

Research: The Fundamentals of Paraphrasing and Summarizing

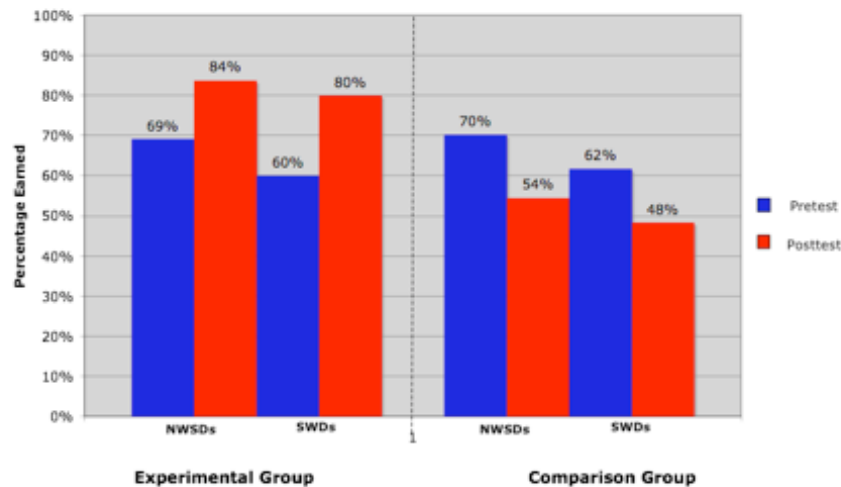
Overview

This study investigated the effects of teaching the fundamental skills associated with paraphrasing and summarizing in relation to students' ability to identify and paraphrase main ideas and details. Two experimental general education classes of tenth graders (n = 43), in which some students with disabilities had been included, worked through the lessons in the Fundamentals of Paraphrasing and Summarizing Program. A comparison class (n = 23) of tenth graders received typical English instruction. There were some students with disabilities included in this comparison class, as well. The classes were randomly selected into the conditions. All students took a test where they had to write paraphrases of the topic, main idea, and details of each paragraph in a different passage before and after the instruction. The design was a pretest-posttest comparison-group design.

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Results
Figure 1 shows the mean percentage scores earned by the students on a test where they had to paraphrase as they wrote the topic, main idea, and details for each paragraph in a passage. Students who had disabilities (SWDs) and students who did not have disabilities (NSWDs) in the experimental classes earned higher mean scores on the posttest than the pretest. The opposite was true for the students in the comparison class; their posttest mean scores were lower than their pretest scores.

Results: TMD Subtest Scores



An ANCOVA revealed significant differences between the posttest scores of the experimental and comparison students without disabilities (NSWDs) in favor of the experimental group [$F(1,53) = 54.404, p < .0005, \eta^2 = .507$]. This difference represents a very large effect size. Two-tailed t tests revealed that there were no differences between the pretests of the students with disabilities in the groups, but there were significant differences between the groups' posttests [$t(4.115) = 3.307, p < .028, d = 3.31$], in favor of the experimental students with disabilities. Again, this difference represents a very large effect size.

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Conclusions

Students in general education English classes could learn fundamental skills associated with paraphrasing and summarizing, two reading comprehension strategies. Both students with and without disabilities learned how to identify and paraphrase topics, main ideas, and details in paragraphs in reading passages above the 80% level, which is generally considered to be a mastery level for learning strategies. Moreover, their scores on the posttest were significantly higher than the posttest scores of their peers in a comparison class.

Reference

Graner, P. (2007). *The effects of strategic summarization instruction on the performance of students with and without disabilities in secondary inclusive classes*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Lawrence: University of Kansas.