

The Effects of Sight Words and Direct Instruction phonics remedial programs implemented by college students on seventh–grade Taiwanese Students with Low English Achievement

Shih-Jay Tzeng* Wei-Ting Chen** Su-Li Chen***

The participants of the present study were 32 seventh–graders whose English performance was ranked the first or the second from the bottom in their classes in a junior high school. They were randomly assigned to the experimental group and the control group. In addition to their original English class, students in the experimental group received a remedial program in which four 40-minute 1-on-1 or 1-on-2 tutorial sessions per week were held for 10 weeks. The goal of the program was to enhance their English decoding skills. The 220 Dolch sight words and a Direct Instruction phonics program with scripted lesson plans (Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons; Engelmann, 1985) were adopted as tutorial materials. As part of the course requirements, 27 college students who were taking a course entitled English Remedial Instruction under the supervision of the professor and a teaching assistant, served as tutors in the experiment. The control group received no supplemental tutorial program.

The results of the study revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the total number of sight words learned. In the experimental group, the average pretest and posttest scores were 41.19 and 182.63, which indicated a significant growth, whereas in the control group, the average pretest and posttest scores were 51.44 and 59.60, which suggested only very limited growth. In addition, the experimental group also outdid the control group on the curriculum-based measurement of DISTAR materials. Students in the experimental group recognized 73.9% target words, while those in the control group recognized only 42.8%. Finally, the effectiveness of the remedial program did not manifest itself on the participants' school monthly English examinations. That is, there were no significant differences in the mean monthly English exam scores between the experimental and the control groups.

主題文章

Keywords: English remedial instruction, sight words, phonics, direct instruction, low achievers

* Corresponding Author: Shih-Jay Tzeng, Professor, Department of Special Education, National Taitung University

** Wei-Ting Chen, The Director, Taitung Victoria English Language Center

*** Su-Li Chen, Professor, Department of Education, National Taitung University