center for the study of adult literacy

Reading-Related Competencies Across Reading Comprehension Assessments

What was the goal of the study?

The researchers wanted to explore whether the effects of reading-related skills vary across different reading comprehension tests and across low, average, and high levels of performance on each test.

Why was the study conducted?

Though previous literacy research has shown that multiple reading-related skills are important for reading comprehension, it is not known if the effects of these skills vary for adult learners across different reading comprehension tests.

What did the study find?

Researchers examined how six reading-related competencies (decoding, oral vocabulary, fluency, listening comprehension, background knowledge, and inferencing) varied for lower, average, and higher performing adult learners across three reading comprehension tests: WJ Passage Comprehension, RAPID Reading Comprehension, and RISE Reading Comprehension. Results indicated that the effect of the different competencies varied for the different tests, but overall, the researchers found that decoding was the most important predictor of performance across all three tests. The researchers also found that the effects varied by performance level.

Who participated in the study?

The participants in this study were 168 adult learners.

How was the study conducted?

The researchers used OLS and quantile regression analyses. OLS is used to estimate the relations between variables and determine which variables are most important to outcomes of interest. Quantile regression is used to understand whether relations between variables change at high and low levels.

How can people use the results?

Practitioners and researchers should be cautious when selecting a reading comprehension test.

Reference

Talwar, A., Greenberg, D., Tighe, E. L., & Li, H. (2021). Examining the reading-related competencies of struggling adult readers: Nuances across reading comprehension assessments and performance levels. *Reading and Writing*, 34(6), 1569-1592. doi:10.1007/s11145-021-10128-7

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