



Staples, A., Heying, K. & McLellan, J. (1995) A study of the Effects of Co:Writer Word Prediction Software on the Writing Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities.

A six-week descriptive study incorporating an ABABAB design was conducted to evaluate the effects of Co:Writer word prediction software on the writing achievement of elementary school students with learning disabilities. Eight boys and two girls ranging in age from 7-10 years participated in the study. Students wrote daily for fifteen minutes using either a word processor or word processor with Co:Writer word prediction software. During weeks one, three, and five students wrote using a word processor. During weeks two, four, and six students wrote using Co:Writer. Students wrote in three different writing genres—descriptive, free writing, and narrative. Informal reading inventories, spelling tests, decoding tests, writing samples, and a writing apprehension survey were administered pre and post test to determine gains in reading skill, writing quality and quantity and attitudes toward writing.

Findings:

- Students received significantly higher scores on spelling and general mechanics (usage, punctuation, grammar) when using Co:Writer than when they used a word process or alone.
- There was a significant positive change in decoding skills for initial consonant blends by the end of the study. Students improved their decoding of initial consonant blends by as much as 30% in some cases.
- Student apprehension toward writing was significantly reduced. Students reported that they enjoyed using Co:Writer, felt it helped them with their writing by reducing the mistakes they ordinarily made (spelling, backwards letters) and helped them keep their ideas flowing. This is perhaps the most significant finding of the study because if students feel more able to do a task such as writing, they will persevere more and give up less readily which in turn will positively affect their writing quality.

Booker, B.W., (1995). An Evaluation of the Program & Its Implementation. The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

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