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SELF-QUESTIONING IN WRITING

by

Erin L. Thomas

A Thesis

Submitted to the

Department of Interdisciplinary and Inclusive Education

College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of

Master of Arts in Special Education

at

Rowan University

May 26, 2019

Thesis Advisor: Sydney Kuder, Ph.D.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis paper to my mother, Jill L. Thomas.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Sydney Kuder for his guidance and support throughout this process. With his counsel, I was able to push myself to new limits, gaining more knowledge in the field of Special Education. The lessons learned, and the new knowledge gained, will help me further my education and teaching practice.

I would also like to thank my father, sister, and fiancé for their support throughout the year.

Abstract

Erin L. Thomas
SELF-QUESTIONING IN WRITING
2018-2019
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Master of Arts in Special Education

This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy, using student-generated questions when writing narrative and expository text. Six eighth grade students, diagnosed with a disability, were measured on their achievement in their quality of writing, through a 6-point holistic rubric and a feature checklist, their quantity of writing through the number of words written, and their creation of literal, direct, and evaluative questions. Students participated in a narrative and expository cycle over the duration of four months. In Phase A, of each cycle, students wrote an essay of the specified genre, establishing the baseline. In Phase B, of each cycle, students became immersed in the genre through the reading of various texts of the specified genre. Students created literal, inferential, and evaluative questions based on the genre features. Students answered these questions and used the information to write another essay of the studied genre. The questions created were used to self-regulate, self-assess, and peer-assess the essay written during Phase B. The data suggests that the use of this strategy is effective in displaying students' level of thinking about the studied genre. It also heightens students' knowledge of the studied genres, enabling students to write a more organized and better quality writing piece, incorporating more genre features.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Students within a special education setting require a variety of supports academically, socially, and emotionally. They are placed within a resource setting, based on their individual need for additional support and a modified curriculum. In these resource settings, students diagnosed with learning disabilities may experience difficulties acquiring and demonstrating knowledge of the writing process due to the focus of addressing isolated skills when discrepancies occur in their writings (Jacobs & Fu, 2012). Writing possesses a variety of skills, integrating cognitive, social processing, and comprehensive language skills (Jacobs & Fu, 2012). Due to a disparity in skills, students with learning disabilities may struggle with the writing process of various genres, which includes generating topics, planning and organizing, editing, revising, and transcribing words (Jacobs & Fu, 2012). Consequently, when students are not successfully implementing a variety of strategies in writing and are limited in their knowledge, this often results in a decrease in motivation (Jacobs, & Fu, 2012). Under these circumstances, frustration may arise during the writing process, not allowing students to fully express thoughts and opinions through their written expression. Through the use of self-questioning, it may be possible for students to acquire basic writing skills and greater knowledge of the writing process which would, therefore, permit the growth of students' written expression to occur using more abstract concepts.

Self-questioning is a critical strategy that is used to aid in the comprehension of text. This strategy is an ongoing process that can be used before, during, and after

reading. It utilizes skills, such as activating prior knowledge, understanding text structure and its features, identifying story elements, vocabulary, and the relationship between sentences and paragraphs (Joseph & Ross, 2017). The identification and implementation of these skills allow readers to further explore and comprehend read text, promoting success in school (Joseph & Ross, 2017).

The self-questioning strategy is a process whereby students strategically ask and answer questions while reading, which nurtures and expands students' critical thinking and independence in learning (Corley & Rauscher, 2013). Question generating uses cognitive and metacognitive skills, improving awareness and control of thinking, and resulting in the improvement of students' learning (Corley & Rauscher, 2013). Students develop the ability to manage their learning, through the use of asking questions, and checking their understanding, using the text as a reference (Joseph & Ross, 2017). As a result, self-questioning aids in the improvement of focus, organizational skills within reading, and enables new information to be integrated with prior knowledge to improve comprehension of a read text (Malthouse et al., 2015). Ultimately, this strategy has been proven to be successful in improving self-monitoring and reading comprehension over numerous genres (Lohfink, 2012).

When writing, students use prior knowledge, knowledge of text structures, story elements, relative sentences and paragraphs, and word choice to coherently create a written piece of work over a variety of different writing genres, which may include narrative, biography, non-fiction, research, short story, etc. A limited number of studies have investigated the use of reading strategies to teach writing (Pennington et al., 2017). More precisely, to achieve success in writing, students are to use literal (questions

pertaining to detail, core concepts, key words), inferential (questions that focus on using context clues to think deeply about the text), and evaluative questioning (questions that guide students to form and evolve their perspectives, judgments, and/or positions), as they would when comprehending a text, to guide their writing (Zorfass & Weinbloom, 2014).

Hence, before students begin the writing process, they are immersed in the studied genre, asking and answering literal, inferential, and evaluative questions of the text. These questions focus on the text structure, words used, vocabulary, story elements, etc. of the genre. Students participate in the same writing of the genre, using these questions to guide their writing. For example, when creating a narrative, students would create literal questions, such as: *Can my reader identify the main characters of the story? Can the reader identify the main topic of the story?* Students would create inferential questions such as: *What inferences can the reader make when evaluating the character? What quotations can the reader choose to show the traits of the main character?* Students also create evaluative questions, such as: *What positions can the reader take when reading a narrative? What judgments can the reader make about the antagonist in the story?* After completing the writing process, students evaluate their peers' written work, answering the questions their classmates have created.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of self-questioning, using student-generated questions, when writing across genres. In this study, the components measured will include students' achievement in (a) quality of writing, (b)

quantity of writing, and (c) creation of literal, direct, and evaluative questioning. To measure the quality of writing, students will participate in an unstructured writing of the genre, scored with an holistic rubric, ranging from levels 1 (Inadequate command) to 5 (Superior Command). It will include the following components: content and organization, usage, sentence structure, and mechanics. Additionally, students will be measured on the amount of text features incorporated into their writing piece. Students' quantity of writing will be assessed, measuring students' ability to elaborate through written expression, on their chosen topic, with the use of this technique. Lastly, students will also be measured in (d) their self-monitoring of the writing skills taught within each genre.

Building upon the research of self-questioning in reading instruction, this study is to examine and identify the effective use of this strategy in writing instruction. The following questions will be examined:

1. What are the effects of the use of self-questioning during the writing process on student achievement in writing quality?
2. What are the effects of self-questioning during the writing process on students' achievement in writing quantity?
3. Will students improve in their self-monitoring skills throughout the writing process?
4. Will students' inferential questioning improve with the use of this system?

Significance of the Study

As students generate their own literal, inferential, and evaluative questions pertaining to the studied genre, they are creating a purpose for writing. In effect, student-generated questions are used to regulate and self-monitor understanding of the learned topic or skill. Through the use of these questions, students set goals for themselves and monitor their implementation of writing skills being taught. As a result, student motivation for learning increases and the questioning process allows students to overcome obstacles that may arise before the construction of their writing piece (Teng & Zhang, 2017).

Prior to writing, students determine how they are going to demonstrate the studied skill through answering their own questions. During this process, students are active participants in the scaffolding of the learned skill, with varied levels of teacher support. They become involved in solving their own questions, nurturing and expanding on their metacognitive skills, utilizing higher-order thinking, and gaining ownership of their writing, thereby empowering themselves to be better writers. By allowing students to take an active role in constructing the content of their writing, they are more invested in the quality of their writing, which fosters creativity and a sense of ownership. When student choice is utilized to further instruction, it provides accountability and motivates students to participate in the writing process and its overall presentation (Norris, 2015).

Through the use of the self-questioning strategy, teachers can improve classroom practice and improve students' independence in the writing process. During the implementation of this strategy, teachers focus on students being the major contributors in the scaffolding of writing skills being taught. Teachers have the ability to assess how

students are applying the learned skill by viewing the questions they generate, and they can provide necessary feedback prior to the construction of the writing piece. As the process progresses, a reduction occurs in the teachers' scaffolding role, increasing students' responsibility (Pol et al., 2010). This will empower students to facilitate their own learning, increase their motivation to complete the assignment, and allow them to produce better work (Norris, 2015). The teachers decrease their role in instruction, fostering confidence and encouraging students to become more self-reliant.

Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be defined as follows:

1. **Self-questioning:** A reading comprehension strategy, in which students strategically ask and answer literal, inferential, and evaluative questions before, during, and after reading a text (Corley & Rauscher, 2013; Joseph & Ross, 2017; Taylor et al., 2002).
2. **Cognitive skills:** The skills the brain utilizes for memory, to think, to learn, to reason, and to pay attention (Corley & Rauscher, 2013; Learning Rx, Inc., 2018).
3. **Metacognition skills:** Skills used to think about learning (Corley & Rauscher, 2013; Joseph & Ross, 2017).
4. **Literal Questions:** Questions made before, during, and after the reading process, pertaining to detail, core concepts, and keywords (Zorfass & Weinbloom, 2014).

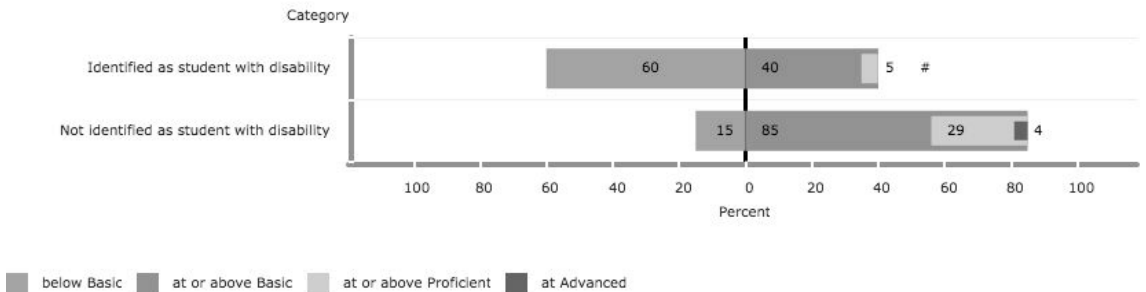
5. **Inferential Questions:** Questions that focus on using context clues to critically think about the text read before, during, and after reading (Zorfass & Weinbloom, 2014).
6. **Evaluative Questions:** Questions that evolve perspectives, judgments, and/or positions about the text read (Zorfass & Weinbloom, 2014).
7. **Holistic Rubric:** "... a single scale with all criteria to be included in the evaluation being considered together." The score is based on the overall judgment of the student's work, matching the piece of work to a single description on the scale (DePaul University, 2018).
8. **Self-Monitor:** Managing learning through self-reflection (Joseph & Ross, 2017).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Writing is a fundamental skill that will be used throughout a child's life. According to the Nation's Report Card (2011), 60% of students with disabilities scored below the basic level in writing, 40% scored at or above in basic writing skills, and 5% scored at or above proficiency (see Figure 1). In comparison, 15% of students without disabilities scored below the basic writing skills, 85% scored at or above in basic writing skills, 29% scored at or above proficiency, and 4% scored with advanced writing skills (NAEP, 2011). Statistics have shown that there is a large discrepancy between the writing levels of students with disabilities compared to students without disabilities. With this mind, remediation is needed to raise the writing levels of students with disabilities, closing the discrepancy gap.

Percentages at or above each achievement level for writing, grade 8 by disability status of student, including those with 504 plan: 2011, National



Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. Some apparent differences between estimates may not be statistically significant.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2011 Writing Assessment.

Figure 1. NAEP 2011 Writing

The writing process focuses on sentence construction skills, strategies for planning, evaluating, monitoring, drafting, and revising a text, and knowledge of the genre and content (Graham et al., 2017). Students, diagnosed with a disability may struggle with one or more of the above components. Students with disabilities, compared to their peers, have less knowledge and less strategies in basic writing skills, due to weakened memory skills, executive functioning, and cognitive monitoring skills, as well as limited academic self-confidence. Students exert more energy in trying to overcome their deficiencies, negatively affecting the length, organization, and quality of students' writing, resulting in lower motivation (Graham et al., 2017).

In an authoritative review, conducted by Graham, Collins, and Rigby-Wills (2017), the authors used meta-analysis techniques to review fifty-three studies, spanning forty years (1973-2013). The chosen studies had to meet the criteria of having participants from grades one through twelve, students with disabilities, including students with average achievement, some aspect of writing was assessed, a sample size larger than nine, the study was presented in English, and contained data. The authors concluded that in every study, students with disabilities performed lower on written tasks than their average achieving peers, which included: the written text, text production skills, knowledge about writing, or motivation to write (Graham et al., 2017). Henceforth, students with disabilities have less knowledge in the writing process, the genres of writing, and the transcribing of their writing piece, resulting in lower quality. With this in mind, students with disabilities are to work to achieve, at a mastery level, these skills in order to be successful in writing, proving to be a challenge.

Writing process

Throughout the writing process, students go through a series of steps in order to create a coherent and organized final writing piece. Students plan their writing piece, create a draft, revise, edit, and publish; however, the process may be different for students with disabilities.

A study conducted by Koutsoftas in 2016, based on the framework of Hayes and Berninger, focused on the production of a writing piece, using the writing process. This writing process includes the following components: proposer, translator, transcriber, and evaluator. The proposer is the subconscious process that generates ideas to write, the translator translates these ideas into language, the transcriber turns the ideas into written form, and the evaluator uses executive functioning and the working memory to monitor the writing piece. Revision is seen as the repetition of this process.

Within this study, Koutsoftas measured the writing performance of 64 subjects, from fourth and sixth grade, on productivity, complexity, accuracy, mechanics, and writing quality. Using two control groups, from grades four through six, Koutsoftas compared the writing results of children with disabilities to children without disabilities to receive his conclusion. The children with learning disabilities were classified under speech/language impairment or specific learning disability. Within their IEP goals, students were striving to achieve written language deficiencies. Students were assessed using the *Group Reading and Diagnostic Evaluation* for their reading ability, focusing on sentence comprehension, paragraph comprehension, and vocabulary. The study was conducted for four sessions within a 10-day period, varied in times, for the writing process. Students were evaluated on their outlines, first drafts, and final copies.

As a result, Koutsoftas found that in planning, children with disabilities generated more ideas, however, children without disabilities were stronger in organizing their thoughts. During the translating stage, for the first draft, children without disabilities produced more sentences, and were more accurate in spelling than students with disabilities. For the final copy, the same findings were found. During the revision stage, all students made the same amount of revisions within their writing. For the quality of writing, the group without disabilities outperformed the children with disabilities.

The purpose of this study was to compare the planning, writing, and revising stages for children with disabilities to children without disabilities. Children with disabilities had fewer story elements, displaying the need for remediation within this area. Another area of focus for children with disabilities is the organization of ideas in the pre-writing stage, as well as, the use of higher vocabulary and proper sentence structure (Koutsoftas, 2016). By viewing the writing needs for children with disabilities, intervention can focus on the specified skills, bettering children's ability to communicate through a written medium.

Narratives and Expository Texts

Students, in their development of skills to write various types of texts, will be required to write narrative and expository texts throughout their schooling. Students with disabilities may struggle with several aspects of the writing process, surrounding the genre type and what this genre consists of. A narrative text often surrounds a personal event or other life experiences. Additionally, narrative texts may also include a fictitious story in which the students create a plot with imaginary characters. In both texts, several

story elements are present, which include characters, setting, plot elements, and a conflict. In comparison, expository writing focuses on the analysis of research or a read text, in which students are to use their reading comprehension skills in correlation with their writing skills to display a conclusion.

In a study conducted by Hall-Mills and Apel in 2012, twelve adolescents with learning disabilities, in grades six through twelve, were evaluated according to their productivity, grammar, and genre-specific elements. Children were chosen for this study because of their deficiency in spoken and/or written language. Their comprehensive language and literacy evaluation, and their report of performance on the state level reading achievement were used as determining measures. Each participant was reading below the grade-level expectation or achieved a standard score below the 16th percentile in the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised*, *Bader Reading and Language Inventory-Fifth Edition*, and the *Test of Written Spelling- Fourth Edition*.

