Abstract

Background: This paper analyses performance and the process used in carrying out a common hybrid task, such as, summarizing a text, from a developmental point of view and comparing the differences between students with and without reading difficulties.

Method: 548 students typically developing and 54 students with learning difficulties for reading (grades 5 to 8, ages 11 to 14) read and summarized a text using the triple task technique and then they did a comprehension questionnaire. Attention was paid to the various activities undertaken during this task, their cognitive cost, and the organization of reading and writing activities throughout the exercise, together with performance through evaluation of the summary and the reading comprehension questionnaire.

Results: There were no significant differences in performance or strategies used for the task between students of primary and secondary education. A linear reading-writing process was mostly employed by both, with greater cost and time needed by primary students. Students with reading difficulties did not show any strategies compensating for the greater difficulty and cognitive cost that the task represents for them.

Conclusions: The effective and strategic use of summarizing as a learning tool seems to demand a specific training for students with or without reading difficulties.

Keywords

hybrid task, cognitive cost, reading difficulties, reading comprehension, strategies of summarizing.