

Research: The Self Advocacy Strategy CD Instruction

Overview

This study investigated the comparative effects of two methods of teaching high school students with disabilities the Self-Advocacy Strategy: a live-instruction method and an Interactive Hypermedia (IH) Software Program. Sixteen students with disabilities were randomly selected into the live-instruction group or the IH group. The eight live-instruction students were taught the Self-Advocacy Strategy individually by a researcher. The eight IH students were taught the strategy via their computers. Six additional students did not volunteer to receive the instruction; they served as a comparison group. A multiple-baseline across-students design was used with the students who received the live or IH instruction. For each test, students were asked to answer orally a series of ten probe questions to simulate a conference situation, and their 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

The students who received live or IH instruction made substantially more contributions in simulated conference situations after the instruction than before the instruction. When the three groups were compared, no differences were found between the groups at baseline. During their IEP conferences, students in the live-instruction group made a mean of 62 appropriate contributions, and IH students made a mean of 61 appropriate contributions. No significant differences were found between these two groups' performances during the practice activities and during the IEP conferences. Nevertheless, a KWANOVA indicated a significant difference between the three groups [$F(2, 22) = 12.537, p < .002$]. Post-hoc analysis revealed a significant difference between the students' performances at their conferences between the live-instruction students and the comparison students as well as a significant difference between the IH group and the comparison students.

With regard to basic social skills used during the IEP conferences, no differences were found among the three groups. With respect to student use of the Self-Advocacy Strategy steps, all students in the live-instruction group and the IH group used all four steps of the strategy.

A review of the students' IEPs revealed that for the IH students, 66% of the goals written for the 8 students were contributed by the students during their conferences. Similarly, 79% of the goals were contributed by the live-instruction group. In contrast, only 20% of the goals written for the comparison students were contributed by those students at their IEP conferences. Significant differences were found between the live-instruction group and the comparison group as well as between the IH group and the comparison group on this measure. No differences were found between the two instructed groups.

Live-instruction students, IH students, and comparison students rated their satisfaction with the outcomes of the IEP conference similarly (4.7 versus 4.8 versus 4.3, respectively).

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Conclusions

This study showed that instruction in the Self-Advocacy Strategy resulted in increased numbers of contributions by students with disabilities in simulated conferences and resulted in large numbers of contributions in their IEP conferences when they were compared to a group of students who did not receive the instruction. This larger number of appropriate contributions yielded a higher number of goals contributed by the students in their final IEPs. Additionally, this study shows that students who receive instruction in the strategy via the IH program perform about the same as students who receive live instruction. Thus, the IH program is a viable way of saving teacher time while producing positive results.

Reference

Lancaster, P. E., Schumaker, J. B., and Deshler, D. D. (2002). Development and validation of an interactive hypermedia program for teaching a self-advocacy strategy to students with disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 25, 277 – 302.