In the study, two writing samples were attained from each student. Within 30 minutes, students constructed a specified genre using paper and pencil. Each writing piece was transcribed into the *Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts*, which was coded and analyzed for microstructure elements (grammar and productivity). To analyze the text for macrostructure elements (genre specific features), the writing pieces were analyzed with a checklist.

The results indicated that students differ in the composition of narratives versus expository writing, showing differences in number of words, complexity of sentence construction, and word choice. The narrative pieces displayed a higher percentage in all

of these areas. In the macrostructure (specific genre elements), students included half of the elements within each genre. It was concluded that within a narrative, students mostly produced sensory details, followed by characters, logical sequence, plot, and context. In the expository writing, students mostly included an introduction, followed by body paragraphs, conclusion, logical sequence, and information that adequately addressed the assignment.

The authors of this study concluded that students show more productivity in grammar and number of words, compared to the expository text. In relation to the specific genre elements, students did not include a large number of the components into their writing for both genres (Hall-Mills & Apel, 2012). As seen, students with disabilities are not retaining knowledge in the text structure associated with each genre, being problematic when writing, effecting their organization of the genre.

Self-Questioning

When reading, students focus on the decoding of words, as well as the comprehension of a text. With the use of self-questioning, students create inferential, literal, and evaluative questions, aiding in the comprehension of the read text. With the use of explicit and direct instruction, students are able to learn comprehensive strategies that will aid in the understanding of a given text, especially students with disabilities (Sencibaugh & Sencibaugh, 2015). Through asking questions, students are able to self-monitor their understanding of a text before, during, and after reading by making predictions, summarizing content, and activating prior knowledge, all while promoting reasoning skills (Wood et al., 2015). Teaching the skills to generate questions may be

especially crucial to promote students participation in the general education classroom (Wood et al., 2015).

Questioning the text is a metacognitive skill in which students actively build on their understanding by asking questions pertaining to their reading. Sencibaugh and Sencibaugh (2015) conducted a study on the use of self-questioning in reading comprehension for middle school students. The researchers examined the comprehension of six eighth-graders to determine whether the self-questioning strategy was beneficial in their comprehension of a narrative text. The *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised Normative Update* was used for the pre- and post-assessment to measure the students reading comprehension. Students were identified as struggling due to their basic scoring on the *Missouri Assessment*. The students participated in the study five days a week for 50 minutes.

Students made an improvement in the pre-and post-test of the word comprehension, passage comprehension, and reading comprehension clusters within the *Woodcock Reading Master Test-Revised Normative Update*. Students improved 10% in their word comprehension, 10% in their passage comprehension, and 10% in their reading comprehension cluster with the use of this strategy (Sencibaugh & Sencibaugh, 2015).

As shown, there is an improvement in the comprehension of a narrative text with the use of self-questioning. In addition to narrative text, students can use the self-questioning strategy with expository text. In a study conducted by Berkely, Marshak, Mastropieri, and Scruggs (2011), fifty-seven students in seventh grade, ranging in

intellectual level, participated in the study. The students' task was to use the self-questioning strategy to aid in the comprehension of a social studies text. Nine of the fifty-seven students received special services for learning disabilities, other health impaired, hearing impairment, or received a 504 plan. All students were in an inclusive setting. Achievement data, student *Scholastic Reading Inventory* scores, state test scores, and student grades in social studies from the pervious year, were used to measure the starting point. To assess the students' progress, a multiple-choice test and an open-ended test were used to analyze the improvement in the content. Students in the self-questioning group scored higher than the students in the non-self-questioning group. Within this study, 63% of the students used the strategies, and 88% identified the strategy as helpful when remembering what they have read (Berkely et al., 2015).

Additionally, in the study conducted by Wood, Browder, and Flynn (2015), three fourth and fifth grade students, who had moderate intellectual disabilities, participated in the self-questioning strategy to analyze a social studies text. Two of the students received the majority of instruction in a self-contained classroom, whereas the other student is mostly in a general education setting. The criterion was for students to be at or below the IQ level of 55 and meet the federal criteria for an intellectual disability. After establishing the baseline, students received the intervention, being measured through the generation of four questions and the answering of six questions about two sections of the text, the number of comprehension questions asked throughout the class, and the number of questions the participants answered to identified as "not in the text," during the generalization probes (Wood et al., 2015).

This study resulted in the three students increasing their generation of questions throughout the lesson, as well as an increase of participation in the classroom. The authors concluded that students learned about the content, as well as obtained knowledge of the skill. With the improvement in questioning, students were limited to *who*, *what*, and *where* questions, struggling with questions such as *why* and *how* (Wood et al., 2015).

With the systematic and explicit teaching of the self-questioning strategy, in different contents, students are able to become more independent in their reading comprehension, improving in their learning. Students have also shown more improvement in their independence, increasing motivation and self-efficacy.

Scaffolding the Self-Questioning Strategy

Students with deficiencies in reading comprehension need explicit and systematic instruction, providing them with strategies to learn how to comprehend text. Students, who learn to self-question with teacher-provided questions, will most likely not generalize the skill, hindering the development of this skill on their own (Rouse et al., 2014). With the use of scaffolding, or fading, students will be provided with instructional support until they are able to complete the skill independently. As a result, students will become more independent, promoting self-reliance, when comprehending text, as well as writing their own version of the genre.

Rouse, Alber-Morgan, Cullen, and Sawyer (2014) conducted a study on fifth graders with disabilities, examining the effects of a self-questioning intervention with a prompt fading procedure on reading comprehension, using expository text. Using two fifth graders, both receiving services due to a deficiency in reading comprehension, data was collected two to three days a week during 30-minute intervals. Students were

assessed on their ability to answer eight-multiple choice questions at the end of each intervention session. The questions consisted of identifying the main idea, vocabulary, sequencing, overall concept, author's purpose, cause and effect, and conclusion. Both students went through several phases during the intervention. First, the baseline was established, followed by the embedded questions training phase, the embedded questions phase, the self-questioning training phase, the self-questioning phase, the self-questioning fading phase, and the maintenance/generalization phase (Rouse et al., 2014).

This study resulted in the improvement of student reading comprehension over the duration of the study. Using the systematic prompt fading, students became more self-sufficient in their reading comprehension, and maintained the skill six weeks after the last intervention (Rouse et al., 2014). As shown, through the use of the fading prompt of self-questioning, students were able to generalize the skill, using it independently to comprehend a text. With the generalization of this skill, students have become more self-reliant in their learning.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation promotes independence within the classroom. Students display tendencies to be goal-directed, have strategic behaviors, and show high levels of self-awareness, self-reflection, and adaptation in their thinking (Berkeley & Larsen, 2018).

Berkeley and Larsen (2018) conducted a literature review, using thirty years of research. Within the studies, participants were from grades four through twelve, and were identified as having a learning disability. The interventions reviewed contained strategies for reading comprehension and at least one self-regulating component. Students also needed to independently use a self-regulate strategy. The review included eighteen case

studies. Five studies investigated narrative text, four investigated both narrative and expository, and nine investigated expository text. Fourteen studies focused on cognitive modeling and goal setting, fifteen studies focused on the self-monitoring of strategy use and comprehension, and nine studies focused on reinforcement strategy use through feedback and attribution training (Berkley & Larsen, 2018).

The results of the review indicated that students with learning disabilities improved their comprehension of a read text. The students also internalized and generalized the strategies over time, resulting in a long-lasting impact on student performance (Berkley & Larsen, 2018).

Additionally, Glaser and Brunstein (2007) conducted a study extending the self-regulate strategy development model to increase the effectiveness of writing strategies in fourth grade writing. Using a control group and an experimental group, students received instruction in how to self-regulate during the writing process. The goal was for students to maintain the strategy and transfer the learned skill to untrained tasks, extending the study by Hayes and Flower in 1980. Students participated in guided and independent practice to acquire the skill. Specifically, students self-assessed their writing performance, set learning goals, and self-monitor the strategy use during prewriting and redrafting phases of the writing process. To test this, the investigators used a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up design (Glaser & Brunstein, 2007).

In conclusion, the students who used the self-regulation strategy in unison with the taught strategies were better able to use their knowledge when planning and revising a story. They also improved in completeness and quality of their stories. The students who

also received the self-regulation instruction were able to maintain this strategy in the follow-up activity (Glaser & Brunstein, 2007).

Summary

In summary, it has been shown that students with disabilities struggle in all areas of the writing process. Students specifically struggle with incorporating genre features within their writing, struggle with the mechanics of a writing piece, and are not as productive as students without disabilities. As a result, intervention within these areas is needed to address the deficiency gap. Research has shown the benefits of using the self-questioning strategy to benefit students with disabilities, who struggle in reading and writing. With the use of the intervention, students can become more cognizant of the text features within specific genres, adding the features within their writing. Students will also further develop their writing skills, providing a more coherent and organized writing piece. By using a scaffolding model, students will learn to generalize the skill, becoming more independent in the writing of various genres. The more independence grown by the students will promote self-efficacy within student learning. Promoting self-regulation will provide a means for students to become more motivated to complete a writing task, improving their experience in writing the specific genre.

The purpose of the current study was to provide students with a planning and drafting technique, as well as a self-monitored and peer monitored system to use during the writing process. Additionally, students will be, in unison, learning about the features of the specific genre, aiding in their comprehension of the read text. The self-questioning

strategy, applied to writing, will provide a means to the improvement of an overall writing performance of students with disabilities.

Chapter 3:

Methodology

Setting

School. This study was conducted in a middle school, located in a suburban New Jersey. The middle school houses grades five through eight. The school district instructs children from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade, who live in two neighboring towns. The district has five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school, providing education to a total of 5,507 students (New Jersey School Performance Report, 2018). According to the New Jersey School Performance Report (2018), provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, the district, in the 2017-2018 school year, consisted of 66.2% of White students, 12.9% of Hispanic students, 7.2% of Black or African American students, 9.5% of Asian students, 0.1% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, and 4% of two or more race students. Out of this population, 49.8% are female and 50.2% are male. This population consisted of 5.4% of students who are economically disadvantaged, 14.3% of students who are diagnosed with disabilities, 0.8% of students who are English Language Learners, 0.2% of homeless students, and 0.1% of students who are in foster care. In this population, 93.6% of students speak English at home, 1.8% of students speak Spanish, 1.0% of students speak Chinese, and 3.7% of students speak other languages (New Jersey School Performance Report, 2018).

Classroom. This study was conducted in a classroom containing seven student computers, one teacher laptop, and an ELMO projector. The study was conducted in the students' Writer's Workshop class, during period 2, from 9:00am to 9:42am. This class is

a special education class, hosting six eighth grade male students with disabilities, which include Attention Deficit Disorder and Specific Learning Disabilities. The students were placed in a pullout setting due to their need of additional support, and a slower and modified curriculum in writing.

Participants

The participants within the study consist of six eighth grade male students who have been diagnosed with a disability. These individuals are placed in a pullout special education classroom for writing as a means to provide additional support in writing various genres. General information about the students involved in the proposed study, as well as their classification under the New Jersey Department of Education-Special Education Department is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Student General Information

Student General Information		
Student	Grade	Classification
A	8	Auditory Impaired
B	8	Attention Deficit Disorder
C	8	Attention Deficit Disorder
D	8	Specific Learning Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematical Computation
E	8	Attention Deficit Disorder
F	8	Specific Learning Disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematical Computation

As displayed, the six participants are enrolled as eighth graders, and are all classified under the New Jersey Department of Education. Student A is classified as Auditory Impaired. Student B, Student C, and Student E are classified as having Attention Deficit Disorder. Student D and Student F are classified as having a Specific Learning Disability in Mathematical Computation. The students were placed into a pullout resource environment due to discrepancies in writing.

Materials

Essay prompt. Students, to gain baseline and intervention data, were instructed to complete narrative and expository essay prompts. Students' writing prompts and rubrics were distributed through a Google Doc on Google Classroom, and on paper. The prompt

was read aloud to the students. The students recorded their responses on a Google Doc given in Google Classroom. The students used a Chrome book, supplied by the school, to type their responses.

Holistic rubrics. Using a holistic rubric, adopted from the *New Jersey Scoring Rubric for Essay Writing- 6 points*, students were assessed on narrative and expository writing. Students are measured in the following components: content and organization, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics (see Table 2). The subcomponents in content and organization include: introduction and concluding paragraphs, focus and logical progression of ideas, and details. The usage subcomponents include: focus on tense and verb agreement, and word choice. Students will be scored on a 6-point scale, which includes: Inadequate Command, Limited Command, Partial Command, Adequate Command, Strong Command, and Superior Command (see Appendix A: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Narrative Writing: Grade 8, and Appendix B: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Expository Writing: Grade 8). The scoring of the rubric can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Scoring for the Holistic Scoring Rubric for Narrative Writing

Scoring for the Holistic Scoring Rubric for Narrative Writing: Grade 8 and the Holistic Scoring Rubric for Expository Writing: Grade 8						
	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
<u>Content and Organization</u>	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points
Opening and Closing						
Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points
Details/ Textual Evidence and Additional Details	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points
<u>Usage</u>	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points
Tense and subject/verb agreement						
Word choice						
<u>Sentence Construction</u>	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points
<u>Mechanics</u>	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points	6 points

Question matrix. Students referenced the Question Matrix to aid in the creation of literal (shallow), inferential (deep), and evaluative (profound) questions (see Appendix C: Question Matrix). Students will be assessed on the type of questions they have

independently generated. The graphic organizer used to record the questions was available on paper, as well as on a Google Doc attached to Google Classroom, which students accessed through the Chrome books supplied by the school.

Feature checklist. Students were assessed on the text structure incorporated into their narrative and expository writing piece, using a checklist adapted from Halls-Mill and Apel (2012). Each component is designated a point. If the component is viewed within the writing piece, the student will receive a point (See Table 3 and 4).

Table 3

Narrative Checklist

Narrative Checklist		
Points	Element	Description
1 point	Characters	Characters are included and described well, effectively developed and complex.
1 point	Plot	Engaging plot with rising action, conflict, suspense, climax, falling action, and resolution.
1 point	Sensory Details	Incorporates/describes emotions, gestures, movement, and expressions using senses.
1 point	Dialogue	Dialogue is included to move the plot along, display character traits, and/or describe the setting.
1 point	Logical Sequence	All parts are sequenced logically; no problems with organization or clarity. Vivid and unique beginning that gets readers' attention. Ideas linked explicitly with effective and logical transitions, and appropriate cohesive ties. Ending concludes and extends the story.
1 point	Context	Setting clearly described, use of figurative language, descriptive words/phrases to enhance style and tone. Uses interesting, imaginative language that engages the readers.

Table 4

Expository Checklist

Expository Checklist		
Points	Element	Description
1 point	Assignment	Addressed and sufficiently developed all parts of the assignment with equal weight. Structure is identifiable, appropriate for the assignment, and well-developed.
1 point	Logical Sequence	All ideas are sequenced logically; no problems with organization or clarity.
1 point	Introduction	Introduction includes a hook, background information (bridge), and a thesis statement. Thesis statement stated clearly, original, creative, and captures purpose of the assignment.
1 point	Body	Body paragraphs contain a claim, textual evidence, and a warrant (explains the meaning, the context of the data, and the connection between the claim and the data). Supporting details and evidence is offered to support the thesis statement.
1 point	Conclusion	Conclusion restates the thesis in a different way, provides a summary of the main points, and ended with original ideas that extend the topic, leaving the reader with something to think about.

Additionally, students were measured on the number of words within their writing, assessing their productivity.

Research Design

This experimental research was conducted twice, once for a narrative text, and another for an expository text. The narrative cycle was conducted first, due to students' familiarity with the genre. During Phase A, students wrote a narrative piece to establish

the baseline. After this phase, students were immersed into the narrative genre by reading varied texts written by previous students. Students were prompted to use prior knowledge of dialogue, and “show, not tell” (an even balance of thoughts, description, action, and dialogue), to create questions that will help them apply information from mini-lessons previously conducted and findings during the immersion process into their writing. During this process, students were prompted to create literal, inferential, and evaluative questions, utilizing the question matrix. During Phase B, students completed a narrative writing prompt, utilizing their questions to base their writing. After the construction, students shared their writing pieces and their questions with a peer, whom provided constructive feedback. Students were given additional time to make revisions, based on the feedback given.

