

Research: The Visual Imagery Strategy

Overview

This study investigated the effects of instruction of the Visual Imagery and the Self-Questioning Strategy. Six students with LD in grades eight through 12 participated, and a multiple-probe across-strategies design was used for each student. Some students were taught the Visual Imagery Strategy first; others were taught the Self-Questioning Strategy first. However, all the students received instruction in both strategies.

Several measures were used, including a measure of student use of each strategy while they were reading a passage as well as a measure of reading comprehension after the students had read the passage. Two levels of 100- to 200-word passages were used to gather these measures: those written at the student's reading level and those written at the student's actual grade level. In order to gather the strategy-use measures, five dots were marked in the passage at relatively equally spaced intervals. The student was asked to read until he/she reached a dot and then to tell the researcher about the picture he/she had in his/her mind of the passage (visual imagery) or to tell the researcher about any questions he/she had asked him/herself about the passage (self-questioning), depending on which strategy was being tested in a given test session. The researcher scored each student response according to a written set of objective guidelines.

Results

Results showed that all six students mastered both strategies with regard to applying them to ability-level materials. Five of the six students learned to apply both strategies to grade-level materials within four practice trials and did so in such a way as to improve their performance on the comprehension tests. During baseline, the mean percentage of comprehension questions answered correctly on grade-level passages was 42%, even after the students were prompted to use visual images. After instruction, the mean percentage of comprehension questions answered correctly on grade-level passages was 82% when they were prompted to use the Visual Imagery Strategy. Follow-up tests conducted after instruction was terminated showed some decrease in mean comprehension scores (down to 78% for Visual Imagery).

Conclusions

Thus, these results show that after relatively small amounts of instructional time (5 to 7 hours per strategy) students with LD can learn to apply reading comprehension strategies to materials written at their grade level in such a way that their comprehension of those passages increases substantially.

Reference

Clark, F. L., Deshler, D. D., Schumaker, J. B., Alley, G. R., & Warner, M. M. (1984). Visual imagery and self-questioning: Strategies to improve comprehension of written material. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 17(3), 145 - 149.