

# Process Writing Instruction: Effects on the Writing Quality of Students with Mild Intellectual Disability

*Sharon Cai Weiying*

## **Abstract**

Students in special education tend to have limited writing skills. When given writing tasks, students with special educational needs frequently feel demoralised and approach it without a plan. Their writing outcomes might appear disjointed due to the lack of meaningful content, poor organization, and grammatical errors. Nevertheless, writing proficiency is important in our current technological inclined society that relies heavily on social media interactions and other forms of electronic written communication. The current study investigates the effectiveness of a process oriented approach to writing expository text with 17-year-old students with mild intellectual disabilities (MID) in a special education school. This approach to teaching writing strategies consists of five stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing, rewriting, and publishing. The type of expository writing used in this study is descriptive essays and the stimuli for writing being written prompts. Thirty students composed descriptive essays under two different groups. The experimental group consists of 15 students who underwent a 10-hour process writing instructional workshop. The control group consists of 15 students in which the teacher taught in a traditional writing skills instruction approach. The essays were compared on three measures: productivity, accuracy and text quality. Productivity was measured by the number of words. Correct minus Incorrect Word Sequences (CIWS) was used to measure writing accuracy for grammar and mechanics. Text quality was measured using a modification of the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT; 2005) paragraph scoring system. Additionally, the writing attitudes of students were examined using an adapted Writing Dispositions Scale (Piazza & Siebart, 2008) that measures the three affective dimensions: confidence, persistence and passion towards writing. The findings indicated that the process writing approach used in the study produced strong effects on the students' productivity, accuracy and text quality. Results also showed that the students in the process writing experimental group developed more positive dispositions towards writing when compared to the control group. The findings from this study showed that the process writing approach had a positive impact on the writing quality of students with MID and held more optimistic attitudes towards writing.