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Preserve Educators’ Perceptions About Two Types of Vocabulary Progress Monitoring Measures

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Background

- Educators at all levels require reliable and valid assessments to measure student learning. One method of assessing content knowledge is vocabulary progress monitoring, as shown by curriculum-based measurement (CBM), which has demonstrated evidence of reliability and validity in secondary-level content-area classes (e.g., Espin et al., 2013). CBM can be applied to the university setting with preservice teachers to teach the principles of progress monitoring and to model the procedures to influence future educators’ implementation of CBM in their future classrooms.
- One descriptive study investigated the use of vocabulary-matching in a college course (Larson & Ward, 2006) but did not determine the technical adequacy of the measures. Technically adequate measures at the university level may be important for instructors to gauge student performance accurately and to enable students to examine their own learning appropriately.
- These procedures may provide an opportunity for instructing students in performance accurately and to enable students to examine their own adequacy of the measures. Technically adequate measures at the university level may be important for instructors to gauge student performance accurately and to enable students to examine their own learning appropriately.

Purpose: Researchers, including doctoral students in an assessment course, developed vocabulary-matching and selection measures for use in a section of an introductory special education course to judge preservice teachers’ satisfaction with the measures and practices in supporting their own learning about progress monitoring. A brief follow-up study (5 weeks) was conducted to see whether students taking an intensive course online would be more likely to use the progress monitoring tools than students taking the course face to face across a traditional 15-week semester.

Research Questions

1. How do preservice teachers in the face-to-face and online class rate their satisfaction with using vocabulary-matching CBM and vocabulary-selection CBM across a semester?
2. Did preservice teachers in the face-to-face course improve in their progress monitoring knowledge across the semester, and did both the face-to-face and online groups improve in vocabulary knowledge as evidenced by vocabulary pre-posttests and beginning/ending vocabulary-matching and vocabulary-selection probes?

Method

Participants and Setting

- n = 29 undergraduates in a face-to-face (traditional 15 weeks) and n = 9 graduates in an online (5 weeks) Introduction to Special Education course at a southeastern university
- Sex: 21 females, 7 males in face-to-face section (1 did not complete form)
- Year: 6 juniors, 12 sophomores, 7 freshmen, 4 seniors in face-to-face section
- Major: 1 special education, 27 general education or other (elementary, early childhood, secondary subjects, agriculture) in face-to-face section
- Online section: 10 females, 1 male in online MAT program for teaching students with learning disabilities (but n = 9 for survey)

Measures: CBM probes

- 150 terms drawn from text glossary (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2015) based on a previous study and checked against more recent edition
- Random assignment of terms with replacement across 8 probes (including one form that was repeated) for face-to-face. Four of the probes were selected for use in the online class.
- 20 items, 22 definitions (including 2 distractors) on each probe (Espin et al., 2013) for vocabulary matching
- 20 definitions and three terms for each definition (including one correct choice and two distractors) on each probe for vocabulary selection

Criterion measures

- 75-item multiple-choice pre- and posttest on textbook vocabulary
- 20-item multiple-choice pre- and posttest on progress monitoring vocabulary

Student survey

- 15-item survey about the vocabulary measures; 1-11 items: 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Strongly Disagree); 12-13 items: (1=very easy, 5=very difficult); 14 select measure and 15 free response (explain why)

Procedures

- Doctoral students in assessment course used previously identified pool of words
- CBM group-administered by researchers (including course faculty) during class for 4 minutes for vocabulary-matching and 90 seconds for vocabulary-selection probes every other week.
- Students saw their scored probes and graphed their progress during off-probe weeks.
- Vocabulary-multiple-choice measure and progress monitoring knowledge measure given as pre- and posttests during first and last week of semester

Student satisfaction survey data

- Results

Discussion

- Students grew significantly in their knowledge of course vocabulary across the term in both sections and in progress monitoring concepts face to face.
- Students in the face-to-face section preferred the matching probes to the selection probes and reported that graphing activities were useful but that taking probes and seeing progress largely did not alter their study habits.
- In contrast, all the students in the online class preferred the selection probes to the matching probes, and 78% of them agreed that selection probes were good indicators of their knowledge and that seeing their graphs was useful.
- However, the majority indicated neutrality or disagreed that matching probes indicated their level of knowledge and that matching graphs were useful.
- Across both sections, 95% thought the activities helped them to better understand how vocabulary knowledge in a content area could be assessed.

Limitations and Future Research

- Need to address reliability and validity for both types of probes and examine slope of improvement. Which type of format appears to model student growth better? Are there other ways technology can be used to make these procedures or matching probe easier online? Repeat with larger ns.