

IMPACTS OF RUBRIC-BASED INSTRUCTION TO STUDENT WRITING DEVELOPMENT

IN A SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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by

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William Paterson University of New Jersey

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigates the effectiveness of rubric-based instruction in fostering student writing growth within the context of middle school social studies. Through the utilization of customized rubrics tailored to individual student needs, the study aims to enhance the revision process and support writing development in Middle School. Several sub-questions are explored, focusing on the impact of rubric instruction on student self-assessment and the comparison between teacher-provided feedback and student self-assessment.

The study emphasizes the significance of personalized rubrics in promoting student writing development. By clarifying assessment criteria and honing self-assessment abilities, tailored rubrics play a pivotal role in elevating student writing capabilities. Additionally, the comparison between student self-assessment and teacher feedback yields valuable insights into student writing progress, underscoring the effectiveness of both assessment methods.

Findings suggest that the integration of personalized rubrics magnifies the efficacy of teacher feedback in middle school social studies classrooms. Through targeted feedback facilitated by tailored rubrics, teachers can assist students in comprehending their strengths and weaknesses, fostering a nuanced understanding of the writing process. Ultimately, this research contributes to the discourse on effective pedagogical strategies for fostering student writing growth in middle school social studies classes.

DEDICATION

To God, for instilling in me a spirit of perseverance, resilience, and growth. To my partner Joe, for being my rock and support during this journey of growth; To my family, who supported my goals. Thank you for all your encouragement, love, and support.

To Dr. Hong, who held my hand through every step, providing me with timely feedback, and being the gentle yet assertive voice throughout this project. Thank you for all that you do and for believing in all your students.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

The writing process is incomplete without revision, an essential stage that engages students in the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy—evaluation (Rank & Pool, 2014). Through this process, students actively assess their writing, identifying errors, inconsistencies, and areas requiring clarification or expansion. By recognizing these areas for improvement, students gain a deeper understanding of their writing process, fostering self-development and a more profound connection with writing. This thesis emphasizes the significance of employing evaluation tools, specifically student-tailored rubrics, as a critical means to guide and enhance the revision process.

The prevailing New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items (Pearson, 2022) is the standard evaluation tool for writing prompts in Social Studies within New Jersey. However, despite its professed aim to assess responses to the Research Simulation Task and the Literary Analysis Task, the rubric's wording, emphasizing broad objectives such as "full comprehension" and "clear reasoning," relies heavily on assessor discretion, lacking specificity and contextual guidance. This deficiency inhibits its effectiveness in providing targeted feedback to students, leaving them uncertain about areas needing improvement. At the national level, questions are still up on the effectiveness of rubrics in instruction. Tierney and Simon (2004) included in their study one of the downsides of rubrics, stating, "Unfortunately, many rubrics are still not instructionally useful because of inconsistencies in the descriptions of performance criteria across their scale levels. The most

accessible rubrics, particularly those available on the Internet, contain design flaws that not only affect their instructional usefulness, but also the validity of their results” (p.1). In New Jersey writing assessments, the same deficiencies can be observed in the NJSLA rubric for prose-constructed response and narrative tasks which poses general standards for each category and scoring tier (Pearson, 2022).

In my experience in the classroom, I observed that students are often dismissive of rubrics because they either do not understand the significance of rubrics or the incomprehension of components within a rubric. In many teacher preparation programs, I personally experienced a lack of training for future educators to adapt to rubric synthesis or curation. This lack of training shows in the practice I have experienced for two years. Many students verbally express their need for knowledge on rubrics and how to utilize them for improvements. Often, I see teachers buy or copy rubrics from websites such as Teacher Pay Teachers or from a rubric generator on the internet and curate their lessons around it rather than curate the rubric to match their students' needs or the areas they are assessing in assessment. Research is needed to investigate these limitations and advocate for the adoption of student-tailored rubrics, addressing specific writing needs and fostering a clearer understanding of assessment criteria to enhance students' writing skills in the middle school social studies classroom.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of rubric-based instruction on student writing growth in a middle school social studies classroom. The investigation includes sub-questions focusing on the influence of rubric instruction on student self-assessment and the comparison between teacher-provided feedback and student self-assessment. The study aims to address key inquiries, specifically exploring how rubric discussions shape the student self-assessment process and understanding the dynamics between student self-assessment and teacher

assessment. Through these inquiries, the research endeavors to provide a holistic perspective on the effectiveness of rubric-based instruction in fostering student writing development within the context of a social studies curriculum.

