

Abstract

Effects of Highlighting and Summarizing on Reading Comprehension

My study tested to see if highlighting has an effect on reading comprehension and if the use of summarization changes that effect. Highlighting is a common reading and study strategy among students (Gurung, Weirdert, & Jeske, 2010). Some studies have dismissed highlighting as a study strategy that improves reading comprehension (Dunlosky, 2013; Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, & Willingham, 2013; Gurung et al., 2010). There are past studies, however, that report highlighting as beneficial (Yue, Storm, Kornell, & Bjork, 2014; Van Blerkom, Van Blerkom, and Bertsch, 2006). The present research addresses this discrepancy. I predicted that highlighting has a positive effect without summarization, but the effect of highlighting with summarization is greater. Summarization and highlighting each have positive effects. This hypothesis is based on the levels of processing theory and testing effect. The conditions I tested are non-highlighting/non-summarizing, highlighting without summarization, summarizing without highlighting, and highlighting with summarization. I used a repeated measures 2x2 within-subjects ANOVA analysis with the SPSS program. The population tested includes 41 students between the ages of 18-25. The results of my study concluded highlighting as effective compared to the control, summarization as not effective compared to the control, and summarizing actually decreasing the effectiveness of highlighting. My research adds to discussion of how students can best utilize written information. It is important to understand how highlighting and summarizing interact to increase reading comprehension and memory retention strategy effectiveness.