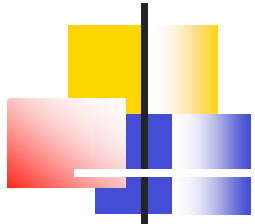


Educational Research and Minority Francophone Communities: Reflection on Challenges and Solutions

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Presentation Objectives

- 1. To identify the main challenges for educational research in minority Francophone communities in Canada in the long term (up to 2018)
- 2. To look into these challenges in detail
- 3. To consider ways to overcome them



Background

- Legal Background
 - Sections 16 and 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
 - 1969 *Official Languages Act*, revised in 1988 and amended in 2005
- These instruments were developed to ensure the continued existence and development of official-language minority communities.



Background (cont'd)

- Socio-Demographic Background
 - Francophone communities are changing.
 - These changes pose some concerns for these communities (2006 Census)
 - Declining language continuity index
 - Fewer people speak mainly French at home
 - Low birth rate
 - Low ability to attract immigrants
 - Aging population



Background (cont'd)

- The goal of minority Francophone communities: cultural autonomy (Landry; Landry, Allard & Deveau, 2006)
- Pillars of cultural autonomy
 - Social proximity
 - Institutional completeness
 - Ideological legitimacy
- These are the essential elements of collective identity development.



Minority Francophone Education

- In achieving cultural autonomy, minority Francophone communities face challenges in many areas, including education.

Minority Francophone Education (cont'd)



- Education is:
 - The cornerstone of institutional completeness for Francophone communities
 - The cornerstone of the continued existence and development of minority Francophone communities

Minority Francophone Education (cont'd)



- Education is crucial, especially in minority Francophone communities, because it provides three important socializing experiences that lead to the development of Francophone communities:
 - Enculturing experiences
 - Autonomizing experiences
 - Consciousness-raising experiences

Minority Francophone Education (cont'd)



- Three types of socializing experiences (Landry, Allard, Deveau & Bourgeois, 2005)
 - Enculturing experiences: internalization of social norms on minority and majority language use in minority communities.
 - Autonomizing experiences: internalization of motives for learning and using languages.
 - Consciousness-raising experiences: development of a critical awareness of the social conditions that contribute to linguistic minority vitality.



Challenges for Minority Francophone Education

- Challenges for minority Francophone education:
 - WHO? – Subjects
 - WHAT? – Program content
 - HOW? – Pedagogy



Education Challenges: WHO?

- Children of rights holders
 - Challenge 1. To recruit and retain students in French public schools.
 - Challenge 2. To improve French language enculturation of children of rights holders from early childhood via French daycare services.
 - Challenge 3. To increase the availability of French postsecondary education in all provinces and territories.

Education Challenges: WHO?

(cont'd)



- Rights holding parents
 - Challenge 4. To raise rights holders' awareness of their options for transmitting their language and culture to facilitate their children's integration into the Francophone community.

Education Challenges: WHO?

(cont'd)

- Adult rights holders and immigrants
 - Challenge 5. To increase the availability and quality of French adult education.
 - Challenge 6. To increase the availability and quality of French education for immigrants.

Education Challenges: WHO?

(cont'd)



- Educators

- Challenge 7. To offer training and skills upgrades to all staff:
 - Schools: teachers, administrators and student services
 - Daycare centres: early childhood educators
 - Adult education: literacy practitioners
 - Personnel responsible for welcoming immigrants and providing language courses



Education Challenges: WHAT?

- Program development
 - Challenge 8. To develop programs to improve academic performance in traditional subjects.
 - Challenge 9. To develop programs with enculturation as a transversal objective.
 - Challenge 10. To develop programs with the clear objective of raising ethnolinguistic consciousness in order to foster community engagement.



Education Challenges: HOW?

- Pedagogy in minority communities
 - Challenge 11. To ensure that pedagogy in minority communities promotes French enculturation.
 - Challenge 12. To ensure that pedagogy in minority communities promotes self-determination by meeting learners' needs for autonomy, competence and belonging.

Education Challenges: HOW?



(cont'd)

- Pedagogy in minority communities
 - Challenge 13. To ensure that pedagogy in minority communities fosters ethnolinguistic consciousness and community engagement.



Education Challenges (cont'd)

- Education and research challenges
 - Education challenges (who, what and how) must be the focus of minority Francophone education research.



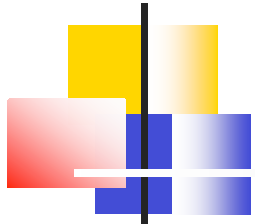
General Definition of Scientific Research

- Scientific research: two definitions
 - Research is an objective quest for knowledge on questions of facts (Gauthier, 1992, p. 4)
 - The two goals of scientific research (van der Maren, 1996, p. 5 and 6)
 - First goal: the questioning, criticizing and challenging of common sense, theories, and ways of thinking held by the majority or the authorities.
 - Second goal: the transgression of received knowledge.