Research Questions

Based on the problem identified above of utilizing rubrics tailored to students' needs, the primary question is identified. The primary research question is How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? In addition to exploring the primary question, the study aims to investigate the following subsequent questions:

- How does rubric instruction influence students' self-assessment of their writing.
- What does comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided

feedback reveal about student writing development.

Through these investigations, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of personalized rubric use on student writing growth and the dynamics between student self-assessment and teacher feedback in the context of a middle school Social Studies curriculum.

Definition of Terms

This segment outlines the definitions of key terms pertinent to the study's scope. The study aims to address the query, how does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? The following definitions are established for the purpose of this investigation:

- *Student Growth Objective (SGO)*: SGOs are long-term academic goals for groups of students set by teachers in consultation with their supervisors (New Jersey Department of

Education, 2019). These academic goals are measured through a preassessment at the beginning of the school year, a midpoint check done by January of the school year and a final assessment conducted from March to April of the school year.

- *Rubrics tailored to students' specific needs*: this rubric arises from standard rubrics that have been customized to elaborate on specific requirements based on the task.

Additionally, it is also customized based on a student's specific goal. For this research, the main rubric I will be utilizing is the NJSLA rubric for prose constructed response items.

- *Participants*: The participants in this study include 12 students in an 8th grade Social Studies classroom with ages ranging from 13-14 years old.

Theoretical Framework

This portion introduces the chosen theoretical framework aligned with the research question how does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? This question guided the selection of the theoretical frameworks, which incorporates the Cognitive Process of Writing Theory (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hodges, 2017), Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) (Butler & Winne, 1995).

The Cognitive Process theory posits that writing should be understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes orchestrated by writers during the act of composing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Building on this, Hodges (2017) further elaborates that writing constitutes a "complex system of inter-working cognitive processes" (p.139). This theory identifies four pivotal aspects in the writing process: composing written work through a thinking process, organizing these processes, goal setting, and synthesizing major and minor goals to complete a

writing task. Within this framework, writers undergo multiple composition steps and necessitate revisiting completed steps through revision, guided by mentor and peer feedback. In a middle school setting, as students learn to regulate their social and emotional learning experiences, it is important to utilize objective assessment and feedback tools such as a rubric. Through a rubric tailored to student's specific needs, learners can practice identifying their strengths and areas of improvement as writers and make informed decisions to improve their work.

Compounding this theory to sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), the role of mentors as the more knowledgeable others (MKO) emphasizes the critical role of experienced mentors in the writing process (Hodges, 2017, p.139). First, it recognizes writing as a practice in which interaction is non-negotiable. These interactions are opportunities for feedback and guidance and can be focused through a rubric. Thus, it introduces the idea of teaching writing as a process. Writing instruction should emphasize that writing is a multi-stage process that includes planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Rubrics tailored to students' specific needs guide students through each stage of their writing discourse, encouraging them to reflect on their choices.

Lastly, the theory of self-regulated learning supports my study in utilizing rubrics tailored to student needs to improve writing. Self-regulation is how students approach tasks, using skills like setting goals to improve knowledge, choosing strategies that balance progress with costs, and constantly monitoring the impact of their actions as tasks progress (Butler & Winne, 1995; Carver & Scheier, 2016). This process and the resulting comprehension assist students in assessing the alignment of their thinking and learning with self-set goals. This theory guides my study by emphasizing the significance of goal setting, formative feedback, and adapting goals and tasks based on a learner's development and needs. In the context of writing and feedback, self-regulated learning theory is relevant because feedback helps learners recognize both areas of

improvement and strengths in their writing. This recognition empowers them to adjust and set new goals, aligning with their evolving understanding. The aim of guided practice is to foster self-regulation through heightened self-awareness, which can be achieved through reflection or collaborative approaches like peer and teacher conferences. A concise and detailed rubric acts as a self-regulation tool, offering distinct goals that aid in the formulation of new and personalized objectives.

Educational Significance

The purpose of this study is to examine the research question how does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? This topic is worthy of research because, in the realm of education, rubrics provide data to both educators and students to identify strengths and growth areas for the assessed and the assessor. Improved comprehension of rubrics allows students to engage and gain awareness of their learning by understanding their strengths and growth areas, giving them self-awareness. Rubrics also serve as a transparent grading tool promoting validity and objectivity. Additionally, this study enlightens the need for teachers to practice integrity with assessment tools. Many rubrics (especially in the NJSLA) need more specificity to allow for self-assessment. The lack in these areas inhibits students from being more proactive or interested in engaging with rubrics provided in their classrooms and utilizing them for academic growth. There is a need for teacher training in curating or creating rubrics that match their students' needs. Utilizing a generated or random rubrics from the Internet causes a mismatch in the grading and the skills being graded, causing a disservice to students.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Overview

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to the primary and subsequent questions identified in this study. This primary research question is how does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? And the subsequent questions are how rubric instruction impact students' self-assessment of their writing and what does comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development. This review of the literature examines research studies that looked at the formative use of rubrics, individualized instruction and self-regulation, and mitigating writing anxiety and genre-specific instruction.

