SELF-QUESTIONING BY KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

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Abstract

Self-questioning is recognized as means of facilitating learning and cognitive development for primary school students but was not considered suitable for kindergarten children.

A set of three studies was performed to examine the readiness of children of this age to benefit from training in self-questioning to improve the quality of their questions and their academic achievements in story comprehension and ability of self-directed learning. Three methods of training in self-questioning were compared in the following set of studies.

Study 1: Ninety three children aged 5-6 participated in the study. The subjects were divided into 3 groups: Two experimental groups – one trained in the Active Processing method, and the second in the Metacognitive method, the third served as a control group.

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of the two self-questioning training methods on the subjects’ quality of questions, story comprehension, and their ability of self-directed learning.

The study consisted of three stages:
Stage 1: To establish a baseline, the subjects were measured on their quality of questions, story comprehension and ability of self-directed learning.
Stage 2: The two types of intervention were applied in the experimental groups: Active Processing in one, and the Metacognitive in the other. The control group was requested to ask as many questions as they could. The effects of the interventions were measured by the same measures as in stage 1.
Stage 3: To examine a long term effect, the same measures were applied a year after the intervention, when the subjects attended first year at school.

The results in the Short Term testing showed that the Metacognitive experimental group scored significantly higher than the two other groups in both measures, quality of questions and story comprehension, while in the Long Term both experimental groups scored higher than the control group in both measurements. The Metacognitive group scored significantly higher than the other two groups in the self-directed learning.

Study 2: Study 2 was a replica of study 1 with the exception that the children participating in this study were diagnosed as LD (learning deficiencies) students. Eighty-four LD children participated in this study. They were divided into three groups as in study 1 and received the same treatments.

The results showed no significant differences in the Short Term measures, while in the Long Term they were found similar to those as in study 1.

Study 3: Study 3 was a replica of study 1 with the exception that in this study the interventions were different. The 72 children who participated in this study were divided into three experimental groups, each receiving one of the three questioning interventions. The Active Processing, the Metacognitive and the Schema method respectively.

The results were similar to those in study 1 with the exception that in study 3 the Metacognitive group was found superior to all others, and the Schema group was found significantly better than the Active Processing.

Conclusion: The results of the three studies join to substantiate the claim that 5-6 years old children can benefit from self-questioning training and that the Metacognitive method of training enhances learning abilities and development more efficiently than the other two methods. This conclusion applies to regular as well as to LD students.

Keywords: Self-questioning, kindergarten, LD, metacognition.