In the second cycle, the students used the same process for an expository text. During Phase A, the students wrote an expository essay to establish the baseline. Phase A was followed by the immersion of the genre, focusing on the construction of expository text. Students were prompted to identify the components within the introduction, body paragraphs, and the conclusion. For the introduction, students were prompted to identify the hook, background information, and the thesis. Students were prompted to identify the claim, data, and warrant of each body paragraph. For the conclusion, students were prompted to identify the restated thesis, summary of the main points, and the lingering thought. During this process, students were prompted to create literal, inferential, and evaluative questions. After the intervention was conducted, the students participated in Phase B. During Phase B, students were provided with a writing prompt to complete independently, using their student-generated questions to guide their writing. After the

construction of the essay, students shared their writing piece and questions with their peer to receive constructive feedback. Students were given additional time to make revisions, based on the feedback given.

Procedure

The study was conducted from January 2019 to April 2019. For the narrative cycle, students completed two narrative writing pieces. In Phase A, the students had three class periods (42 minutes each) to write a narrative with a focus on kindness. The students received the prompt electronically and on paper. The prompt stated, “Many stories embed the theme of kindness through characters’ actions, thoughts, and dialogue. Write a narrative with the theme of kindness.” The directions were read aloud to the students. The students also received the rubric to help in their planning. The students wrote their responses on a Google Doc available on Google Classroom. No further instruction or help was given regarding the writing of the essays.

For the following three days, students read various narratives written by previous students. Students discussed the construction of the paragraphs, the use of dialogue, and the effects of “showing, not telling,” using an equal balance of thoughts, actions, descriptions, and dialogue. These concepts were mini-lessons previously taught. The students were given a paper and electronic version of the graphic organizer to record questions about the narrative process. It was expressed in the directions that at least four questions were to be created and these questions will be used as a reference for the construction of their own writing piece.

In Phase B, the students were given the directions and the rubric of the second writing prompt electronically and on paper. The prompt stated, “Using information from previously learned mini-lessons and the use of your questions, write a personal narrative.” The students were read the direction aloud. On the first day, students were directed to answer the questions they created. Students were given two days to answer their questions. Students, for the following two weeks, completed the assignment. After two weeks, the students met with a peer. The peer answered the proposed questions, pertaining to their partner’s essay. Students were given two days to complete this. The following two days, the students were given time to make revisions to their papers, using proposed feedback.

In the second cycle, the expository text cycle, students had three class periods (42 minutes each) to complete the assignment for Phase A. The students read the two poems, “A Dream Deferred,” and “As I Grew Older,” by Langston Hughes. They compared the two poems in an expository writing piece. The students were given the prompt: “You have read ‘A Dream Deferred’ and ‘As I Grew Older.’ Think about the similarities and differences in how the author develops the theme (theme is the central idea of the poems) in each text. Write an essay in which you identify a theme from each text and analyze how each theme is developed. Be sure to include specific details from both poems.” A paper copy and an electronic copy, attached as a Google Doc on Google Classroom, contained the poems and directions. The poems and directions were also read aloud to the students. The students were given the rubric in advance to help plan their writing piece. Students wrote their responses on a Google Doc assigned on Google Classroom. No further instruction or help was given regarding the writing of the essay.

For the following two days, students read analyzes written by previous students. Students discussed the construction of the paragraphs, identifying the hook, background information, and thesis within the introduction, the claim, data, and warrant in the body paragraphs, and the restated thesis, summary of the main points, and the lingering thought in the conclusion. Students were supplied with a paper and electronic version of the graphic organizer to record questions about the analyses read. Through the directions, students were instructed to create three questions pertaining to the introduction, five questions pertaining to the body paragraphs, and three questions pertaining to the conclusion. Students were also instructed to utilize their created questions as a reference for the construction of their own writing piece.

In Phase B, the students were given an essay prompt electronically attached as a Google Doc in Google Classroom and on paper. The students received the rubric in advance. The prompt stated, “After reading the short story, ‘Thank You, Ma’am,’ write an essay analyzing the theme. Please use evidence to support your answer.” The students were read the story and the directions aloud. On the third day, students were directed to answer the questions they created. Students were given two days to answer their questions. Students, for the following two weeks, completed the assignment. After two weeks, the students met with a peer. The peer answered the proposed questions, pertaining to their partner’s essay. Students were given two days to complete this. The following two days, the students were given time to make revisions to their paper, based on the proposed feedback.

Measurement Procedures

The students completed the essays, their questions, their answers to the questions, and peer evaluations using a Google Document on Google Classroom. Spelling errors, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization were not auto-corrected for the students.

The student-generated questions were recorded on a Google Doc. The questions were evaluated, using the question matrix, for the type of question created (see Appendix C: Question Matrix). The questions types include: literal (shallow), inferential (deep), or evaluative (profound). Students were assessed on the type of questions they have independently generated.

To measure the quality of writing, the students' essays were assessed using a 6-point holistic rubric. Students were measured on the components of content and organization, which includes the subcomponents, introduction and concluding paragraphs, focus and logical progression of ideas, and details. Students were also measured on the component of usage, with a focus on tense and verb agreement, and word choice. Additionally, students were measured on the components of sentence construction, and mechanics. Students were scored, using a 6-point scale, on their inadequate command, limited command, partial command, adequate command, strong command, or their superior command in each component. Adding the scores of each component, and dividing by six established an overall performance score.

Each essay genre contained various features. The teacher assessed each essay for genre features incorporated into their writing piece. In the narrative texts, the teacher assessed the students' work for the following components: characters, plot, sensory

details, dialogue, logical sequence, and context. The teacher assessed the students' essays for the following components in the expository writing pieces: assignment, logical sequence, introduction, body, and conclusion.

For the quantity of writing, each writing piece was transferred to a Microsoft Word document as a means to identify the word count, using the word count feature included in the program.

Data Analysis

The amount of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions were recorded and the percentage was found for how many questions each student created. The essays were assessed for individual components, essay parts, an overall performance score, and for quantity through the number of words written. The baseline and intervention scores were compared. Tables and graphs were used to visually analyze the data.

Chapter 4

Results

The effectiveness of a self-questioning strategy, used before, during, and after writing, was assessed. The study focused on students' creation of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions, and the quality and quantity of writing. To establish a baseline, the students independently wrote a narrative and expository essay. After the baseline was established, the students were immersed into the studied genre. The students generated literal, inferential, and evaluative questions, to guide their writing. The students received a new writing prompt (the intervention) and answered questions they generated pertaining to their new writing piece. Afterwards, the students wrote a new narrative and expository writing piece, using the questions as a guide. These questions were also used to provide peer feedback.

To assess the effectiveness of the strategy, the types of student-generated questions were assessed. The baseline and intervention writing pieces were assessed for essay components and overall performance using a holistic 6-point rubric, and a checklist for genre features. The baseline and intervention essays were also assessed for the quantity of writing by counting the number of words in each writing piece.

Narrative Writing

Questioning. After being immersed in the genre, the students created questions, utilizing the Question Matrix, to guide their writing. The types of student-generated questions were evaluated. The types include: literal (shallow) questions, inferential (deep) questions, and evaluative (profound) questions. The questions each student created and

how they were assessed are shown in Table 5. An analysis of the types of questions generated appears in Table 6 and in Figure 2.

Table 5

Narrative Student-Generated Questions

Student	Question	Question Type		
		Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
A	How can an author hook the reader?		X	
	What details can be used to show the story?	X		
	What dialogue can be used to show the story?	X		
	How will the theme be shown?			X
B	How will the author “show, not tell” details?			X
	What imagery can be used?	X		
	How can onomatopoeias be used?		X	
	How can the theme be shown?		X	
C	What characters are used?	X		
	How can the mountain be explained?		X	
	What imagery is used?	X		
	How can feelings be used?		X	
D	How can dialogue move the story along?		X	
	What events are going to be explained?	X		
	How might the reader be hooked?			X
	What thoughts can be used?	X		
E	What is the setting?	X		
	Who are the characters?	X		
	What dialogue can be used?	X		
	How can dialogue be used?		X	
F	Why might word choice be important?			X
	How can voice be shown?		X	
	How can figurative language be used?		X	
	How can the theme be shown?		X	

Table 6

Overall Narrative Student-Generated Questions

Student	Types of Questions		
	Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
A	2	1	1
B	1	2	1
C	2	2	0
D	2	1	1
E	3	1	0
F	0	3	1

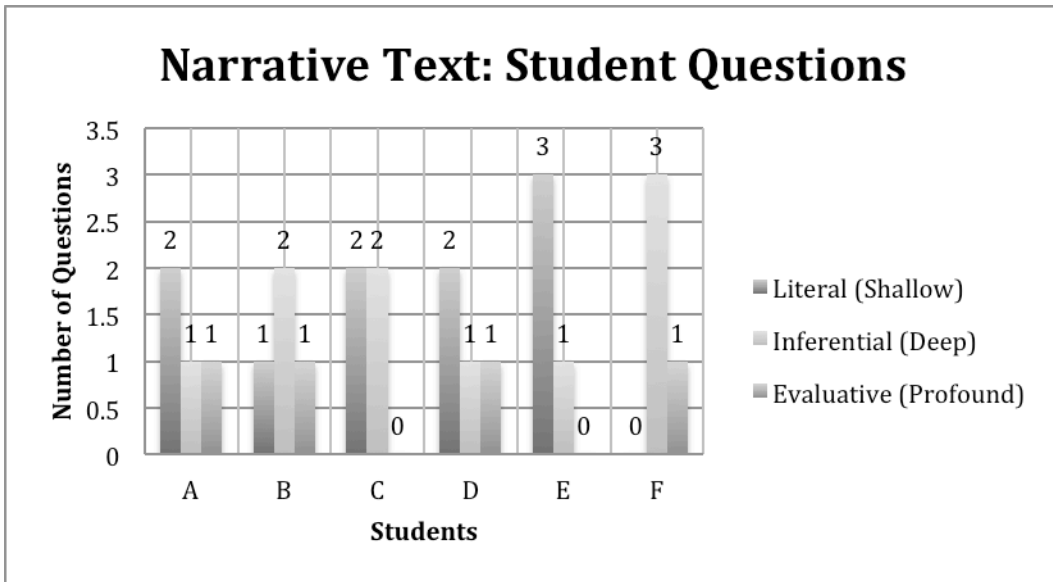


Figure 2. Narrative Text: Student Questions

As shown, Student A created 2 literal questions (50%), 1 inferential question (25%), and 1 evaluative question (25%). Student B created 1 literal question (25%), 2 inferential questions (50%), and 1 evaluative question (25%). Student C created 2 literal questions (50%), 2 inferential questions (50%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student D created 2 literal questions (50%), 1 inferential question (25%), and 1 evaluative question (25%). Student E created 3 literal questions (75%), 1 inferential question (25%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student F created 0 literal questions (0%), 3 inferential questions (75%), and 1 profound question (25%). The students created, in total, 10 out of 24 literal or shallow questions, equaling to 42%, 10 out of 24 inferential or deep questions, equaling to 42%, and 4 out of 24 evaluative or profound questions, equaling to 16%.

Narrative quality. The quality of each narrative was assessed using a 6-point holistic rubric (See Appendix A: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Narrative Writing: Grade 8). The students were assessed on the component of content and organization, with the subcomponents of an opening and a closing, focus and logical progression of ideas, and details, the component of usage, with the subcomponents of tense and subject/verb agreement, and word choice, the component of sentence construction, and the component of mechanics. The score in each component was added together and divided by six to gain an overall score for the writing assignment. The results of this analysis appear in Table 7. The results for each student are shown in Figures 3 through 8.

Table 7

Results for the Narrative Holistic Rubric

Student	Baseline							Intervention						
	Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics		Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics	
A	3	2	2	2	3	3		5	5	5	4	4	4	
B	2	3.5	4	3.5	4	3		5	4	4	4	4	4	
C	2	2.5	3	2	2	2		3	2.5	3	2	2	2	
D	4	4	4	2.5	4	4		5	4	4	5	5	4	
E	2	2.5	3	2	2	2		4	2.5	3	4	3	3	
F	3	2	3	2	2	3		4	5	4	4.5	3.5	3	