Formative Use of Rubrics

While rubrics are commonly associated with summative assessments, it's crucial not to overlook their significant advantages in formative assessment. Given that writing is a cognitive process, rubrics play a pivotal role in assisting writers as they navigate through various stages and components of their writing pieces which makes it an effective tool in formative assessments. Panadero and Jonsson (2013) studies the use of rubrics for formative assessments. They examined 21 articles to understand how the formative use of rubrics improved student performance and identified factors that may positively or negatively moderate the effects of rubric use formatively. Their articles included rubrics applied across various subjects such as English, algebra, social studies, educational psychology, etc., and were predominantly applied in middle school, with some also in elementary grades three to six and others in undergraduate students.

In their findings, Panadero and Jonsson (2013) discovered that the formative use of rubrics improved student performance by increasing transparency, reducing anxiety, aiding in the feedback process, and supporting self-regulation (p. 138). The researchers also noted factors that moderate the effects of rubric usage, such as the combination of rubrics and metacognitive activities, suggesting that rubric instruction alone has limited impacts on student performance. When coupled with metacognitive activities such as self-assessment opportunities, peer and self-assessment, exemplars, and revision opportunities, rubric usage can facilitate improvements in the writing process and development (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013, p. 140).

Additionally, educational level and the length of intervention also have a moderating effect on the impacts of rubric usage. Prolonged exposure to rubrics and extended time for intervention produced more positive results compared to samples that were only given a rubric for one assessment and those classes that were given a shorter time for intervention application. Younger participants also demonstrated a greater need for time in rubric discussion and instruction.

The study by English et al. (2022) delved into the impact of rubrics on assessment, specifically focusing on their use for formative assessments in K-12 classrooms. The researchers conducted a thorough literary review of thirty-six studies spanning from 1998 to 2020. Their primary goal was to explore the relationship between rubrics, formative assessments, students, and teachers in K-12 settings. The study aimed to identify existing knowledge regarding the role of rubrics in supporting formative assessment of students in these classrooms. Additionally, the researchers sought to understand the influence of rubric design in the context of formative assessments in K-12 classrooms.

The findings of the research indicated that rubrics assist teachers in broadening their teaching methods, ultimately supporting student learning. The study highlighted the alignment of rubric use with effective assessment strategies, making it easier for teachers to comprehend standards, collect evidence of student knowledge, and provide focused feedback. In K-12 classrooms, rubrics were identified as valuable tools for teachers, especially those not experts in a particular subject, aiding in visualizing and organizing key points. The study emphasized the importance of ensuring clarity in assessment criteria through rubrics and recommended teacher training for creating transparent rubrics.

Challenges related to rubric use were acknowledged, including the time required for their creation and implementation. The study emphasized the need for teachers to collaborate in developing and using rubrics, suggesting that schools allocate time for this collaborative effort. The research noted the positive impact of rubrics on teachers' beliefs about assessments, even in the face of limitations in controlling the education system. Recommendations included supporting teachers by providing time and processes for collaborative rubric work.

The study stressed the importance of involving students in the assessment process, emphasizing the positive outcomes observed when teachers used rubrics. Students demonstrated improvements in learning and understanding standards. The research suggested that students need guidance and time to learn how to use rubrics, and schools should support them in this regard.

In summary, the study emphasized the significance of rubrics in enhancing formative assessments in K-12 classrooms for both teachers and students. The study highlighted the need for training, collaborative efforts among teachers, and clear communication of assessment criteria through rubrics. The attitude of teachers towards rubric use, coupled with their openness

to collaboration with colleagues and students, was identified as crucial in supporting student writing development through formative assessments and targeted feedback.

