

ABSTRACT

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Vocabulary Instruction And Its Effects On Writing Quality
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The purpose of this study was to compare the quality of writing, specifically in terms of vocabulary use, of students in the 8th grade whose teacher used intensive vocabulary instruction only or intensive vocabulary instruction together with explicit writing instruction. The investigation sought to determine if a deep knowledge of pretaught words would have an effect on those words used in student writing. All students in the study had the same intensive vocabulary instruction, but ne group had the added component of explicit instruction on how to use pretaught words in their writing.

Intact groups, consisting of 87 students in the 8th grade, participated in the study. The treatment period spanned twelve weeks of instruction that was divided into four cycles. Each cycle included three weeks of instruction with a repeated measure administered at the end of each cycle. The repeated measure was essays written to a picture prompt and was used to allow for further interpretation. The *Test of Written Language 3rd edition* (TOWL-3) was the instrument used as both the pretest and the posttest measure.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) allowed for the adjustment of posttest means while linear regression indicated which independent variables most impacted the dependent variables. Pearson's correlations were also employed to compare the students' vocabulary and writing performance.

Results of the analyses indicated significant differences in the pretest to posttest gain in the number of target words learned for both groups of students. There were also significant differences in the pretest to posttest gain in the quality of written compositions for both groups of students. Findings indicated, however, no significant differences in the number of target words learned between groups and no significant differences in the quality of written compositions between groups.

Students in both groups showed initial improvement in the number of target words used in written compositions during the repeated measures. The group receiving explicit writing instruction, however, showed three times the number of students who increased in the continual usage of target words in their essays from the first to the last repeated measure.