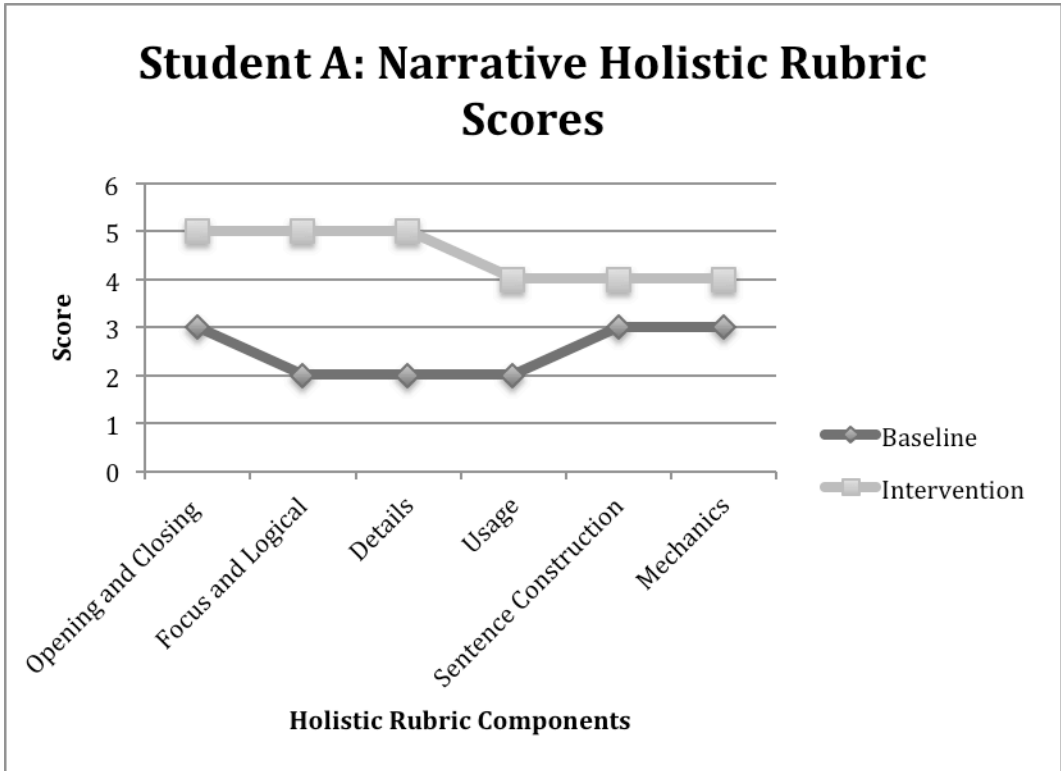


Figure 3. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student A

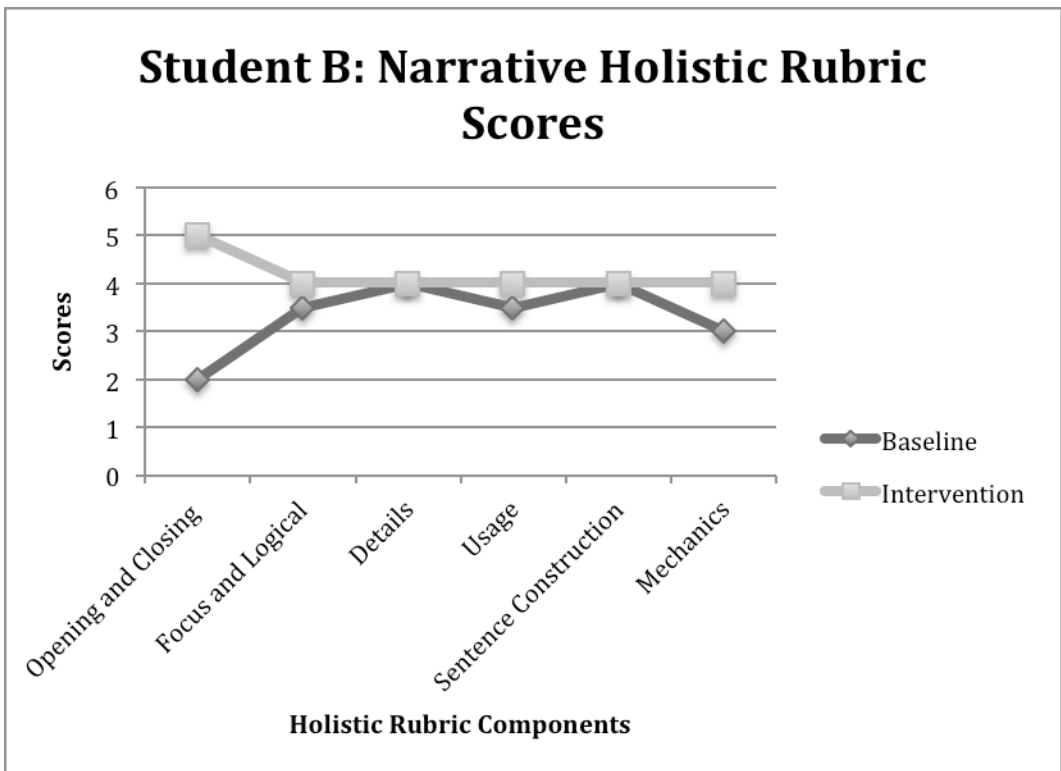


Figure 4. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student B

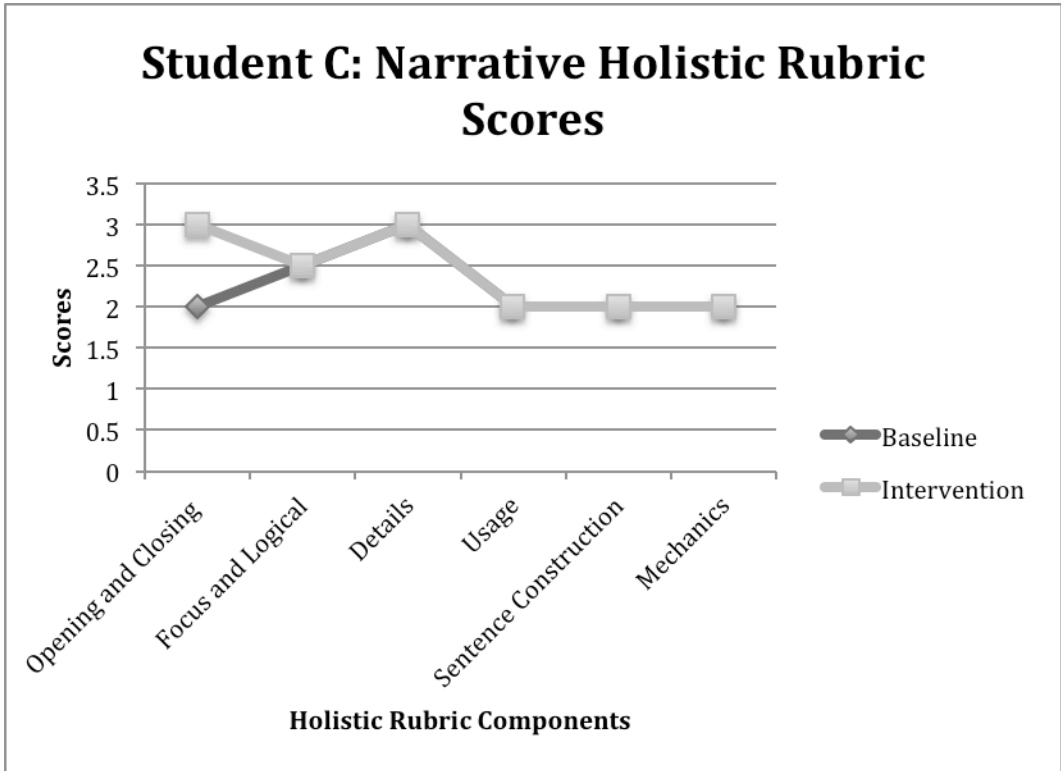


Figure 5. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student C

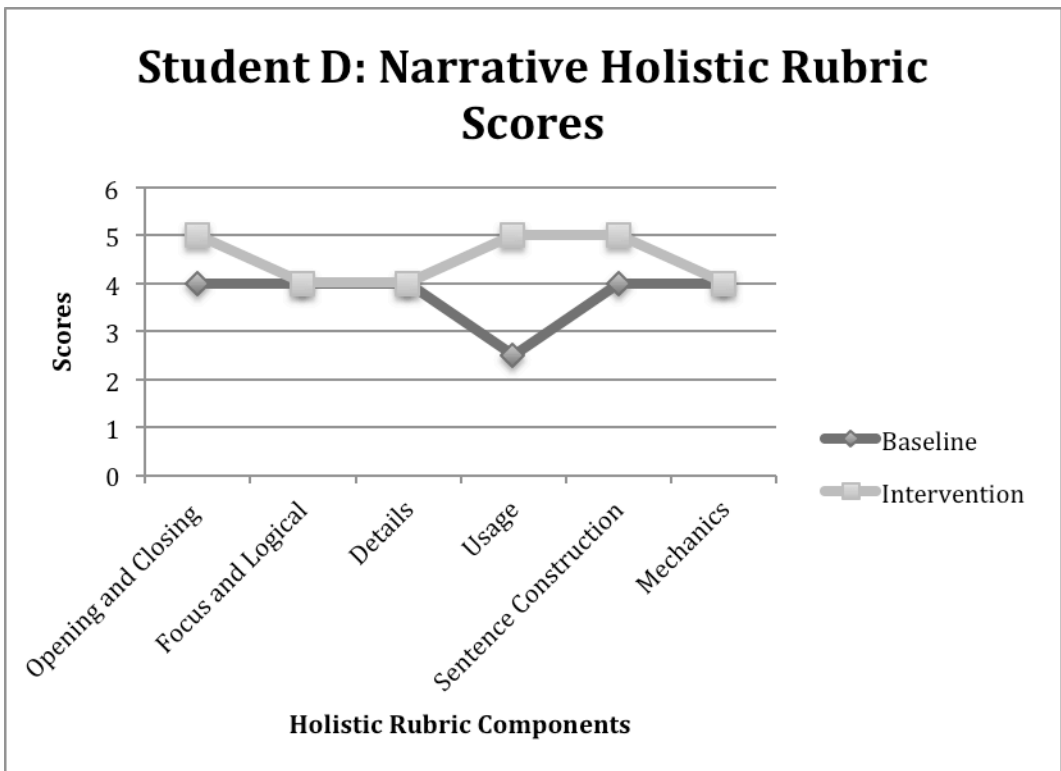


Figure 6. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student D

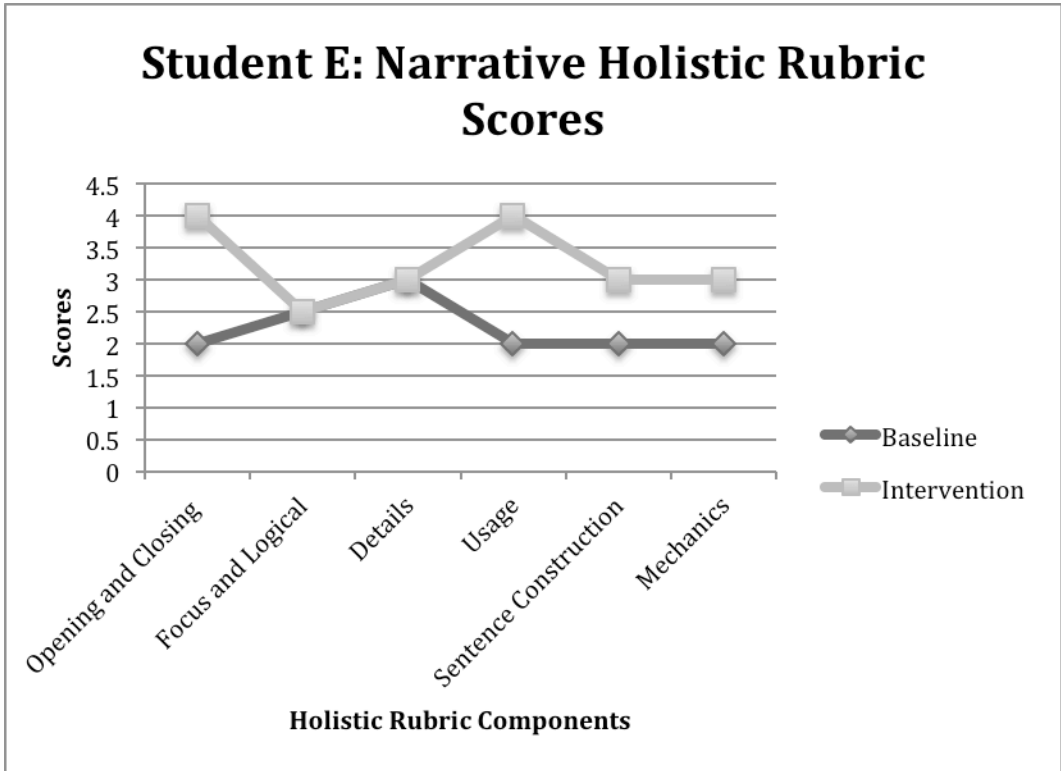


Figure 7. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student E

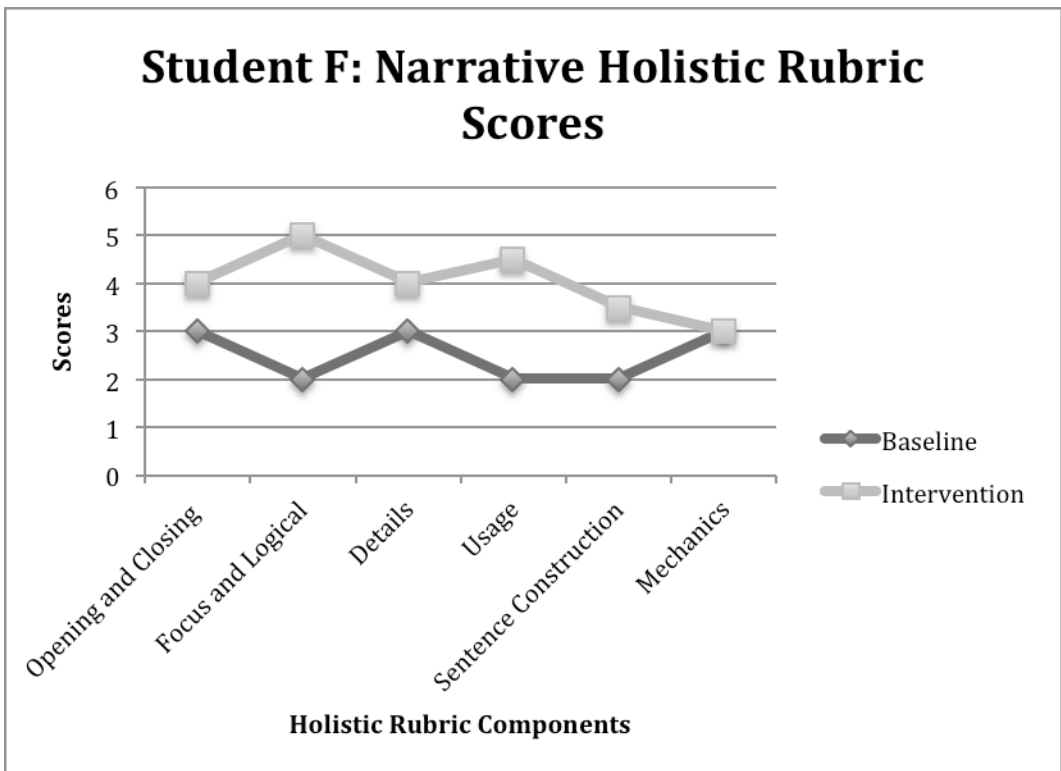


Figure 8. Narrative Holistic Rubric for Student F

As shown, the majority of students showed improvement in the various components on the holistic rubric. Student A scored, in the opening and closing component, a 3 for the baseline phase and a 5 for the intervention phase, showing an improvement in 2 points. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, improving 3 points. In the details component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing a 3-point improvement. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a 2-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student A scored a 3 in baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1 point. For the mechanics component, Student A scored a 3 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student B, in the opening and closing component, scored a 2 in the baseline phase and improved 3-points, receiving a 5 for the intervention phase. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student B scored a 3.5 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, improving .5 points. For the details component, he scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the usage component, he scored a 3.5 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a .5-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student B scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the baseline phase, Student B scored a 3 and improved to a 4 in the mechanics component, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student C received, in the opening and closing component, a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, improving 1 point. For the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student C scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 2.5 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the details component, he scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. Additionally, in the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 2 in the intervention phase, displaying no improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student C scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 2 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. Student C scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 2 in the intervention phase for the mechanics component, displaying no improvement.

Student D, in the opening and closing component, scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing a 1-point improvement. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student D scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the details component, he scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the usage component, he scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, displaying a 2.5-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student D scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1 point. In the baseline phase, Student D scored a 4 in the mechanics component and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying no improvement.

Student E in the opening and closing component, scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, improving 2 points. For the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student E scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 2.5 in

the intervention phase, showing no improvement. For the details component, he scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the usage component, Student E scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a 2-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student E scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1 point. In the baseline phase, Student E scored a 2 for the mechanics component and a 3 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student F, in the opening and closing component, scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, improving 1 point. For the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student F scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, improving 3 points. For the details component, he scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing a 1-point improvement. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4.5 in the intervention phase, displaying a 2.5-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student F scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1.5 points. In the baseline phase, Student F scored a 3 and remained at a 3 in the mechanics component, displaying no improvement.

Overall, the majority of students improved in each component outlined by the rubric. The differences between the baseline and the intervention scores, as well as the average improvement rate in each section, are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Narrative Rubric Differences

Student	Components					
	Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage: Tense and subject/ verb agreement Word choice	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
A	2	3	3	2	2	1
B	3	.5	0	.5	0	1
C	1	0	0	0	0	0
D	1	0	0	2.5	1	0
E	2	0	0	2	1	1
F	1	3	1	2.5	1.5	0
Average Overall Difference	1.6	1.08	.67	1.58	.91	.5

As shown, there was an average improvement in each section of the narrative holistic rubric. The most improvement, with an average growth of 1.6 points, was in the opening and closing component. This was followed by an average improvement of 1.58 points in the usage component, a 1.08-point growth in the focus and logical progression of ideas component, a .91 point growth in the sentence construction component, a .67 point growth in the details component, and .5 point growth in the mechanics component.

The overall scores for the baseline and intervention essays are shown in Figure 4.