Individualized Instruction and Self-Regulation

Customizing rubrics to align with students' specific needs enhances their effectiveness and utility. This underscores the importance of individualized instruction when employing rubrics for writing support, unlocking their full potential. As students become familiar with the rubric's structure and criteria, they gain the ability to recognize their distinct strengths and areas for improvement. This process cultivates self-regulation skills, empowering learners to become independent and proficient writers. Andrade's (1999) research found supporting evidence about the principles of instructional rubrics and self-assessment in learning to write. In Andrade's writing, the researcher provided insights into the effects of providing students with instructional rubrics on the quality of their essays while also assessing the participants' understanding of qualities of good writing when given opportunities for rubric-referenced self-assessment. The participants are eighth-grade students from southern California who wrote three different genres: persuasive, autobiographical, and historical fiction essays.

Through a multiple linear regression analysis process, Andrade (1999) found that, generally, instructional rubrics support students in writing; however, students must be given individualized intensive intervention to achieve a higher performance level from their first drafts. Additionally, the amount of time spent on rubric exposure and instruction has an impact on the effects of instructional rubrics. Lastly, there were also some gender-based results indicating that rubrics showed some detrimental effects on the performance of girls but nothing on boys. The researcher also pointed out, through data from questionnaires provided to the participants, that instructional rubrics have the potential to broaden the students' conception of the qualities of

good writing, such as vocabulary and tone, and increase awareness of the criteria they were assessed with.

Addressing the second inquiry regarding the influence of rubric-referenced self-assessment on students' writing and grasp of good writing attributes, Andrade observed that while self-assessment did not enhance students' understanding of good writing qualities, it did diminish their perception of unfairness in teachers' grading practices. Notably, however, it did not result in an increased perception of fairness among the students.

Moving towards the effects of rubrics and exemplar use on student writing performance by Lipnevich et al. (2023), their study suggests that rubrics and exemplars can be beneficial in promoting self-regulation. The research was conducted on 206 students between 9th and 10th grades attending a private suburban high school in the northeast of the United States. The makeup of the group was predominantly white (72.3%), with Asians accounting for 14.1%, Hispanic/Latino/Latina for 8.7%, and Black students making up 4.9%. Among this group, 101 students self-identified as girls, and 105 as boys.

In their study, Lipnevich et al. aimed to understand the effects of rubrics and exemplars on high school writing performance and to understand how training on rubrics and exemplars results in an improved differential use of these tools. In their methodology, the authors provided two weeks for the first draft and revision opportunities based on rubric-based feedback and exemplars. Their results were defined into three categories: reading, writing, and analysis, and scoring was conducted three times as there were three opportunities for writing: one draft writing and two revision opportunities.

In all three sets of scores, their findings indicate that students who used rubrics scored higher in all three writing opportunities compared to students who used exemplars during their

writing. However, students in the exemplar condition did as well in the reading and analysis sections as the rubrics condition in their first revision following training. The students in the rubric condition still scored higher in their writing. Compared to the control group, the rubric and exemplar group outperformed, suggesting that rubrics and exemplars are valuable tools in self-assessments. Lipnevich et al. (2023) support that rubrics, even without proper training, can help high school students improve writing performance (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). However, in contrast with the previously mentioned studies (Panadero & Jonsson 2013); (Andrade, 1999), Lipnevich et al. (2023) do not suggest using rubrics simultaneously with exemplars, although they are open to more research. The researchers noted that with additional training, exemplars hold as much promise in improving writing development in students. The overarching result states that both tools, rubrics and exemplars, have potentials in enhancing self-feedback that leads to higher performance on a writing task.

Poehner and Yu (2022) explored the potential of rubrics as a mediator for diagnosing emerging abilities in L2 learners. The study was conducted within an Intensive English Program, encompassing students from L2 to L4, with two multilingual participants from Kuwait and Japan. The research aimed to understand how rubric ratings of learner writing, before and after mediation in Dynamic Assessment (DA), contribute to a diagnosis that includes the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Additionally, the study investigated how mediator annotations of the rubric during DA contribute to diagnosing learner emerging abilities.

In the DA process, the mediator and participants reviewed rubric notes (annotations) and the participants' essays, evaluating content, organization, language accuracy, range, and complexity. Participants completed a self-assessment, marking their rubrics with checks for criteria they revised after DA. The mediator also marked areas they addressed, along with notes

on specific challenges found in participants' essays. During the DA, the mediator collaborated with participants, pointing out growth areas and asking questions about their essay overview and specific errors. Excerpts in the study showcased the mediator's guiding approach, focusing on specifics unless participants became unresponsive. The mediator used guiding questions to assist participants in the thinking process. Once participants demonstrated emerging skills, indicating entry into the ZPD, the mediator pointed out other essay areas with similar errors, allowing participants the opportunity to self-assess and apply newly learned skills.

