

Research: The Essay Test-Taking Strategy

Overview

The Essay Test Taking Strategy is used by students when taking an essay exam or answering an essay question. The research study on the Essay Test Taking Strategy included 42 7th and 8th graders with reading and writing disabilities plus 10 average achievers who served as a same-age comparison group. The students with disabilities were assigned via a stratified random sampling method to an experimental or a control group. A pretest-posttest control-group design was employed. The researchers designed a strategy-specific rubric for measuring student use of the strategy when writing essay answers where students earned points according to elements in their permanent products. They also used a six-trait essay measure where the six traits of writing were each scored for each written essay answer on a five-point scale.

Results

Analysis of Covariance results revealed a significant difference between the posttest strategy rubric scores of experimental and control students, representing a large effect size of 1.69. A separate ANCOVA also revealed a significant difference between the content and organization scores of the groups in favor of the experimental group. There were no differences between the content and organization scores of the experimental group and the same-age comparison group of average achievers.

Conclusions

This study showed that students with reading and writing disabilities could learn to write essay answers in response to essay questions such that their content and organization improved. In addition their essay answers were comparable to the answers of students without disabilities.

Reference

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