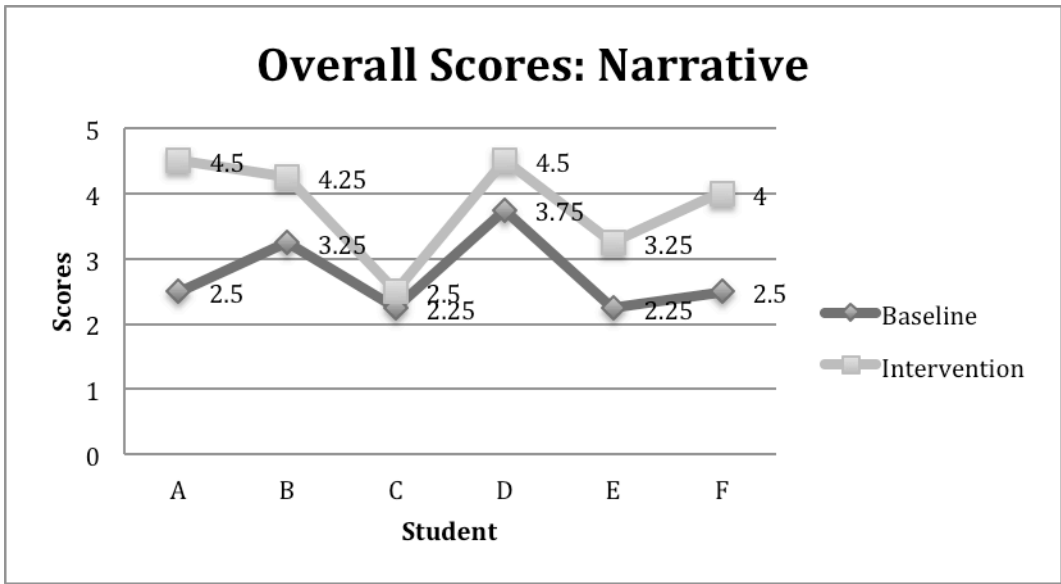


Figure 9. Narrative Overall Holistic Rubric Scores

As seen, students improved from their baseline essay to their intervention essay. The scores were averaged to the nearest quarter. Student A received an overall score of a 2.5 in the baseline phase. He improved to a 4.5 in the intervention phase, growing 2 points. Student B received a 3.25 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4.25 in the intervention phase, growing 1 point. Student C received a 2.25 in the baseline phase and a 2.5 in the intervention phase, growing .25 points. Student D received a 3.75 in the baseline phase and a 4.5 in the intervention phase, growing .75 points. Student E began with a 2.25 in the baseline phase and improved to a 3.25 in the intervention phase, growing 1 point. Student F began with a 2.5 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4 in the intervention phase, growing a total of 1.5 points. Overall, the students improved 72% from the baseline phase to the intervention phase.

The number of features each student incorporated into the baseline and intervention narrative essays is displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Narrative Checklist Results

Student		Component						Overall Score
		Characters	Plot	Sensory Details	Dialogue	Logical Sequence	Context	
A	Baseline	0	0	1/2	1	0	0	1.5
	Intervention	1	1	1	1/2	1	1	5.5
B	Baseline	1/2	1	1	1	1	0	4.5
	Intervention	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
C	Baseline	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	Intervention	1/2	1	1	0	1	0	3.5
D	Baseline	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
	Intervention	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
E	Baseline	1	1	0	1	0	1	4
	Intervention	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
F	Baseline	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Intervention	1	1	1	0	1	1	5

The baseline and intervention essays were scored using a feature checklist, including the following components: characters, plot, sensory details, dialogue, logical sequence, and content. Student A, for the baseline incorporated 1.5 narrative features. He

did not incorporate well-developed characters, or a well-developed plot, receiving a 0 in both features. He also did not write in logical sequence, or developed the context within his story, receiving a 0 in these features. Student A added minimal sensory details, receiving a .5 for this feature. He successfully incorporated dialogue, receiving a point for this feature. In the intervention phase, Student A, incorporated well-developed characters, a well-developed plot, wrote in a logical sequence, developed the context, and incorporated sensory details, receiving 1 point for each feature. He did not incorporate dialogue that moved the story effectively, receiving a .5 for this feature. Overall, Student A added an additional 4 features, growing from a 1.5 to a 5.5.

Student B, in the baseline phase, did not develop all of his characters, receiving a .5 in the feature. Student B incorporated a well-developed plot, added sensory details and dialogue, and wrote in a logical sequence, receiving 1 point for each feature. Student B did not develop the context well, receiving 0 points for this feature. In the intervention phase, Student B received a point for the following features: including well-developed characters and plot, incorporated sensory details and dialogue, and wrote in a logical sequence with well-developed context. For the baseline phase, Student B incorporated 4.5 feature points and improved to incorporating 6 feature points in the intervention phase, adding an additional 1.5 features.

Student C, for the baseline phase, did not develop his characters or plot, did not add sensory details, and did not develop the context, receiving 0 points for each feature. Student C incorporated dialogue and had a logical sequence, receiving a point for each feature. In the intervention phase, Student C received a .5 for partially developing his characters. He incorporated a well-developed plot, and sensory details. Student C did not

effectively use dialogue within his story, nor developed the context, receiving 0 points for these features. Student C also did not write in a logical sequence, receiving 0 points for this feature. Overall, Student C received an overall score of a 2 in the baseline and added an additional 1.5 narrative features, resulting in a 3.5 for the intervention phase.

Student D, for the baseline phase, scored a feature point for well developing his characters and plot, adding dialogue, and writing in a logical sequence. Student D did not receive points for adding sensory details, nor developing the context. In the intervention phase, Student D incorporated well-developed characters and plot, added sensory details and dialogue, wrote in a logical sequence, and had a well-developed overall context. Overall, for the baseline, Student D used 4 features in the baseline narrative and added an additional 2 features, to receive an overall score of a 6 in the intervention phase.

Student E, in the baseline phase, incorporated well-developed characters, as well as a well-developed plot, incorporated dialogue, and had developed his context, receiving a point for each feature. Student E, in the baseline, did not incorporate sensory details, and did not follow a logical sequence, receiving 0 points for these features. In the intervention stage, Student E successfully incorporated well-developed characters and plot, added sensory details and dialogue, wrote in a logical sequence, and developed his context. Student E initially incorporated 4 narrative features in his baseline, and added an additional 2 features, improving to incorporating of 6 narrative features in the intervention phase.

In the baseline phase, Student F incorporated well-developed characters and a well-developed plot in his narrative, receiving a point for each feature. Student F did not

incorporate sensory details, dialogue, did not write in a logical sequence, and did not have well-developed context, receiving 0 points for each feature. Student F in the intervention phase, incorporated well-developed characters, a well-developed plot, sensory details, wrote in a logical sequence, and had well-developed context, receiving a point in each features. He did not successfully add dialogue that effectively moves the story along, receiving 0 points for this feature. Overall, Student F, in the baseline incorporated 2 narrative features and used an additional 3 in the intervention phase, improving to incorporating 5 narrative features.

Table 10 shows the additional number of features added in the intervention essay, compared to the baseline. The majority of students incorporated more sensory details, totaling to a 4.5 growth. This was followed by a 4-point growth in developing the context, a 3-point growth in writing in a logical sequence, and a 2-point growth in developing the characters and plot. There was a 1.5-point decrease in the addition of dialogue with the use of this strategy. In comparison to the baseline phase, there was an average 76% improvement in incorporating narrative features in the intervention phase.

Table 10

Narrative Features Growth

Student	Component						Overall Growth
	Characters	Plot	Sensory Details	Dialogue	Logical Sequence	Context	
A	1	1	1/2	-1/2	1	1	4
B	1/2	0	0	0	0	1	1.5
C	1/2	1	1	-1	0	0	1.5
D	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
E	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
F	0	0	1	0	1	1	3

Quantity of narrative writing. The quantity of each writing piece was assessed, using the Microsoft Word Count feature. The writing pieces were transferred from a Google Document into the Microsoft Word software to obtain a reliable word count. The number of words in the baseline and intervention essays was compared in Table 11 and Figure 10.

Table 11

Word Count: Narrative

Number of Words			
Name	Text Type	Baseline/ Intervention	Number of Words per Writing Piece
Student A	Narrative	Baseline	384
Student A	Narrative	Intervention	663
Student B	Narrative	Baseline	326
Student B	Narrative	Intervention	466
Student C	Narrative	Baseline	173
Student C	Narrative	Intervention	352
Student D	Narrative	Baseline	479
Student D	Narrative	Intervention	550
Student E	Narrative	Baseline	184
Student E	Narrative	Intervention	563
Student F	Narrative	Baseline	230
Student F	Narrative	Intervention	451

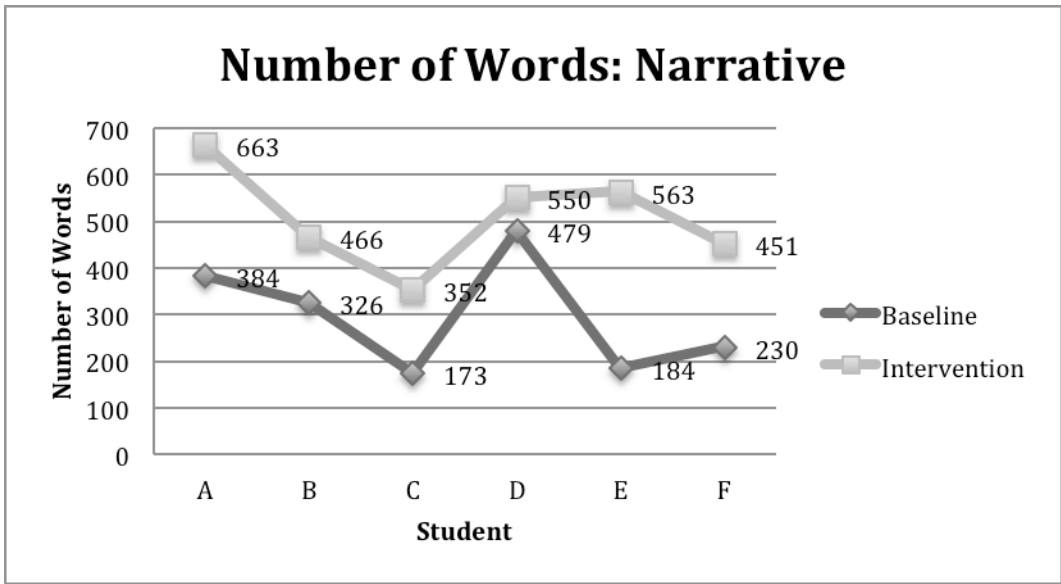


Figure 10. Word Count: Narrative

As shown, the students improved in the number of words they used from the baseline to the intervention. Student A, in the baseline phase, wrote 384 words and improved to 663 words in the intervention phase. He wrote an additional 279 words, improving 72%. Student B wrote 326 words in the baseline phase and 466 words in the intervention phase. He added an additional 140 words, improving 43%. Student C wrote 173 words in the baseline phase and improved 103% by adding an additional 179 words, totaling to 352 words in the intervention phase. Student D wrote 479 words in the baseline phase and improved 15% by adding an additional 71 words, totaling to 550 words in the intervention phase. Student E, in the baseline phase, wrote 184 words and improved 205% by adding 379 words in the intervention phase, totaling to 563 words. Student F wrote 230 words in the baseline phase and improved 96% by adding an additional 221 words, writing a total of 451 words in the intervention phase. Overall,

there was an 89% improvement in the quantity of writing between the intervention and the baseline phases in the narrative cycle.

Expository Writing

Questioning. After being immersed in the genre, the students created questions, using the Questions Matrix, to guide their expository writing. Each question was evaluated for type, which includes: literal (shallow) questions, inferential (deep) questions, and evaluative (profound) questions. The questions each student created and how they were assessed is shown in Table 12. An analysis of the types of questions generated appears in Table 13 and in Figure 11.

Table 12

Expository Student-Generated Questions

Student	Question	Question Type		
		Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
A	How does the background information help me?		X	
	How does the hook make people want to keep reading?		X	
	Why is the thesis arguable?	X		
	Does the author have enough data for their body paragraphs?	X		
	Does the warrant (or the explanation) make sense?	X		
	Is there a connection between the data and the claim?	X		
	Does the claim make sense?	X		
	Are there enough details?	X		
	Was there a restated thesis?	X		
	Does the summary show information from the body paragraphs?	X		
	Is there enough evidence from the summary?	X		
B	Is there enough information for the reader to understand the story?	X		
	Is there enough action in the hook?	X		
	Is there a good hook?			
	Do the claims make sense?	X		
	Does the data support the claim?	X		
	Is the data straight from the text?	X		
	Does the warrant connect to the data and claim?	X		
	Does the warrant make sense?	X		
	Does the summary summarize the main points?	X		

Table 12 (continued)

Student	Question	Question Type		
		Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
B	Is the restated thesis showing a message?	X		
	Does the conclusion have a lasting thought that makes the reader think?	X		
C	Does the introduction make sense?	X		
	How can the hook be more appealing?		X	
	Does the hook contain enough action?	X		
	Is the claim appealing?	X		
	Is there strong enough data that supports the claim?	X		
	Does the warrant connect with the data and claim?	X		
	Is the reasoning good?	X		
	Is there enough evidence for the summary?	X		
	Does the summary make sense?	X		
	Is the wording good?	X		
	Is there right punctuation?	X		
D	How can the hook become more appealing?		X	
	Is there enough background information?	X		
	Is the thesis arguable?	X		
	How should the content be explained?			X
	Are the claim and data connected?	X		
	Does my data have an effect on the story?	X		
	What is the affect?	X		
	Is the thesis restated where it is conveying a message?	X		
	Is the author sharing a though of the main idea to their full power?	X		
Does the conclusion make sense?	X			

Table 12 (continued)

Student	Question	Question Type		
		Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
D	Does the conclusion flow?	X		
E	How can the hook be more appealing?		X	
	Is there enough action in the hook?	X		
	Is there enough background information?	X		
	Does the data support the claim?	X		
	Is the claim arguable?	X		
	Was the context of the quote explained?	X		
	Was the connection between the data and the claim explained?	X		
	What was the effect on the story?	X		
	Does the conclusion make a strong enough summary?	X		
	Is the conclusion long enough?	X		
	Is the restated thesis strong, which shows the same message?	X		
F	Why was the characteristic of the character?	X		
	Why did the character act this way?		X	
	What was the motivation for the character?	X		
	Is the claim good enough to support the body paragraph?	X		
	Can the claim be improved?	X		
	What statements could have improved the claim?	X		
	How does the main character affect their relations?		X	
	Is the ending statement good?	X		
	What should be fixed?	X		
	Does the conclusion flow?	X		
	Does the conclusion match the claim?	X		

Table 13

Overall Expository Student-Generated Questions

Student	Types of Questions		
	Literal (Shallow)	Inferential (Deep)	Evaluative (Profound)
A	9	2	0
B	11	0	0
C	10	1	0
D	9	1	1
E	10	1	0
F	9	2	0

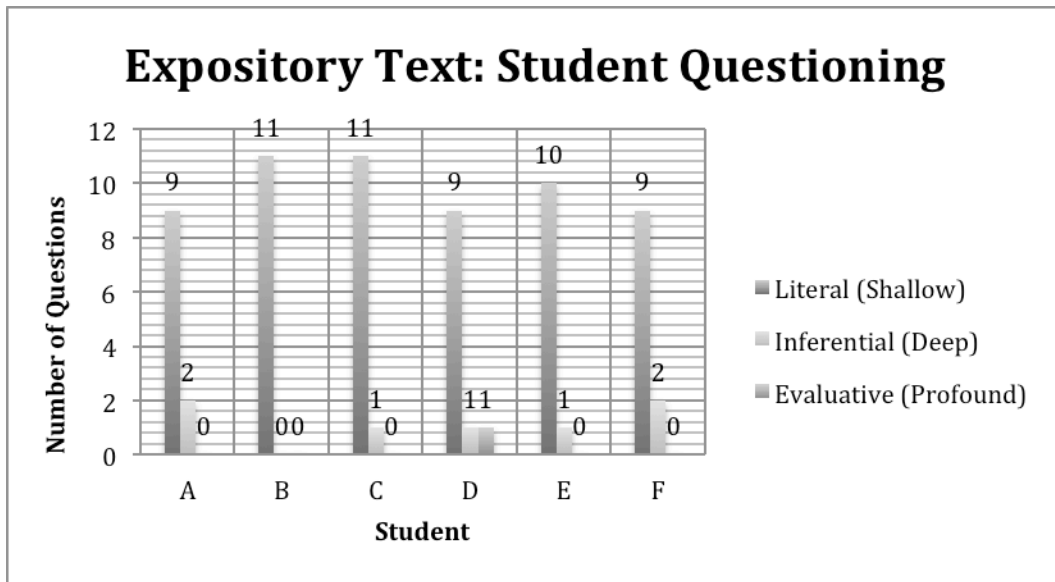


Figure 11. Expository Text: Student Questions

As shown, Student A created 9 literal questions (82%), 2 inferential question (18%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student B created 11 literal questions (100%), 0 inferential questions (0%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student C created 10 literal questions (91%), 1 inferential questions (9%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student D created 9 literal questions (82%), 1 inferential question (9%), and 1 evaluative question (9%). Student E created 10 literal questions (91%), 1 inferential question (9%), and 0 evaluative questions (0%). Student F created 9 literal questions (82%), 2 inferential questions (18%), and 0 evaluative question (0%). In total, the students created 66 questions. 58 questions, out of the 66, were literal questions, equaling to 88%. Students created 7 inferential questions, out of the 66 questions, equaling to 11%. Students created 1 evaluative question, out of 66 questions, equaling to 1%.