The study's results indicate that rubrics can serve as a mediator to identify emerging skills in writing. With mediator notes, dynamic assessment through verbal feedback guided by a rubric, and opportunities for multiple revisions, L2 learners can develop their writing skills, fostering independence in writing and self-assessment. Mediator notes on the rubrics offer specific feedback targeting learners' individual needs for growth and improvement. The study supports the hypothesis that rubric instruction tailored to students' specific needs promotes writing development through targeted feedback and conference time.

In their study, the authors explored gender differences and variations in backgrounds, with Anglophone students identified as those from the British colonies in Canada, whose native language is English, and Francophone students from French backgrounds with French as their mother tongue. Several findings emerged from this research. Firstly, students with higher grades in writing demonstrated greater accuracy in using rubrics to rate exemplars (Laveault & Miles, 2002, p.12). These students also exhibited more severity in their grading quality, demonstrating a more critical approach compared to students with lower writing scores, who tended to show a preference for leniency.

A second finding similar to that of Andrade's (1999), revealed that girls tended to achieve higher marks in writing and also displayed greater accuracy in rubric use compared to boys (Laveault & Miles, 2002, p. 26). This suggests a correlation between higher grades in writing and the accuracy in using rubrics for peer assessment, indicating a better understanding of rubric criteria for assessment. Lastly, Francophone students tended to have higher scores than their Anglophone counterparts. However, it is important to consider variations in school instructional styles before drawing concrete conclusions.

Tekin's (2021) research underscores the effectiveness of a comprehensive writing instruction approach, emphasizing the synergy between rubrics and targeted conference time to facilitate the growth of developing writers. The study, conducted with seven third-grade students in a New Jersey middle school ELA class following a Writer's Workshop Model, aimed to scrutinize the impact of focused instruction on students' writing performance. The investigation delved into the supportive role of writing conferences in enabling teachers to cater to diverse learning needs, the influence of these conferences on students' writing motivation, and whether dedicated conference time contributes to an enhanced self-awareness of writing development.

During an eight-week period, participants engaged in conference time enriched with targeted instruction. Tekin's (2021) results analysis revealed that personalized attention positively influenced students' writing motivation. The modeling observed during conference sessions significantly impacted the practical application of writing skills, and the targeted conferences contributed to the enhancement of metacognitive practices in writing. Notably, students, following individualized instruction, displayed heightened focus and an improved willingness to participate. The active engagement in inquiry during conference time showcased increased responsiveness to written feedback. Furthermore, participants demonstrated improved

self-assessment, articulated during individual conference sessions, providing evidence of heightened self-awareness of their writing development. This heightened self-awareness establishes a foundation for more profound and independent reflection and self-assessment, especially when guided by the success criteria outlined within a rubric.

Mitigating Writing Anxiety and Genre-Specific Instruction

A well-designed rubric, offering clear expectations for specific writing tasks, not only facilitates cognitive processes during writing but also contributes to social and emotional learning, especially in alleviating anxiety related to written assignments. With transparent success criteria and genre-specific rubrics tailored to individual student needs, rubrics emerge as invaluable tools for organizing thoughts and improving writers' attitudes towards the writing process. In their study involving 73 English major students in Indonesia, Arindra and Ardi (2020) advocate for the efficacy of providing clear expectations through rubric instruction in alleviating anxiety among writers, especially for multi-lingual learners. The researchers investigated the correlation between students' writing anxiety and their utilization of writing rubrics. Prior to the introduction of rubrics and instruction, fourteen (19%) participants experienced low anxiety, while fifty-three (76%) indicated a moderate level, and six (8%) exhibited high anxiety. These anxiety experiences were classified into somatic, cognitive, and avoidance behaviors. Somatic anxiety, characterized by nervousness, upset stomach, heart pounding, trembles, mental blankness, panic, frozen, or tensed feelings (Cheng, 2004), emerged as the dominant type, with cognitive anxiety being the second.

The study's conclusions highlight two key findings: firstly, the students' second language writing anxiety and use of writing assessment rubrics were predominantly at a moderate level. Secondly, students' second language writing anxiety correlated with their utilization of writing

assessment rubrics. This correlation suggests that students, aware of the impending rubric assessment, would optimize their use of rubrics, resulting in reduced anxiety. Conversely, students who did not use rubrics exhibited higher anxiety levels.

