

ABSTRACT

CONTENT AREA LITERACY STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON COMPREHENSION

This study examined the possibility that middle school science students' difficulty with comprehension and summarization may be linked to deficits in strategic reading skills and low self-efficacy. A treatment group received explicit, direct instruction in the use of one content literacy strategy, X Marks the Spot. A control group received no additional strategy instruction. Results gained from data analysis of pretests and posttests for comprehension and summary indicated explicit, direct strategy instruction received by the treatment group may have enabled them to outperform the control group in identifying important elements in text and transforming the text into a cohesive summary. Both groups differed significantly in what they considered important, what they included in their summaries, and in how they transformed the original text. An informal survey was administered and indicated increased levels of student engagement and purported strategy use in the treatment group following direct strategy instruction.

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