Expository quality. The quality of each expository piece was assessed using a 6-point holistic rubric (See Appendix B: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Expository Writing: Grade 8). The students were assessed on the component of content and organization, with the subcomponents of an opening and a closing, focus and logical progression of ideas, and details, the component of usage, focusing on the subcomponents of tense and subject/verb agreement and word choice, the component of sentence construction, and the component of mechanics. The score in each component was added together and divided by six to gain an overall score for the writing assignment. The results of this analysis appear in Table 14. The results for each student are shown in Figures 12 through 17.

Table 14

Results for the Expository Holistic Rubric

Student	Baseline							Intervention						
	Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics		Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage	Sentence Construction	Mechanics	
A	3	2.5	2	2	3	3		6	2.5	4	3	4	4	
B	2.5	4	4	2.5	2	2		5	4	3	3.5	4	4	
C	2	2	1	2	2	2		4	3.5	3	2	2	3	
D	5	3.5	4	2	2	4		5	3.5	4	3.5	4	4	
E	3	2.5	3	2	2	3		5	4	3	3.5	4	4	
F	3	2	2	3	3	3		5	3.5	4	4	4	4	

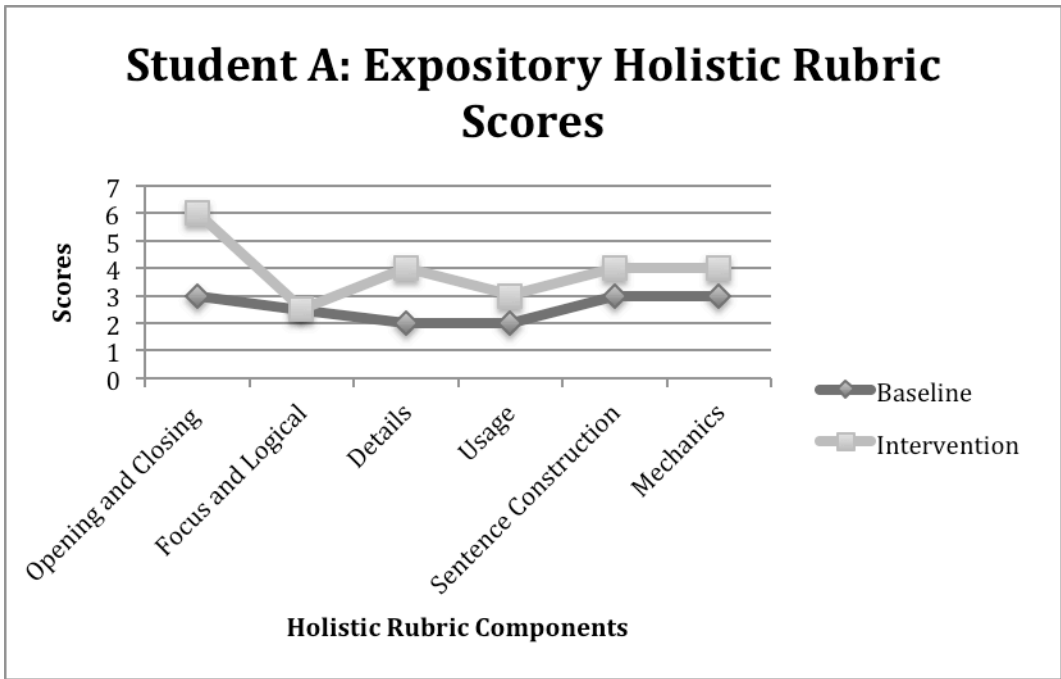


Figure 12. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student A

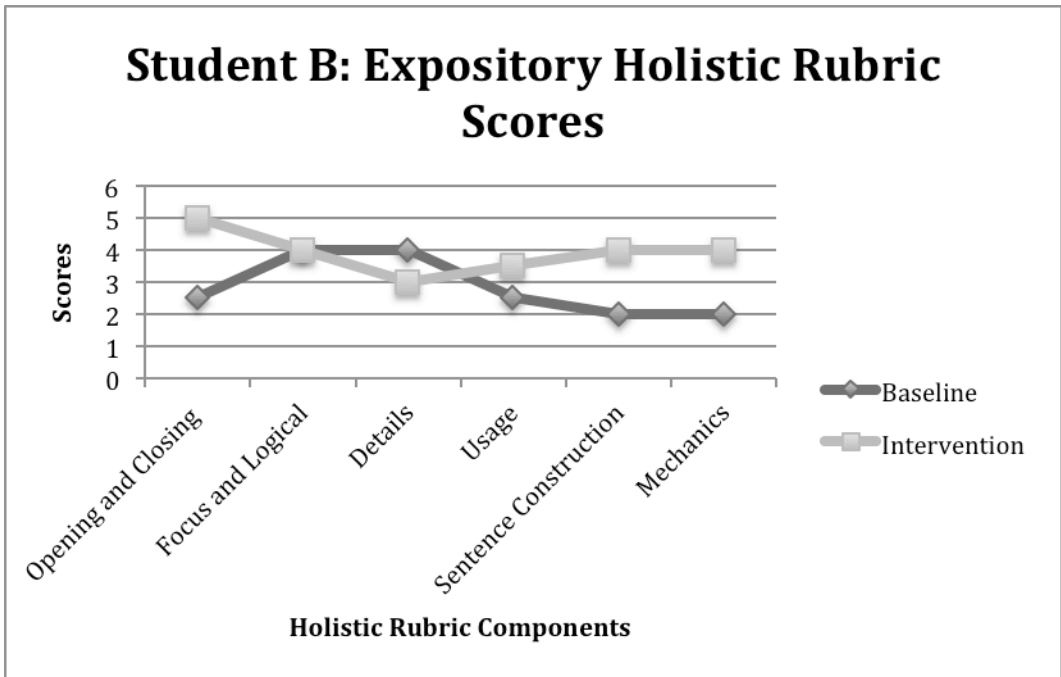


Figure 13. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student B

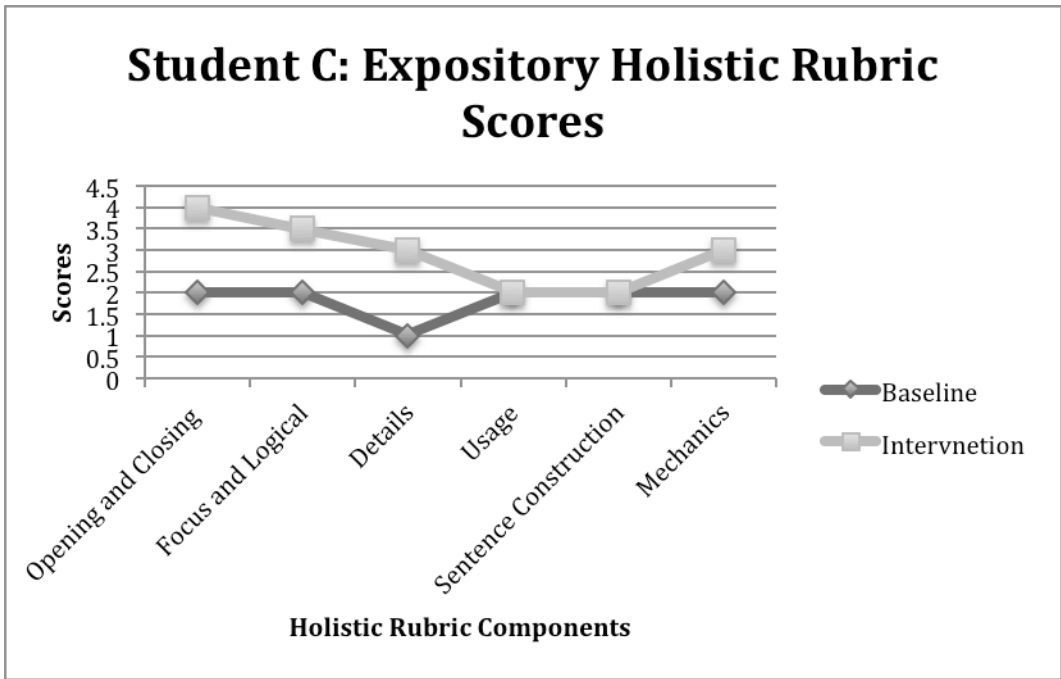


Figure 14. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student C

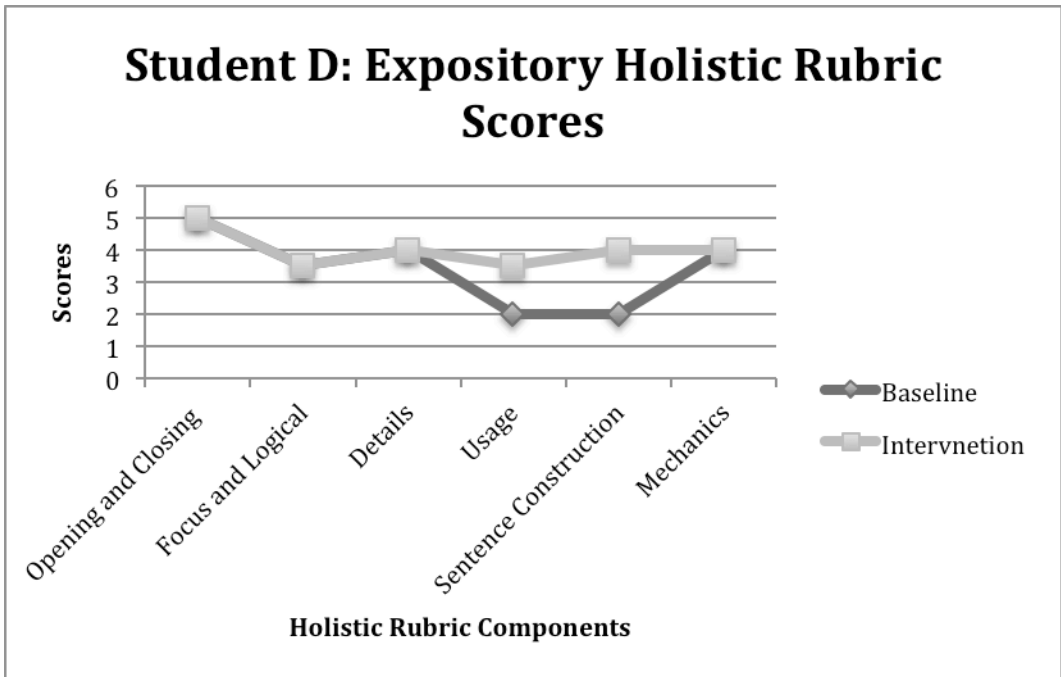


Figure 15. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student D

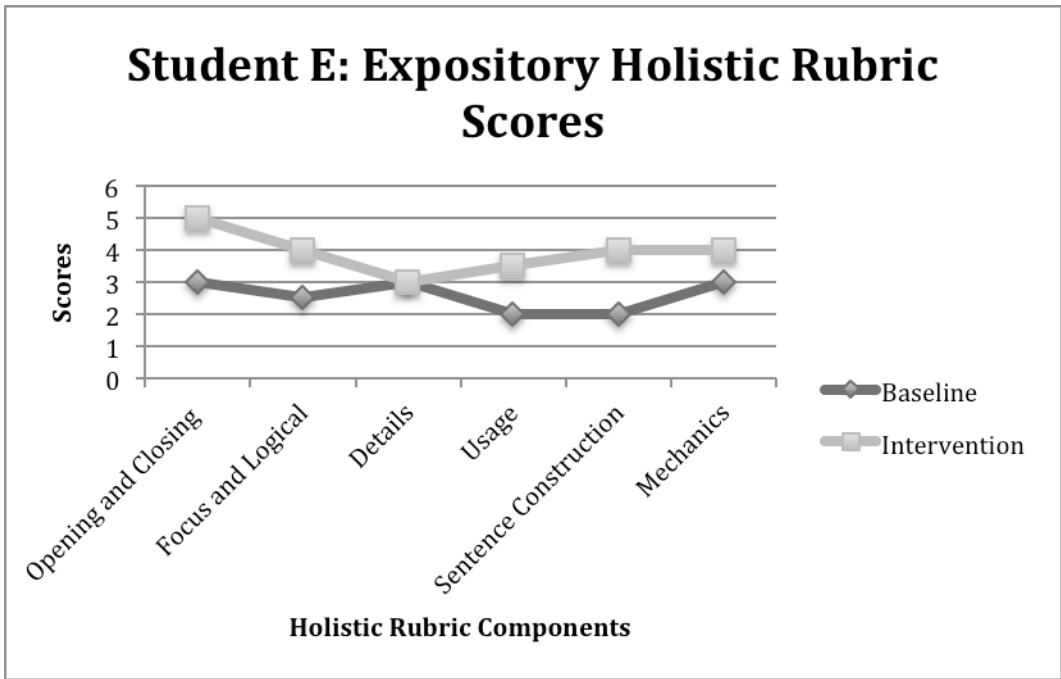


Figure 16. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student E

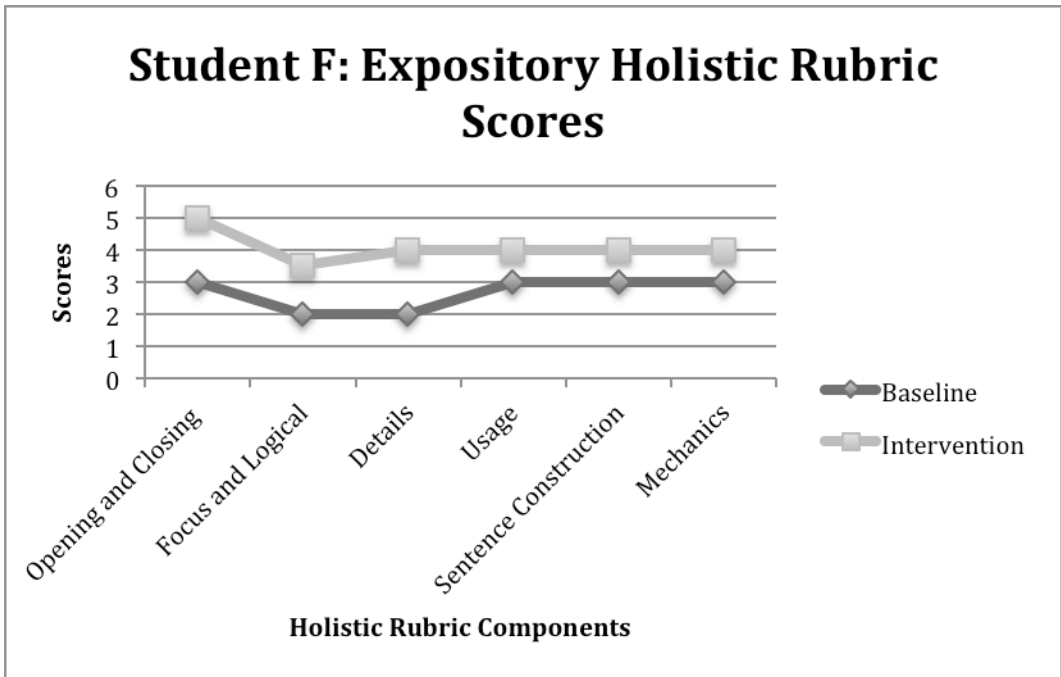


Figure 17. Expository Holistic Scoring for Student F

As shown, the majority of students made improvement in the various components of the rubric. Student A scored, in the opening and closing component, a 3 in the baseline phase and a 6 in the intervention phase, showing a 3-point improvement. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student A scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 2.5 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the details component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student A scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1 point. In the baseline phase, Student A scored a 3 and improved to a 4 in the mechanics component, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student B, in the opening and closing component, scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2.5 points. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, he scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no improvement. In the details component, he scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing a 1-point decrease. In the usage component, he scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student B scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing a 1-point improvement. In the baseline phase, Student B scored a 2 and improved to a 4 in the mechanics component, displaying a 2-point improvement.