The research proposes three pedagogical implications for incorporating rubrics: firstly, teachers should actively seek or create writing rubrics aligned with students' needs, involving students in the rubric preparation process to enhance utilization. Secondly, educators should encourage students to partake in self-assessment and peer-assessment activities using rubrics, fostering self-regulation and improving writing skills. Lastly, teachers should conduct training sessions on the proper utilization of writing assessment rubrics to prevent confusion among students.

In the investigation conducted by Bradford et al. (2016), the impact of rubrics on opinion paragraphs for 20 first-grade students in a low socio-economic school in the Midwestern United States was examined. The participants, aged 6 to 7 years old, attended a School in Need of Assistance. The study focused on evaluating the effectiveness of rubrics designed for first and second-grade students and exploring their influence on the overall quality of student writing.

The researchers not only assessed the students using rubrics but also emphasized the opportunities these tools provide for lessons on writing quality. Rubrics, as outlined in the study, offer explicit instruction beneficial for primary-age students, providing them with a clear vision of success and motivation through feedback. The study highlighted the flexibility in rubric use, where teachers could either construct a rubric collaboratively with their students in a student-centered approach or utilize ready-made rubrics from various sources. However, the study emphasized the importance of modifying ready-made rubrics to suit the age, developmental level, and task specificity of the students.

The results of the study supported the hypothesis that rubrics contribute to the development of writing skills in first and second graders, as evidenced by improved writing scores. Additionally, participants using rubrics exhibited an enhanced attitude towards writing, with a higher average writing score compared to those who did not utilize rubrics. The study incorporated mediations such as mini-lessons focused on specific areas of the rubrics, enabling students to practice and master the criteria.

Concerning the attitude towards writing, participants without access to rubrics reported frustrations with the length and difficulty of the task, while those with rubrics reported faster completion of their paragraphs. One participant even expressed relief in overcoming the initial daunting aspects of the task. In conclusion, the study strongly supports the hypothesis that rubrics and associated instruction contribute significantly to student writing development by providing explicit guidance and transparent criteria for success that are suitable for the participants.

The next study was conducted in Hong Kong to investigate the effectiveness of rubrics in reflective writing for undergraduates from various universities attending a summer program. The program included a one-hour reflective writing workshop in which 134 students participated. A mixed-method approach was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were randomly divided into three groups, consisting of two experiment groups and one control group.

In the first experiment group, participants were provided with rubrics and rubric instruction before engaging in the reflective writing activity. The second experiment group received a rubric with no instruction, immediately followed by the reflective writing, while the control group received neither. Cheng and Chan (2019) noted in their study that university

students are often not given instruction on the purpose and use of rubrics, let alone the chance to practice self-assessment with the use of rubrics (p. 177). This lack of instruction was reflected in the qualitative data gathered from participant interviews, indicating a need for both rubric instruction and opportunities for reflective writing.

The study also highlighted some limitations and challenges of rubric instruction and assessment. One notable limitation is that rubrics may cause confusion and impede independent thinking, as some students perceive them as a fixed structure. Additionally, participants mentioned that reflective writing is a personal endeavor, and the use of rubrics on a personal narrative, such as a reflection, is contradictory in principle. These responses raised ethical questions about rubric usage in reflective writing.

The quantitative results of the study supported the hypothesis that rubric usage can support reflective writing, as indicated by the writing scores of the participants. It is noteworthy that the study showed no significant difference between the two experimental groups. This leads to the conclusion that rubric instruction does not have a significant effect on writing development. However, Cheng and Chan (2019) suggested that the explanation for this evidence is that the researchers designed the rubric in a broad and simple way, allowing it to facilitate student thinking on reflective writing. This suggests that rubric instruction may be more beneficial for younger participants compared to older participants in higher education (Bradford et al., 2016).

The objective of the study was to examine the effectiveness of rubrics in writing development. Despite the generally low scores in this study, the researchers still concluded and recommended the use of rubrics in writing development within the reflective genre. Genre

instruction is advised before a writing assessment, as it can bridge the gap between rubric understanding and writing quality.

Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the primary and subsequent questions identified in this study. The primary research question is: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? The subsequent questions are: How does rubric instruction influence students' self-assessment of their writing, and what does the comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development?

