

# Research: The Self Advocacy Strategy

## Overview

This study investigated the effects of teaching high school students with LD a strategy for advocating for themselves while participating in educational conferences such as Individual Education Planning (IEP) conferences. Sixteen students were randomly selected into an experimental or control group. The eight experimental students were taught the Self-Advocacy Strategy individually. A multiple-baseline across-students design and a posttest-only control-group design were used. For each repeated test, students were asked a series of ten probe questions to simulate a conference situation, and their scores for answers constituted the repeated measure in the multiple-baseline design. At the end of the study, each student participated in an actual IEP conference with teachers, parents, and administrators where the same probe questions were asked. Additionally, the number of goals in the students' IEPs that students contributed at the conference were tallied.

## Results

Experimental and control students made an average of 22 relevant contributions during baseline simulated conferences. After instruction, experimental students made an average of 112 relevant contributions in simulated conferences. During actual IEP conferences, experimental students made an average of 98 relevant contributions, while control students made an average of 42 relevant contributions. A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference between the experimental and control students' performances during their actual IEP conferences in favor of the experimental students.

A review of the students' IEPs revealed that for the experimental students, 31 out of 36 goals (86%) written for the 8 students were contributed by the students during their conferences. In contrast, only 3 of 23 goals (13%) written for the control students were contributed by those students at their IEP conferences.

## Conclusions

This study showed that instruction in the Self-Advocacy Strategy resulted in increased numbers of contributions by students with LD in their IEP conferences when they were compared to a group of students who did not receive the instruction. Additionally, the experimental students' contributions in their conferences resulted in more goal statements in their IEP documents.

## Reference

Van Reusen, A. K., Deshler, D. D., & Schumaker, J. B. (1989). Effects of a student participation strategy in facilitating the involvement of adolescents with learning disabilities in the individualized educational program planning process. *Learning Disabilities*, 1(2), 23-34.