

ABSTRACT

Problem solving is at the core of mathematical understanding. It is the mathematical reasoning that is vital in life. Problem solving reflects the true understanding and application of mathematical content. It is necessary to instill mathematical understanding and reasoning. Some research has been done on tools to assist students in solving word problems, but more must be studied for students to achieve success in problem solving. This qualitative research study documents the observed and reported experiences of 14 low-achieving fifth grade middle school students and the students' ability and attitude in solving mathematical word problems with organizational tactics, such as concept mapping, checklists, reflection sheets, rewording for understanding, reciprocal teaching, and rubrics. Student work was collected along with student-teacher conferences and observations to analyze any difference. This study suggests that organizational techniques assist students to score higher in solving word problems. By the conclusion of the study, all students were performing proficiently in solving word problems. Student attitude was found to become more positive over the duration of the study.