The reviewed studies reveal several common themes that underscore the versatile impact of rubrics on writing development. One notable theme is the significance of the formative use of rubrics, highlighting their benefits beyond summative assessments (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Bradford et al., 2016; English et al., 2022). The findings emphasize their pivotal role in formative assessments, providing transparency, reducing anxiety (Arindra & Ardi, 2020; Bradford et al., 2016; Cheng & Chan, 2019), facilitating the feedback process, and fostering self-regulation (Andrande, 1999; Laveault & Miles, 2002; Lipnevich et al., 2023; Poehner & Yu, 2022; Tekin, 2021). The literature also emphasizes the importance of individualized instruction tailored to students' needs, showcasing how rubrics contribute to self-regulation and independence in writing (Andrande, 1999; Laveault & Miles, 2002). Moreover, the studies explore gender differences (Andrande, 1999; Laveault & Miles, 2002) and background variations (Andrande, 1999 ; Bradford et al., 2016; Cheng and Chan, 2019; Laveault & Miles, 2002; Poehner & Yu, 2022; Tekin, 2021) revealing correlations between higher grades, rubric accuracy (Laveault & Miles, 2002; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013), and effective writing instruction

(Andrade, 1999; Cheng & Chan, 2019). The literature review further underscores the role of rubrics in mitigating writing anxiety (Andrade, 1999; Arindra & Ardi, 2020; Cheng & Chan, 2019) and offering genre-specific instruction. Well-designed rubrics are recognized as valuable tools in alleviating anxiety related to written assignments, contributing not only to academic success but also to social and emotional learning. Overall, the studies advocate for teacher training, collaborative efforts, and involving students in the rubric creation process to optimize their benefits.

These studies collectively highlight the positive effects of rubric instruction on writing development, especially when combined with metacognitive exercises like reflection, self and teacher assessment, and revision opportunities. However, there are contrasting themes in some studies that raise questions about targeted rubric instruction and its impact on students' writing development. Panadero and Jonsson (2013) emphasize the effectiveness of rubrics, particularly when integrated with metacognitive activities. In contrast, Lipnevich et al. (2023) challenge this view, suggesting that rubrics alone can significantly improve high school students' writing, even without additional training. There are disparities in recommended instructional approaches, with Panadero and Jonsson advocating for combining rubrics with tools like exemplars, while Lipnevich et al. caution against simultaneous use with exemplars. The impact of rubric instruction on different age groups adds complexity, as studies by Bradford et al. (2016) and Panadero and Jonsson (2013) focus on younger students, indicating potential age-related variations in rubric effectiveness. Attitudes towards writing differ, with Bradford et al. (2016) and Lipnevich et al. (2023) reporting positive impacts, while Cheng and Chan (2019) note mixed perceptions and ethical concerns, particularly in reflective writing. The instructional approach is contentious, as Panadero and Jonsson stress individualized instruction, while Cheng and Chan

highlight challenges like confusion and perceived inflexibility. Although Bradford et al. (2016) and Lipnevich et al. (2023) report positive effects of rubric instruction, Cheng and Chan (2019) propose that such instruction might be more beneficial for younger participants than older ones in higher education. These varied perspectives highlight the intricate nature of rubric impact on student writing, influenced by factors such as age group, instructional approach, and the specific context of writing tasks.

CHAPTER III

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research design and the rationale for the method of data collection. The primary research question is: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? Subsequent questions include: How does rubric instruction impact students' self-assessment of their writing, and what does the comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development? The method of data collection involves a mixed-method approach, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection methods include the analysis of Student Growth Objective (SGO) scores, small group instruction, student writing samples, self-assessment, and exit tickets.

I participated in this hypothesis-generating study as a teacher-researcher and participant-observer. During this study, I conducted a mixed-method research, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The main research question aimed to address how the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impacts student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom. To answer this question, qualitative data assessed participants' comprehension of rubric instruction and quality of student writing, while quantitative data demonstrated how rubric instruction affected writing quality through essay scores based on a rubric and provided measurement of student writing growth.

The subsequent questions inquire about how rubric instruction influences students' self-assessment of their writing and what comparisons of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development. These two subsequent questions

necessitated qualitative data obtained through self-assessment samples, exit tickets, small group instruction, and student writing samples. In exploring the question of how rubric instruction influences students' self-assessment of their writing, I aimed to understand how participants comprehended the criteria by which they are assessed and how they apply these criteria in their writing. When students engaged in self-assessment, I intended to determine whether they could confidently justify their scores with examples or evidence from their essays. This investigation helped me ascertain if students are developing self-awareness in their writing development and if they are cultivating self-regulation (Butler & Winne, 1995; Carver & Scheier, 2016).

In addressing the subsequent question of what comparisons of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development, I investigated the criteria that students predominantly focused on. Additionally, I identified patterns of success and areas requiring reteaching opportunities. I was interested in pinpointing any patterns of student confidence regarding specific criteria and determining which ones they feel less confident about. Furthermore, I examined whether students could identify their personal strengths and assess the quality of feedback they gave themselves compared to the feedback I provide. The qualitative data collected in this research were utilized to identify future changes, adjustments, and areas of focus in my teaching pedagogy, drawing from student responses in reflections and small group instruction, self-assessment using the rubric, and exit tickets.

