PREDICTING RISK FOR L2 READING DIFFICULTY

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STRUGGLING READERS

- estimated 7-10% (maybe 20%) of students have reading impairment/difficulty

- reading difficulty: common reason for academic difficulty and exiting immersion programs

- early intervention is critical in order to avoid reading difficulties from becoming entrenched

- students with reading impairment may be entitled to special services
L2 READING IMPAIRMENT/DIFFICULTY

- L2 students are NOT at greater risk for reading impairment
- L2 students may be at greater risk for reading difficulty
- L2 students with reading difficulty/impairment are at greater risk of receiving delayed support & of academic underachievement
IDENTIFYING READING IMPAIRMENT in L2 STUDENTS

- reading impairment
- incomplete L2 acquisition
WAIT-AND-SEE APPROACH

- delay identification to ensure that difficulties reflect impairment & not L2 issues

→ wait-and-see becomes wait-and-fail
→ delayed intervention creates long term problems

☼ distinguishing L2 reading impairment that is clinical in nature from other reading difficulties is not necessary in the beginning

☼ struggling L2 readers have same basic needs as all beginning L2 readers, but more intense
WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY about STRUGGLING L2 READERS?

- poor L2 readers have same profiles as poor L1 readers in English program (more later)

- L2 students who are poor readers in their L1 are likely to be poor readers in their L2

- predictors of poor reading in an L2 are the same as those that predict poor reading in an L1
TRANSFER IS GOOD: *linguistic bootstrapping*

⇒ L2 students have a unique **BILINGUAL RESERVOIR**
of skills, knowledge, & experiences: L1 + L2

⇒ L2 students draw on this reservoir of skills &
knowledge when learning to read & write in L2:
**bootstrapping**
CROSS-LINGUISTIC TRANSFER IN READING

LI
print awareness
letter-sound knowledge
phonological awareness
decoding skills
vocabulary
background-cultural knowledge

L2
print awareness
letter-sound knowledge
phonological awareness
decoding skills
vocabulary
background-cultural knowledge

Genesee & Geva, 2006
McGILL AT-RISK READING STUDY
Erdos, Genesee, Savage & Haigh, 2010

L1 language predictors
L1 reading predictors
control measures

L2 language outcomes
L2 reading outcomes
academic outcomes

Fall K
Spring K
Spring Grade 1
Spring Grade 2
Spring Grade 3
Spring Grade 6

predictors
outcomes
RISK FOR L2 READING DIFFICULTIES

SPRING K:

ENGLISH-L1 PREDICTORS of L2 READING OUTCOMES

End of GRADE 3

AT-RISK: >1 s.d. below mean
73%

NOT-AT-RISK: <1 s.d. below mean
73%
RISK FOR L2 ORAL LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

SPRING K:

ENGLISH-L1 PREDICTORS of L2 ORAL LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

End of GRADE 3

AT-RISK:
>1 s.d. below mean
92%

NOT-AT-RISK:
<1 s.d. below mean
76%
SUPPORTING STRUGGLING L2 READERS

- struggling L2 readers, L2 readers with reading impairment, and beginning L2 readers all have the same instructional needs -- impaired L2 readers do not have unique profiles

⇒ provide same instructional support for at-risk readers as for all L2 readers but more intensively

⇒ use an RtI approach ...
R-t-I approach to INTERVENTION

* Response to Intervention / Integrated Service Delivery

- Tier 3: Intensive interventions and comprehensive evaluations (80%)
- Tier 2: Targeted Interventions (15%)
- Tier 1: High-quality classroom instruction, screening and group interventions (5%)
GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION
-WORD STAGE-

- explicit instruction in foundational skills: phonological awareness & phonics
- teach language and comprehension skills for future text reading needs
- expand vocabulary knowledge for narrative and informational text: identify academic vocabulary
- link language development to academic content
- pair work/cooperative learning:
  - increases practice time
  - increased opportunities for feedback
  - increased engagement, everyone is involved
word-level stage continued..

**TIME:**
- regular, frequent and sustained intervention – daily or several times per week for at least 20 weeks

- severe decoding problems:
  - intensive intervention -- Torgessen et al. (2009): 68 hrs of one-on-one instruction in two 50-minute sessions each week – 40% of students were reclassified as “typical” (TIER 2: small groups)

- aim for **mastery** – go for automaticity

- **practice-practice-practice:**
  - Brenner & Hiebert (2009): 90 min. instructional block ⇔ only 17.5 mins eye-time
GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION
-TEXT STAGE-

WORD LEVEL:

- accurate and fluent word decoding skills are important
  ⇒ focus on decoding where needed

- capitalize on X-linguistic links in phonics, spelling, vocab. – be explicit

LANGUAGE:

- Support oral language development (vocab. + figurative language + listening comprehension) is important ⇒ stable long term improvements in reading comp. (Clarke et al., 2010)

- work on complex grammar linked to content

continued...
READING COMPREHENSION

- explicit instruction in use of comprehension strategies improves reading comprehension (Proctor et al., 2009); especially for older struggling readers (Edmonds et al., 2009)

  - most effective when students are engaged to think about text, learn from text, and discuss what they know

READING AS THINKING

OTHER

- use interesting, culturally-relevant, and appropriately complex texts

- develop stamina -
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1E5lbkX5NDg
SUMMARY GUIDE to SUPPORT STRUGGLING READERS

- **ASAP**
- Screening and ongoing monitoring are essential
- **Differentiate** according to students’ specific needs
- **Integrate** multiple levels of intervention — struggling L2 readers have general reading problems
- Greater difficulty ⇒ greater intensity
- Incorporate effective general instructional strategies for L2 learners and adapt for struggling readers
for more:

thank you