

THE EFFECT OF THINKING MAPS® INSTRUCTION
ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FOURTH-GRADE STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study investigated the effects of the Thinking Maps® program, a series of graphic organizers, on the achievement of fourth-grade students as measured by a standardized test. The researcher used a nonequivalent pretest-post test control group design to compare student achievement between fourth-grade students in two elementary schools within a school division. A total of 78 students participated in the study; 41 in two classes in the treatment group and 37 in the two classes in the control group. The treatment group received instruction in the Thinking Maps® program for seven months.

The instrument used to measure the dependent variables (reading, mathematics, and language) was the Stanford Achievement Test (Ninth Edition). Three four-way ANOVAs, with treatment and control, race, gender, and previous achievement level as independent variables were used to compare the students' scaled scores on the post test. Interviews were conducted with the four teachers to collect data on the treatment and control conditions.

The statistical analyses performed on the post test-scaled scores of the fourth-grade students in the study indicated that there was no significant difference between the treatment and control on any of the variables included in this study. While the quantitative analyses could not validate the owner's of Thinking Maps® program claims of improving student achievement as measured by standardized tests, the researcher provides some insight into teachers' and students' reactions to using these graphic organizers as tools for improving classroom instruction.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to two special people in my life, my wife and my mother. They taught me the meaning of trust, acceptance, and patience. For their unselfish gifts of love, I am truly grateful.

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The researcher owes a debt of gratitude to a number of people who contributed to the completion of this study. Foremost among those who assisted the author in remaining on task is my wife, Colleen. Her understanding attitude toward the nature of the process and constant encouragement was instrumental in my ability to keep on track. She never complained about the time I spent on the study nor discouraged me in any way. Without her assistance I could not have persevered. This is another reason I love her so deeply.

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Finally, I cannot say enough about five people who were there from start to finish, Dr. Niles, Dr. Mutter, Dr. Richards, Dr. Dawson, and Dr. Parks. Dr. Niles and Dr. Mutter allowed me to inconvenience them by agreeing to serve on my committee. Both of them provided

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