Student C, in the opening and closing component, scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1.5 points. In the details component, he scored a 1 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing a 2-point improvement. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 2 in the intervention phase, displaying no movement. In the sentence construction component, Student C scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 2 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the baseline phase, Student C scored a 2 and improved to a 3 in the intervention phase for the mechanics component, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student D, in the opening and closing component, scored a 5 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, Student D scored a 3.5 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the details component, he scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1.5-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student D scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. For the mechanics component, Student D scored a 4 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing no movement.

Student E, in the opening and closing component, scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, he scored a 2.5 in the baseline phase and a 4 in

the intervention phase, showing a 1.5-point improvement. In the details component, Student E scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, showing no movement. In the usage component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1.5-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student E scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. In the baseline phase, Student E scored a 3 and improved to a 4 in the mechanics component, displaying a 1-point improvement.

Student F, in the opening and closing component, scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 5 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 2 points. In the focus and logical progression of ideas component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 3.5 in the intervention phase, improving 1.5 points. In the details component, he scored a 2 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing a 2-point improvement. In the usage component, he scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement. In the sentence construction component, Student F scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, showing an improvement of 1 point. Student F, for the mechanics component, scored a 3 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, displaying a 1-point improvement.

The majority of students improved in each component outlined by the rubric. The differences between the baseline and the intervention scores, as well as the average improvement rate in each section, are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Expository Rubric Differences

Student	Components					
	Opening and Closing	Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Details	Usage: Tense and subject/verb agreement Word choice	Sentence Construction	Mechanics
A	3	0	2	1	1	1
B	2.5	0	-1	1	2	2
C	2	1.5	2	0	0	1
D	0	0	0	1.5	2	0
E	2	1.5	0	1.5	2	1
F	2	1.5	2	1	1	1
Average Overall Difference	1.91	.75	.83	1.0	1.33	1.0

As shown, there was an average improvement in each section of the expository holistic rubric. The most improvement, with an average growth of 1.91 points, was in the opening and closing. This was followed by an improvement of 1.33-point growth in the sentence construction component, a 1.0-point growth in the usage component, a 1.0-point growth in the mechanics component, a .83-point growth in the details component, and a .75-point growth in the focus and logical progression of ideas component.

As seen, students dramatically improved from their baseline to their intervention essay. The overall expository scores for the baseline and intervention essays are shown in Figure 18.

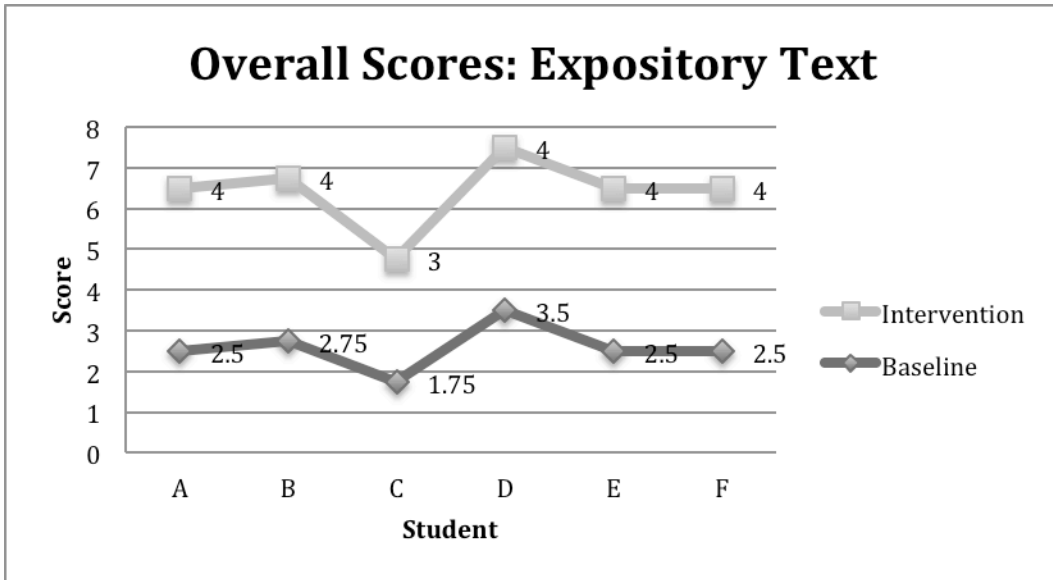


Figure 18. Expository Overall Holistic Rubric Scores

The scores were rounded to the nearest quarter. Student A received an overall score of a 2.5 in the baseline phase, improving to a 4 in the intervention phase, growing 1.5 points. Student B received a 2.75 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4 in the intervention phase, growing 1.25 points. Student C received a 1.75 in the baseline phase and a 3 in the intervention phase, growing 1.25 points. Student D received a 3.5 in the baseline phase and a 4 in the intervention phase, growing .5 points. Student E began with a 2.5 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4 in the intervention phase, growing 1.5

points. Student F began with a 2.5 in the baseline phase and improved to a 4 in the intervention phase, growing a total of 1.5 points. Overall, the students improved 54% from the baseline phase to the intervention phase.

The students also improved in the addition of expository text features. The results of the features incorporated into the baseline and intervention essays are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Expository Checklist Results

Student		Component					Overall Score
		Assignment	Logical Sequence	Introduction	Body Paragraphs	Conclusion	
A	Baseline	0	1/2	1	1/2	1	3
	Intervention	1	1	1	1	1	5
B	Baseline	0	1/2	1	1/2	0	2
	Intervention	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	4
C	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intervention	1/2	0	1	1/2	1	3
D	Baseline	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	4
	Intervention	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	4
E	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intervention	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	4
F	Baseline	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Intervention	1	1/2	1	1	1	4.5

The baseline and intervention essays were scored using a feature checklist, including the following components: assignment, logical sequence, introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Student A, for the baseline, included 3 expository features within his essay. He incorporated some logical sequence and a claim, data, and an explanation in his body paragraphs, receiving a .5 for both features. Student A included an introduction and a conclusion, receiving a point for each feature. The student did not overall address all parts of the assignment with equal weight, not receiving a point for the feature. In the intervention, Student A sufficiently addressed all parts of the assignment, wrote in logical sequence, incorporated an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion, receiving points for all the features. Overall, the student improved from incorporating 3 expository features in the baseline phase, to incorporating 5 features in the intervention phase, adding 2 more features.

Student B, for the baseline, did not sufficiently address the assignment and he did not incorporate a conclusion. Henceforth, he did not receive a point for these features. Student B did not consistently write in logical sequence and did not consistently incorporate a claim, data, and an explanation in his body paragraphs, receiving .5 feature points. He did incorporate an introduction, receiving 1 feature point. In the intervention, Student B wrote in a logical sequence, incorporated an introduction, and a conclusion, receiving 1 feature point. Student B somewhat addressed the assignment and incorporated a claim, data, and explanation for some of his body paragraphs, receiving .5 of a feature point. Overall, Student B incorporated 2 features in his baseline essay and improved by adding an additional 2 in his intervention essay, totaling to 4 feature points.

Student C, in the baseline phase, did not address the assignment, did not write in logical sequence, did not include an introduction, body paragraphs, or a conclusion, receiving 0 feature points. In the intervention phase, Student C incorporated an introduction and a conclusion, receiving a feature point for each. Student C somewhat addressed all parts of the assignment, and in some paragraphs, incorporated a claim, data, and an explanation, receiving .5 feature points. He did not write in logical sequence, therefore, he did not receive a feature point. Overall, Student C incorporated 0 expository features in the baseline phase and improved to incorporating 3 features in the intervention phase, showing a 3-feature improvement.

Student D, for the baseline phase, wrote in logical sequence, and incorporated an introduction and conclusion, receiving 1 feature point for each. Student D somewhat addressed all parts of the assignment and in some body paragraphs, incorporated a claim, data, and an explanation, receiving .5 feature points. In the intervention essay, the student displayed the same feature points, showing no movement.

Student E, in the baseline, did not address the parts of the assignment, did not write in logical sequence, and did not incorporate an introduction, body paragraphs, or conclusion, receiving no feature points. In the intervention, Student E wrote in logical sequence, and added an introduction and conclusion, receiving a feature point for each. Student E somewhat addressed all parts of the assignment and in most of his body paragraphs, incorporated a claim, data, and an explanation, receiving .5 feature points for each. Overall, Student E improved from using 0 features in the baseline phase for the baseline to using 4 features within the intervention phase, showing a 4-point growth.

Student F, in the baseline, did not sufficiently address the parts of the assignment, did not write in logical sequence, and did not incorporate an introduction, body paragraphs, or a conclusion. Therefore, he did not receive any feature points. In the intervention phase, Student F addressed all parts of the assignment, incorporated an introduction and conclusion, and incorporated a claim, data, and an explanation in his body paragraphs, receiving points for each feature. Student F inconsistently wrote in a logical sequence, receiving, 5 feature points. Overall, Student F improved from incorporating 0 features in the baseline phase to incorporating 4.5 features in the intervention phase, showing a 4.5-point growth.

Overall, as shown in Table 17, there was a growth in the addition of expository features. The majority of students incorporated more of a developed conclusion, totaling to a 4-point growth. This was followed by a 3.5-growth in addressing all parts of the assignment, a 3-point growth in incorporating an introduction, and a 2.5-growth in writing in a logical sequence and incorporating a claim, data, and an explanation in their body paragraphs.

Table 17

Expository Features Growth

Student	Component					Overall Growth
	Assignment	Logical Sequence	Introduction	Body Paragraphs	Conclusion	
A	1	1/2	0	1/2	0	2
B	1/2	1/2	0	0	1	2
C	1/2	0	1	1/2	1	3
D	0	0	0	0	0	0
E	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	4
F	1	1/2	1	1	1	4.5

Quantity of expository writing. The quantity of each writing piece was assessed, using the Microsoft Word Count feature. The writing pieces were transferred from a Google Document into the Microsoft Word software to obtain a reliable word count. Table 18 and Figure 19 shows the number of words in the baseline and intervention essays.

Table 18

Word Count: Expository

Number of Words			
Name	Text Type	Baseline/ Intervention	Number of Words per Writing Piece
Student A	Expository	Baseline	493
Student A	Expository	Intervention	823
Student B	Expository	Baseline	266
Student B	Expository	Intervention	518
Student C	Expository	Baseline	206
Student C	Expository	Intervention	566
Student D	Expository	Baseline	469
Student D	Expository	Intervention	590
Student E	Expository	Baseline	291
Student E	Expository	Intervention	590
Student F	Expository	Baseline	400
Student F	Expository	Intervention	587

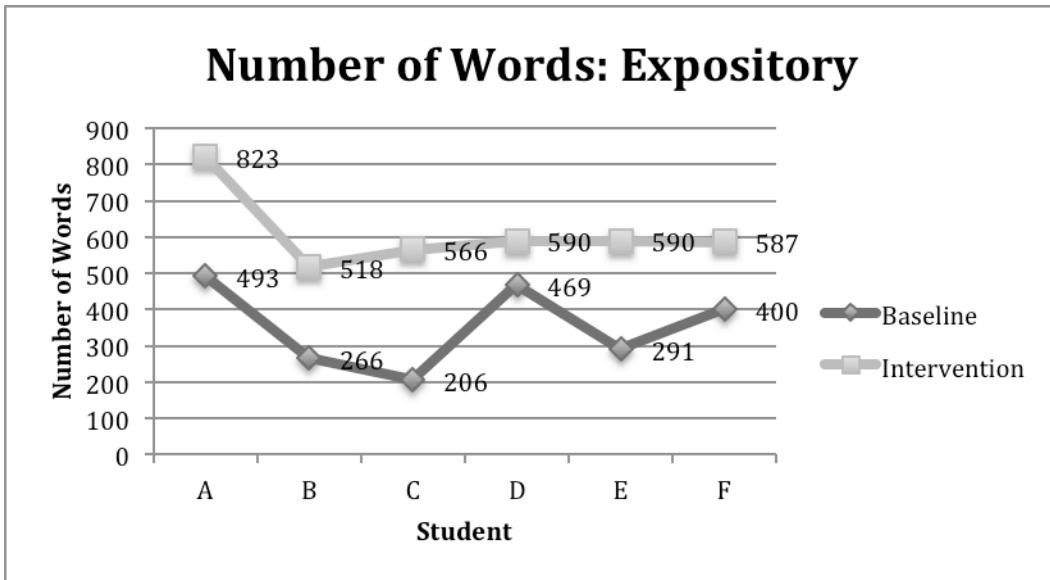


Figure 19. Word Count: Expository

As shown, the students improved in the number of words they used in the baseline phase to the intervention phase. Student A, in the baseline phase, wrote 493 words in the baseline phase and improved to 823 words in the intervention phase, writing an additional 330 words, improving 66%. Student B wrote 266 words in the baseline phase and improved 94% by adding an additional 252 words in the intervention phase, totaling to 518 words. Student C wrote 206 words in the baseline phase and improved 174% by adding an additional 360 words in the intervention phase, totaling to 566 words. Student D wrote 469 words in the baseline phase and improved 64% by adding an additional 304 words in the intervention phase, totaling to 773 words. Student E, in the baseline phase, wrote 291 words and improved 102% by adding an additional 299 words in the intervention phase, totaling to 590 words. Student F wrote 400 words in the baseline phase and improved 46% by adding an additional 187 words in the intervention phase,

totaling to 587 words. Overall, there was a 91% improvement in the quantity of writing an expository essay between the intervention and the baseline phases.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy before, during, and after writing. The study was conducted with six eighth grade male students, diagnosed with disabilities, which include Auditory Impairment, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Specific Learning Disabilities. The study examined the effects of this strategy on the types of questions created, the quality of the essays, and the quantity of the essays.

Findings

Questioning. After being immersed into the genre, students created questions to guide their writing of a narrative and expository text. The students were evaluated on the types of questions they created, which included: literal (shallow) questions, inferential (deep) questions, and evaluative (profound) questions.

In the narrative cycle of the intervention, students created a total of 24 questions. Out of the 24 questions, 10 questions were literal, equaling to 42%, 10 questions were inferential, equaling to 42%, and 4 questions were evaluative, equaling to 16%. As demonstrated in the study conducted by Sencibaugh and Sencibaugh (2015) on the use of self-questioning in reading comprehension of a narrative text, students' understanding of the narrative text improved with the use of the self-questioning strategy (Sencibaugh & Sencibaugh, 2015), however, this strategy was implemented in writing. The data suggests that the students' critical thinking about the content, the genre, and the features of the genre improved with the use of this strategy.

In the expository cycle of the intervention, students created a total of 66 questions. Out of the 66 questions, 58 questions were literal, equaling to 88%, 7 questions were inferential, equaling to 11%, and 1 evaluative question was created, equaling to 1%. This demonstrates similar findings from the study conducted by Wood, Browder, and Flynn (2015), in which fifth grade students used the self-questioning strategy to analyze a social studies text. The authors concluded that the generation of questions increased, but were limited to literal questions. Students continued to struggle with inferential and evaluative questions, as demonstrated in the expository writing data above (Wood et al., 2015).

In the comparison of the two cycles, the students were more successful in creating higher level thinking questions in the narrative cycle, creating 42% of questions as inferential and 16% of questions as evaluative, compared to the expository cycle in which students created 11% of inferential questions and 1% of evaluative questions. For the overall creation of literal, inferential, and evaluative questions, using both the narrative and expository sets, 75% of the questions were literal questions, 19% of the questions were inferential questions, and 6% of the questions were evaluative questions. As self-questioning is a representation of cognitive and metacognitive skills, the data suggests that students have improved their critical-thinking skills (inferential and evaluative questions) more so in the narrative genre, compared to the expository genre, consistent with the research literature (Corley & Rauscher, 2013).

