are difficulties in oral and written communication.

- Large difference in results between the francophone minority group and the francophone majority group in reading in French, lower results.

- In reading, the average student is characterized as employing less cognitive reading strategies, as having less persistence when faced with difficulties in reading and by a greater use of avoidance strategies.

Moreau, Leclerc (August, 2007)
Research context

Francophone minority context

For Landry and Allard (2000)
“the weaker a cultural and linguistic vitality, the higher becomes the challenge of the school and the more crucial it becomes to have a pedagogy that is adapted to the real-life minority context”

Moreau, Leclerc (August, 2007)
Theoretical reminder

Theoretical premises:
“...the francophone psycholanguage development is increased by a strong schooling in French and the development of English language competencies are in no way negatively affected by French schooling (Landry and Allard, 2000).”

For Cummins (1981) “the transfer from one language to another is higher when it is from the minority language to the majority language than vice versa, this due to a strong social pressure to learn the language of the majority.
Purpose of the study

Describe the progress observed in teachers, following training and accompaniment sessions, on knowledge of teaching strategies effective in literacy.

Gather information on the progression of performance in literacy observed in students in the context of implantation or improvement of teaching strategies in literacy.

Moreau, Leclerc (August, 2007)
Theoretical concepts

Professional learning community (PLC)

Action research

Representations

Professional auto-efficacy
Theoretical concepts

Association between working in a professional learning community (PLC) and action research
Method: action research

Participants
Five schools, 60 teaching professionals (school principal, teacher and teacher’s aids)

Procedure
- Six meetings, including five of PLC accompaniment (3-6h)
- Animation tools SAS2 (causal dynamic technique, rainbow technique, socratic wheel, construct analysis)

Data collection tools
- Auto efficacy
- Auto evaluation (socratic wheel)
- Representation of changes observed in students
Results

CHARACTERISTICS

STUDENTS

Oral language
- English as a first language
- Strong English culture
- Second language, little or no French, sometimes others
- Multiple levels of mastering the language

Written language
- Various levels of learning in literacy
- Little interest in reading (parents and children)
- Learning difficulties

Learning aptitudes
- Good learning capacity
- Abilities on a task
- Abilities and perseverance on a task
- Different levels of learning
- Few behavior problems

French is becoming less and less a language of use

CONTEXT

Diversified economic context
Multiethnic context - multi language
Popular English language

SCHOOL...
- Little services in French
- Little implication towards the language
- Little respect for the French language
- Written communication with parents in both languages
- Difficulties between ethnic groups
Results

Changes within students: the personnel’s perceptions of the impact of the action research

PROGRESS OR LEARNING (oral level)
Improvement of spoken French
Better oral comprehension

READING PERFORMANCE
Improvement in reading:
Higher level in letters and sounds knowledge
Reading strategies better understood
Reading progress (Jeunesse Lit program)
Less reading difficulties

IMPROVEMENT-LEARNING, MOTIVATION
Progress or improved learning
Better school functioning, sustained learning
Fewer learning difficulties, facilitated
More participation
More motivation (homework club)
Few progress to little or no progress

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS – RELATIONS, ATTITUDES
Better relationships among students-teacher (climate)
Feeling of being better supported, sense of security
Confidence for the student, feels worshiped

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## Results

Auto evaluation of progress in teaching in literacy and of the group as a PLC (socratic wheel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representations</th>
<th>Pre-test : Mean (N : 40)</th>
<th>Post-test : Mean (N : 40)</th>
<th>Difference between the means at the pre-test and post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Progress in teaching in literacy</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress of the group as a PLC</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

Average of results for the auto evaluation of progress in teaching in literacy (socratic wheel)

Average of results for the auto evaluation of progress of the group working as a PLC (socratic wheel)
Observing important changes in the clientele

Clientele of English unilingual students

Clientele of different socio-economic levels

Clientele from diverse municipalities

More and more parents insisting on communicating in English
Observing important changes in the personnel

Sometimes, in certain classes, the teacher is the only one who speaks in French

Difficulties in renewing or replacing the personnel

Challenge of professional development

Difficulty of accessing documentation in French

Difficulty of accessing expertise
Reflection and future research...

Take advantage of this context to gather information the evolution of the clientele in regards to the language, schooling

Reflect on the pedagogical support to offer in a context of a French school with a unilingual English clientele.

- Support for the evaluation of oral communication
- Support for teaching French reading and writing
Reflection and future research...

Reflect on the use and analysis of school performance data as a pedagogical support: interpretation...

Reflect on pedagogical means taking into account the Anglophone culture and context.

Reflect on pedagogical innovations to favour the French culture.

Support professional learning communities by offering innovative ways of supporting principals, teaching personnel and enlarged communities.
Questions?

Thank you for your participation

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