

With increasing emphasis on mathematics word problems, students in special education need strategy instruction to be successful in this area. Prior research suggests that students benefit from direct instruction, problem-type identification, and the use of schema-based diagrams. Schema-based instruction incorporates all of these components. The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of schema-based instruction in the resource setting with second-grade students with a variety of special education eligibilities. It explores the extent to which students increase the frequency with which they use math word problem strategies during and after schema-based instruction implementation. It also examines the extent to which students increase their ability to correctly solve word problems during and after schema-based instruction. Finally, this study compares students' attitudes toward mathematics problem solving before and after receiving schema-based instruction. The study was conducted in a resource class with seven students on individualized education programs (IEPs). A single-subject research design was used. A control condition was established through general word-problem instruction using the basal mathematics curriculum, and baseline data were obtained. The mathematics word problem schema-based instruction was implemented by the special education teacher in the small group setting. Students received direct instruction for approximately 30 minutes per day, four to five days per week. Instruction was divided into units of three to five lessons each. The control condition was re-established for three days between each unit. Data collection is ongoing, but preliminary results suggest increased problem-solving accuracy and strategy use with the schema-based instruction.