Narrative writing quality. During Phase A of the narrative cycle, students wrote a baseline essay before the implementation of the intervention. After the intervention, students used their questions to guide their writing of the studied genre. The essays were

assessed using a 6-point holistic rubric, focusing on the demonstration of the following components: an opening and closing, focus and logical progression of ideas, details, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics. Adding the components together and dividing by six calculated an overall score. A feature checklist was also used for each cycle to evaluate the incorporation of genre features. The narrative features included: characters, plot, sensory details, dialogue, logical sequence, and context. In the narrative cycle, the students improved their overall score from the baseline to the intervention, demonstrating the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy when used in writing. The data suggests that students used the self-questioning strategy to self-regulate, self-assess, and assess others in their writing, improving in the overall quality of their narrative writing pieces, which was indicated in the study conducted by Glaser and Brunstein (2007), described in the literature review.

There were several components of the narrative holistic rubric in which the students displayed more improvement. Students averaged the most growth, 1.6-points in the construction of a strong opening and closing paragraph. This was followed by a 1.58-point growth in the usage, composing of tense and subject/verb agreement and word choice. There was also a 1.08- point growth in the focus and logical progression of ideas, a .91-point growth in sentence construction, a .67-point growth in the addition of details, and a .5-point growth in mechanics. Overall, the improvement focused more in the construction of the genre, demonstrating students' knowledge in organizing their writing. It was also demonstrated that students also improved, with the use of self-regulation, self-assessment, and peer-assessment, in their grammar and word choice.

In the Narrative Feature Checklist, the students improved in the incorporation of more features within their narrative essays. Student A incorporated 1.5 features in the baseline and improved to 5.5 features in the intervention, incorporating 4 more features. Student B incorporated 4.5 features in the baseline and improved to 6 features in the intervention, incorporating 1.5 more features. Student C incorporated 2 features in the baseline and in the intervention, he incorporated 3.5 features, adding an additional 2 features. Student D and Student E incorporated 4 features in the baseline, and improved to adding 6 features in the intervention, incorporating an additional 2 features. In the baseline, Student F incorporated 2 features, and improved to incorporating 5 features in the intervention, adding an additional 3 features. Overall, the students added an additional 2 feature points from the baseline to the intervention, improving 76%. Therefore, as the data demonstrates, the self-questioning strategy improved students' knowledge of the genre, promoting the incorporation of the genre features within their writing.

In the Narrative Feature Checklist, there were features in which students made more improvement on than others. The majority of students incorporated more sensory details, totaling to a 4.5-point growth. This was followed by a 4-point growth in developing context, a 3-point growth in writing in logical sequence, and a 2-point growth in developing the characters and the plot. However, there was a 1.5-point decrease in the use of dialogue when using this strategy. Student A and Student C lost points in regards to incorporating meaningful dialogue that moves the story along. In comparison with the study conducted by Hall-Mills and Apel in 2012, the students improved in similar areas, including grammar; however, contrary to the study, the students incorporated the

narrative features, demonstrating their knowledge in the text structure of the narrative genre.

Expository writing quality. Students, during Phase A of the expository cycle, wrote a baseline essay. After the intervention implementation, students used their questions to guide their writing of the studied genre. The essays were assessed using a 6-point holistic rubric, focusing on the demonstration of the following components: an opening and closing, focus and logical progression of ideas, details, usage, sentence construction, and mechanics. Adding the components together and dividing by six calculated an overall score. A feature checklist was also used for the cycle to evaluate the incorporation of genre features. The expository features included: assignment, logical sequence, introduction, body paragraphs, and the conclusion. In the expository cycle, the students improved their overall score from the baseline to the intervention, displaying the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy before, during, and after writing. The data suggests that students, using the self-questioning strategy to self-regulate, self-assess, and assess others in their writing, improved the completeness and overall quality of their expository writing.

There were several components of the expository holistic rubric in which the students made more improvement. Students averaged the most growth, 1.91-points, in the construction of a strong opening and closing paragraph. This was followed by a 1.33-point growth in sentence construction. There was also a 1-point growth in the usage, focusing on the tense and subject/verb agreement and word choice, and mechanics, a .83-point growth in the addition of details, and a .75-point growth in the focus and logical progression of ideas. Overall, there was an improvement in the construction of the

writing piece, further demonstrating the growth of the students' knowledge in organizing and implementing the features within the genre.

In the Expository Feature Checklist, the students made improvement in the incorporation of genre features within their expository essays. Overall, the students added an additional 2.42 feature points from the baseline to the intervention, improving 272% in the addition of expository features. The majority of students incorporated more of a developed conclusion, totaling to a 4-point growth. This was followed by a 3.5-point growth in addressing all parts of the assignment, a 3-point growth in including an introduction, and a 2.5-point growth in writing in a logical sequence and incorporating a claim, data, and an explanation in their body paragraphs. In comparison with the study conducted by Hall-Mills and Apel in 2012, the students improved in similar areas; however, contrary to the study, the students demonstrated their knowledge of the genre by incorporating more features within their intervention writing pieces. Additionally, students created a majority of their questions relating to the composition of the genre, further demonstrating their ability to self-regulate the incorporation of these components within their writing.

Comparison of writing quality. In comparing the quality of the two cycles, students achieved a higher baseline in the narrative genre, averaging an overall score of a 2.75, compared to the expository genre, averaging an overall score of a 2.5. In the narrative intervention cycle, the students scored an overall average of a 3.75, improving 72%. In the expository cycle, the students achieved an overall score of a 3.75, improving 54%. The data indicates that the students have achieved similar scores in the intervention phase; however, students made more improvement in the narrative cycle, compared to the

expository cycle, which can be related to the more inferential and evaluative questions created.

Overall, in both the narrative and expository cycle, students made a 1.75-point growth in the opening and closing, a .91-point growth in the focus and logical progression of ideas, a .75-point growth in the addition of details, a 1.29-point growth in the usage, a 1.12-point growth in sentence construction, and a .75-point growth in mechanics. Students, as seen, made the most improvement in the construction of the writing piece. This was followed by the growth in usage, sentence construction, focus and logical progression of ideas, addition of details, and mechanics. In the incorporation of features, students, in the narrative cycle, incorporated 2.33 more features in the intervention phase. In the expository intervention cycle, students incorporated 2.58 more features. Although students improved more in the narrative cycle for the overall score, students incorporated more features in the expository cycle. Students, during the expository self-questioning phase, created more questions relating to the features within the genre. Therefore, students were able to self-monitor the incorporation of these expository features within the essay conducted during the intervention phase.

Writing quantity. The students wrote a baseline and an intervention essay during the narrative and expository cycle. In both the narrative and expository cycle, the students showed an improvement in the number of words used in the baseline phase compared to the intervention phase. . In the narrative cycle, students improved 89% in quantity of words, and in the expository cycle, students improved 91% in the quantity of words. Overall, students added between 190 to 360 words, averaging 289 words, showing an 89% improvement. The data suggests that students, with their increased in knowledge of

the studied genres and their ability to self-regulate the construction of the genres, were able to heighten the number of words used within the intervention essays.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the time constraints in the baseline phase compared to the intervention phase. The students, to write the baseline, has three days to complete the assignment, compared to several weeks to complete the intervention phase. This may impact the intervention scores because students had additional time to focus on sentence construction, mechanics, and grammar. Students also had additional time to review their work with a peer, providing ample time to edit and revise the submitted writing, producing a more polished writing piece.

Another limitation was the maintenance and generalization of the strategy. Due to time constraints, students were not able to participate in the maintenance of the strategy in various writing pieces. Additionally, students were not able to participate in a follow-up assignment to assess the generalization of the strategy. Another limitation was the sample size of the study. The sample consisted of six students with disabilities. To further clarify the effectiveness of the strategy within writing, a larger sample size, with a variety of students with and without disabilities is needed.

Implications and Recommendations

The results suggest that self-questioning can effectively improve students' thinking about the specified writing genre. As indicated, students were more successful in thinking critically about a narrative text, creating and answering more inferential and evaluative questions, compared to an expository text. By promoting critical thinking in

both genres, using this strategy, students can become more effective writers in more than one genre. Further research will need to be conducted, using this strategy, to demonstrate the generalization of the self-questioning strategy in future writing pieces.

In regards to the quality of a narrative and expository text, the data suggests that the use of the self-questioning strategy improved the overall quality and the incorporation of more genre features within students' writing. More specifically, in the narrative genre, students improved the most in the construction of a strong opening and closing paragraph, followed by usage, the focus and logical progression of ideas, sentence construction, addition of details, and mechanics. Students additionally improved in the incorporation of more narrative features within their writing. The majority of students incorporated more sensory details, followed by the incorporation of a well-developed context, writing in a logical sequence, and incorporated well-developed characters and plot; however, there was a decrease in the use of dialogue. In the expository genre, students improved in the construction of a strong opening and closing paragraph, sentence construction, usage, mechanics, addition of details, and focus and logical progression of ideas. Additionally, students improved in the incorporation of a developed conclusion, addressing all parts of the assignment, including an introduction, writing in a logical sequence and incorporating a claim, data, and an explanation in their body paragraphs.

By comparing the two genres, it was demonstrated that the students produced a more concise and better quality narrative, compared to the an expository writing piece. Students displayed a higher level of thinking when writing narratives, indicated by the number of inferential and evaluative questions created. However, due to the creation of

questions, primarily focusing on the construction of the genre, the students incorporated more features within the expository cycle. By promoting both types of questions, when creating a writing piece, students can better their understanding of the genre they are writing, and improve the overall quality and quantity of their writing piece.

The data implies that the use of self-question offers students a way to self-regulate the organization and incorporation of narrative and expository features within their writing, motivating students to write more. The students, with the additional support from their peers were able to more effectively organize their writing pieces, following a logical sequence. Students were also, with the use of this strategy, add more complex word choice, and improve their overall sentence construction and grammar within their writing piece. Additionally, students had a guide to offered feedback to their peers, using the questions. This resulted in a more complete and, overall, a better quality writing piece. As a result, this study demonstrates an improvement in students' understanding and writing of the narrative and expository genre.

Finally, further research on the maintenance and generalization of the self-questioning strategy before, during, and after writing is needed. Additionally, a larger sample size, with a varied population is needed to further explore the effectiveness of this strategy in the writing process.

Conclusion. In comparing the two sets of data, it has been shown that students think about their narrative writing pieces in more inferential and evaluative ways, compared to when they write expository text, resulting in a higher improvement rate. However, students with the use of this strategy, incorporated more genre features and

more words in an expository text, compared to a narrative text. Overall, this study examined the effectiveness of the self-questioning strategy before, during, and after writing specified genres, implemented with students with disabilities. It has been concluded that this strategy is effective in improving students' quality of questions, showing a correlation between the use of higher level thinking questions and overall quality of the essays written. It has also been concluded that the use of questioning improves a students' quality and quantity of written expression.

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Appendix A

Holistic Scoring Rubric for Narrative Writing: Grade 8

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and Organization Opening and Closing	Missing opening and/or closing	May lack opening and/or closing	Attempted an opening and/or closing	Includes general opening and/or closing	Strong, inviting opening Strong, satisfying closing	Powerful, unique opening Powerful, unique closing that connects to the entire piece
Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Topic is unclear and scattered; minimal response. No planning evident; disorganized No planning evident; disorganized No use of transitions Does not address intended audience	Drifts from the topic Some organizing structure evident Few, if any, transitions Addresses audience minimally	Usually has single focus; stays on topic Some lapses or flaws in organization May lack some transitions Addresses audience inconsistently	Maintains Single focus/topic throughout Ideas loosely connected Transitions are evident Addresses appropriate audience	Single focus/topic is well developed Logical progression of ideas Includes various transitions Attempts compositional risks Addresses appropriate audience	Single topic/focus is clear and fully developed Logical, mature progression of ideas Includes mature transitions Successful use of compositional risks Captures appropriate audience
Details	Details random, inappropriate, or barely apparent	Details lack elaboration or relevance	Repetitious details Several unelaborated details	Uneven development of details	Details appropriate and varied	Details effective, vivid, explicit, and/or relevant
Usage Tense and subject/verb agreement Word choice	Errors detract from meaning No evidence of grade-level vocabulary use	Numerous errors Little evidence of grade-level vocabulary use Word choice repetitive or vague	Some errors Some evidence of grade-level vocabulary use Word choice mostly accurate	Some errors that do not interfere with meaning Uses grade-level vocabulary Attempts to use challenging vocabulary	Few usage errors that do not interfere with meaning Uses grade-level vocabulary well Uses advanced vocabulary	Very few, if any, usage errors Uses advanced vocabulary in a mature and appropriate manner

Appendix A continued

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sentence Construction	Assortment of repetitive, incomplete and/or incorrect sentences	Excessive monotony/same structure Numerous errors	Little variety in sentence structure Some errors	Some variety in sentence structure attempted Few errors	Some variety in sentence structure which are appropriate and effective Few errors	Precision and/or sophistication in varied and engaging sentence structure Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics	Severe errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Many errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Some errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Few errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation audience	Very few errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation audience	Few, if any, errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation audience

Appendix B

Holistic Scoring Rubric for Expository Writing: Grade 8

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and Organization Opening and Closing	Missing opening and/or closing	May lack opening and/or closing	Attempted an opening and/or closing	Includes general opening and/or closing	Strong, inviting opening Strong, satisfying closing	Powerful, unique opening Powerful, unique closing that connects to the entire piece
Focus and Logical Progression of Ideas	Topic is unclear and scattered; minimal response. No planning evident; disorganized No planning evident; disorganized No use of transitions Does not address intended audience	Drifts from the topic Some organizing structure evident Few, if any, transitions Addresses audience minimally	Usually has single focus; stays on topic Some lapses or flaws in organization May lack some transitions Addresses audience inconsistently	Maintains single focus/topic throughout Ideas loosely connected Transitions are evident Addresses appropriate audience	Single focus/topic is well developed Logical progression of ideas Includes various transitions Attempts compositional risks Addresses appropriate audience	Single topic/focus is clear and fully developed Logical, mature progression of ideas Includes mature transitions Successful use of compositional risks Captures appropriate audience
Textual Evidence and Additional Details	Textual evidence random, inappropriate, or barely evident Little to no additional details	Minimal relevant text evidence utilized Details lack elaboration or relevance	Textual evidence referenced but unelaborated Several unelaborated details	Relevant textual evidence references Details unevenly developed	Details and textual evidence appropriate and varied Evidence developed to support the main idea	Details and textual evidence are effective, vivid, explicit, and relevant Use of text and details enhances overall content

Appendix B continued

In scoring, consider the grid of written language	Inadequate Command	Limited Command	Partial Command	Adequate Command	Strong Command	Superior Command
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6
Usage Tense and subject/verb agreement Word choice	Errors detract from meaning No evidence of grade-level vocabulary use	Numerous errors Little evidence of grade-level vocabulary use Word choice repetitive or vague	Some errors Some evidence of grade-level vocabulary use Word choice mostly accurate	Some errors that do not interfere with meaning Uses grade-level vocabulary Attempts to use challenging vocabulary	Few usage errors that do not interfere with meaning Uses grade-level vocabulary well Uses advanced vocabulary	Very few, if any, usage errors Uses advanced vocabulary in a mature and appropriate manner
Sentence Construction	Assortment of repetitive, incomplete and/or incorrect sentences	Excessive monotony/same structure Numerous errors	Little variety in sentence structure Some errors	Some variety in sentence structure attempted Few errors	Some variety in sentence structure which are appropriate and effective Few errors	P Precision and/or sophistication in varied and engaging sentence structure Very few, if any, errors
Mechanics	Severe errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Many errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Some errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation which detract from meaning	Few errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation	Very few errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation	Few, if any, errors in spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation

Appendix C

Question Matrix

Question Matrix



Shallow

Deep

Profound

Question	Is	Did	Can	Will/Should	Might
What	What is				
Where		Where did			
Who			Who can		
How				How should	
Why					Why might