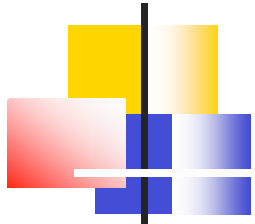
Educational Research

- Educational research: two definitions
 - Gay's (1996) definition:
 - The formal, systematic application of the scientific method to the study of education problems
 - Legendre (1993, p. 1079) includes problem solving in his definition of educational research:
 - Application of the principles of the scientific method to study and solve problems in the area of education.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Research on education: academic research based on methodologies employed in the social sciences, such as psychology and sociology.
 - Essentially it is positivist, post-positivist and interpretive research.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Research for education: research involving education practitioners, with or without the participation or collaboration of researchers.
 - Educators and administrators of educational institutions conduct or participate in research on educational practices, management practices, etc.
 - Mainly action, evaluation and development research.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Value of current research on minority education
 - In the last few years, there has been more and more academic research on minority education.
 - These studies provide interesting observations on various aspects of minority Francophone education.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Value of research “for” minority education
 - Implementation of various action and development research initiatives in practice settings (e.g., Francophone sections of departments of education, educators)
 - These initiatives often lead to changes in practice.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Gaps in current research “on” minority education conducted by universities (faculty and chairs) and research institutes:
 - Lack of human resources (minority education specialists)
 - Lack of financial resources
 - Less than optimal use of scant resources
 - Knowledge sharing is rare in practice settings



Education Research (cont'd)

- Gaps in current research “for” minority education in practice settings:
 - We believe there is not enough research.
 - Aside from some studies conducted by or for departments of education, the research is not disseminated enough.
 - Innovations in education and management programs and practices are too rarely subjected to formal evaluation.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Is it possible to fill these gaps in minority Francophone education research?
 - There should be an inventory of who is conducting research on and for minority Francophone education.
 - The research should be inventoried, summarized and critically evaluated.
 - Inventories and summaries could be useful for identifying research priorities “on” and “for” minority Francophone education.



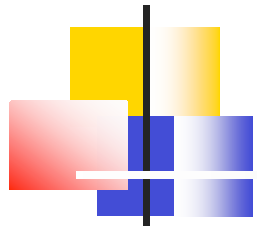
Educational Research (cont'd)

- Research and change
 - Current minority Francophone education research aims to promote change in education.
 - It certainly is an agent of change.
 - But how could education research better promote change in minority Francophone education?



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Three change paradigms (from Applebaum) that apply to education (Savoie-Zajc & Dolbec, in Chevrier, 1994)
 - Equilibrium paradigm: the system in which research is conducted is concerned mainly with operational equilibrium.
 - Evolutionary paradigm: the system views change as a process of adjustment and adaptation that evolves due to external and internal constraints.
 - Political paradigm: change is accomplished through negotiation, compromise, and transactions in the relations of power linking individuals, groups, institutions and cultures in the pursuit of certain goals.

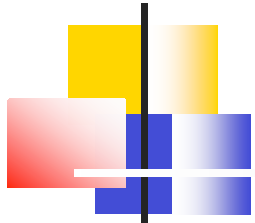


Educational Research (cont'd)

- Three spaces of research (van der Maren, 1996)
 - Academic space: where we conduct positivistic, post-positivist and interpretive research with the objective of improving knowledge and the understanding of various phenomena.
 - Political space: where we conduct action and evaluation research.
 - Pragmatic space: where we conduct development research.

Types of change as products of educational research

(Savoie-Zajc & Dolbec, in Chevrier, 1994, p. 91)



| SPACES | | Academic | Political | Pragmatic |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| PARADIGMS | Equilibrium | status quo | temporary turbulence | cooptation |
| | Evolutionary | increased turbulence | action decision | technological learning |
| | Political | awareness | problem resolution | mutual adaptation |



Educational Research (cont'd)

- In terms of change, minority Francophone education research is situated mostly in the political and evolutionary paradigms rather than the equilibrium paradigm, as it is meant to promote awareness, action decisions and problem resolution.
- While educational research in the academic space should continue to raise awareness, more research should be done in the political and practical spaces to facilitate action decision and problem resolution.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- According to Fullan (1991), there are two levels of change in education:
 - 1st level change: easier to achieve as it does not involve significant changes in basic functional characteristics or in the role played by stakeholders.
 - 2nd level change: much more difficult to achieve, as it involves new objectives, organizational structures or roles.



Educational Research (cont'd)

- Based on the nature of the challenges to minority Francophone education that we described earlier, educational research seems to be focused mainly on 2nd level changes, which are more difficult to implement than 1st level changes.



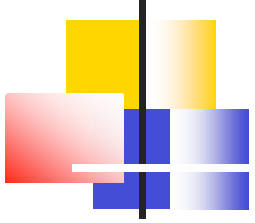
In Conclusion...

- There are many challenges to minority Francophone education.
- These challenges, all articulated around the objective of cultural autonomy, should be an object of research on and for education.
- More research for education should be conducted by researchers in collaboration with interested parties from the education system.



In Conclusion (cont'd)

- Research and results should attempt to raise awareness and facilitate changes in the education system and the community.
- Policies should be based more on research, which should be reviewed in a dialogue between researchers and parties interested in minority Francophone education.



Thank you!