

SQWwrite™

Self-Question



Answer

Rehearse

Write



Michael Gladstein, Ed.S., M.Ed.

About the Author

MICHAEL GLADSTEIN, Ed.S., M.Ed. is a school psychologist, special education authority and educational consultant in Northfield, Illinois specializing in writing, organization, executive functioning and special education needs.

Michael provides ***SQ Write*** implementation workshops to help teachers improve student writing outcomes. He also provides direct executive functioning and writing instruction to students of all ages and conducts comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations.

Prior to generating hands-on and practical academic learning tools linked to current learning research, Michael was a special education teacher in self-contained, resource and inclusion settings. He has also served as an adjunct lecturer of special education at Loyola University Chicago.



Table of Contents

Introduction

<i>SQ Write</i> : Why It's Needed	vii
<i>SQ Write</i> at a Glance	viii
<i>SQ Write</i> : An Executive Functioning Approach to Writing	ix
<i>SQ Write</i> Design	x
<i>SQ Write</i> Materials	xii
<i>SQ Write</i> Executive Function Development	xvi
<i>SQ Write</i> Implementation	xv

Skill-Building Section 1

Lesson 1 Self-Questioning Strategies: I Know A Lot!	1
Lesson 2 Whole-to-Part Analysis: I Can Break It Down!	5
Lesson 3 Writing Is Easy with <i>SQ Write</i>	15

Essay Writing Section 21

Lesson 4 Main Topic, Extended Topic, Subtopics	21
Lesson 5 Introductory Phrases	29
Lesson 6 Background Information	35
Lesson 7 Subtopic Details	43
Lesson 8 Detail Bridges	51
Lesson 9 Detail Evidence	57
Lesson 10 Conclusion	63

Appendix

Blank Class Thought Organizers	70
--------------------------------------	----

***SQ Write*: Why It's Needed**

SQ Write fills a serious educational need. The National Center for Education Statistics (2008) reported some alarming statistics. In 2002, only 28 percent of fourth graders could write at a proficient level or above. In 2007, only about 33 percent of eighth graders and 24 percent of twelfth graders could write at a proficient level or above and just 2 percent of eighth graders and 1 percent of twelfth graders could write at an advanced level.

Why Writing Can Be Difficult

Beginning in late elementary school, teachers, administrators and parents share in the frustration when students fail to produce organized, elaborated written products. But is this expectation realistic? After all, general organizational skills are only just emerging at this age. In fact, executive functioning skills that promote general organization such as planning, breaking down tasks, whole-to-part analysis, categorization, and sequencing are some of the last skills to develop in adolescents.

If we demand organized and elaborated writing, then we must directly teach these skills. In early elementary school reading is taught in a direct, sequential manner that addresses specific discrete skills. Similarly, the discrete skills needed to develop organized writing must be taught and modeled through a direct, sequential process. With ***SQ Write***, you will directly teach students the application of executive functioning skills and self-questioning, helping them to more easily produce organized and elaborated writing.

SQ Write at a Glance

SQ Write is a comprehensive curriculum that applies an executive functioning approach to teaching and learning how to write effectively. The executive functioning skills students learn and practice using ***SQ Write*** become part of their repertoire for managing writing tasks in all subject areas.

SQ Write employs a simple yet powerful process that can be used in all tiers of instruction to help elementary and middle-school students become self-reliant writers who create high-quality writing products.

1. Self-question to generate ideas.
2. Answer self-questions to fill in the Thought Organizer.
3. Rehearse the answers aloud, converting them into complete sentences.
4. Write sentences that sound right.

Self-Question



Self-Questioning

- ends complaint, “I don’t know what to write”;
- provides a simple way to generate ideas—just ask some questions;
- organizes ideas already in students’ heads.

Answer



***SQ Write* Thought Organizer**

- ends complaint, “I don’t know what comes next”;
- divides an essay into manageable chunks;
- captures ideas before they are lost, visually storing and organizing them;
- synthesizes ideas so they don’t have to be held in working memory.

Rehearse



Verbal Rehearsal

- provides auditory feedback to hear if thoughts sound right;
- prompts structural modifications before writing even begins;
- makes writing easier because there’s a mental imprint of the essay.

Write



Self-Reliant Writers

- show increased self-direction and decreased instructor dependency;
- demonstrate dramatically improved writing capabilities;
- create detailed, complete writing products;
- meet or exceed writing standards;
- transfer skills to all types of writing.

***SQ Write*: An Executive Functioning Approach to Writing**

Executive functions are neurologically-based skills involving mental control and self-regulation; in essence, processes that relate to managing oneself and one's resources in order to achieve a goal (Cooper-Kahn & Dietzel, 2008). Executive functions highly influence the writing process and, ultimately, a written product (Kellogg, 1996).

SQ Write teaches students how to apply executive functioning skills to create logical, well-constructed essays through the use of engaging, real-life activities that employ the metacognitive strategies of self-questioning, whole-to-part analysis and verbal mediation and rehearsal.

Self-Questioning

Self-questioning is a technique used to access prior knowledge and leads students to become self-reliant thinkers and writers. The independent generation of self-questions allows for an indefinite amount of knowledge to be accessed for writing content (Blohm & Benton, 1991). Throughout ***SQ Write***, students are directly taught the formulaic self-questioning process. Class activities model how the self-questioning formula can help to develop a specific section of the essay. As students practice and develop the skills necessary to generate self-questions, this inner talk leads to independent:

- access of stored memory;
- construction of knowledge chains, or highly connected information;
- generation of specific evidence that “shows” rather than simply “tells”.

Students who independently generate concrete self-questions throughout the pre-writing process produce writing with more details, more examples and more explanations than students not taught a self-questioning strategy (Blohm & Benton, 1991).

Whole-To-Part Analysis

Whole-to-part analysis breaks a broad idea into manageable chunks. Because it is easier to work on a small part, initiation increases and procrastination is minimized. ***SQ Write*** directly teaches students to use self-questioning to identify a main idea and then break it into smaller more detailed parts accompanied by evidence that supports understanding of the whole. Students ask self-questions to:

- discover a main topic;
- brainstorm 3 subtopics;
- identify background information;
- generate 2 details per subtopic;
- produce specific evidence for each detail.

Verbal Mediation & Rehearsal

Oral storytelling and rehearsing highly influence the development of effective written expression. Prior to writing, students must be able to verbalize their ideas in a detailed cohesive manner. Most students more effectively organize information orally. Thus, verbal organization is a key trait in writing (Kellogg, 1996). ***SQ Write*** incorporates verbal mediation in a prescribed sequential process until students are ready to write.

This process, in conjunction with writing and reviewing work, is repeated in each phase of the essay-building process. If students have trouble making their ideas “sound right”, the auditory feedback prompts them to alter the content. By adding, deleting, resequencing and rephrasing ideas, students refine their rough drafts before even beginning to write.