The overarching question is how the implementation of a rubric tailored to student needs impacts student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom. Qualitative measures in the study are employed to analyze student writing quality, while quantitative data is essential for measuring growth in student writing through rubric instruction.

Research Setting

This study is designed to answer the research question: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? The research is set in a school district located in Northern New Jersey.

Population

The city in which my research is going to be conducted is a suburb composed of a population of 69,128 residents as of year 2021. This population consists of 31.3% residents under eighteen years old and 9.0% of residents over sixty-five years of age. 52.21% of the residents are female. The majority of the residents are of Hispanic descent, comprising 74.1% of the city. Black or African ethnicity is at 7.5%, American Indian or Alaskan Native at 0.9%, and Asians at 0.9%.

The median household income in the city is \$57,832 in 2022, and the per capita income is \$23,832. As of 2021, the poverty rate stands at 25.3%, with a population density of 22,514.2 people per square mile (United States Census Bureau, 2023)

Language Spoken at Home

Residents who speak a language other than English at home constitute 73.4% of the population. Of these, 79.1% speak Spanish, while 19.4% reported using English as their first language.

Education

In this city, 67.4% are high school graduates, and 16.1% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

The school in which I will be conducting my research is a middle school offering instruction to 7th and 8th grades. Based on the state scores from the previous year, the school is

enrolled in a comprehensive support plan. The latest enrollment totals 470 students, with 256 enrolled in 8th grade. The school is eligible to receive free lunch for all students. Currently, the school is focused on providing interventions for ELA and Math using programs such as Amplify, Lexia, and Mathia.

Research Participants

The participants in this study include myself as the teacher-researcher and participant-observer, along with 12 8th-grade students. I have been teaching 8th grade in the same school and district for two years as a general education teacher, certified for K-12 instruction, with a specialization in Social Studies. The curriculum I teach focuses on American Revolution and Civics instruction. Additionally, I have two years of student teaching experience at the middle school level, and I am also a multilingual learner. As a multilingual learner, I consistently find that writing enables me to comprehend and analyze topics comprehensively, engaging in literacy practices.

Rubric analysis has been instrumental in enhancing my writing by identifying areas for improvement and focusing on specific aspects depending on the genre. Writing has also contributed to my flexibility in delivery, enabling effective communication with my target audience. Currently enrolled in a Master's in Writing program (ELCL6290/6300 MED Teaching of Writing), I am committed to improving my teaching practice and helping students communicate using effective writing practices.

The student participants in this study are aged 13-14, all of Hispanic background, studying American Revolution and Civics in Social Studies. They receive 40 minutes of Social Studies instruction for four days a week, with one period dedicated to Lexia, an independent practice aiding reading and comprehension. Parents of the students were informed about the

study and provided consent before its commencement. The research involved immersing students in three weeks of writing practices, including rubric instruction, small group instruction, self-assessment, revision, and publication.

Data Sources

The data sources were categorized under qualitative and quantitative data.

Qualitative Data:

1. *Exit Tickets:* These tickets, a part of everyday teaching and learning practices, formatively assessed students' understanding of the day's lesson, specifically focusing on their comprehension of rubric instruction.
2. *Student Writing Samples:* These samples unveiled how students applied learned instructions in their writing practices. The data provided insights into students' understanding of content, syntax, and vocabulary, offering a comprehensive picture of their writing quality.
3. *Field Notes:* This journal, kept by the researcher, recorded the focus of small group instruction, areas of student confusion, or the zone of proximal development. This data was crucial for understanding how students progressed across the criteria in the rubric and identifying areas where they may have struggled. Field notes also included students' general responses during small group instruction.
4. *Student Self-Assessment Samples:* This data illustrated the comparison between student self-assessment and teacher-provided assessment. It revealed students' perceptions of their own writing, their recognition of strengths and areas of growth, and highlighted aspects they considered important. This information was compared to the feedback provided by the more knowledgeable other (MKO).

Quantitative Data:

1. *SGO Scores:* SGO preassessment scores were collected at the beginning of the year in September. The purpose of the preassessment is to find a baseline score to measure the growth of students throughout the school year. A midyear checkpoint has been conducted to measure if students are developing towards their target growth measure. The final assessment from March to April showed the final growth measure of the students' writing skills.

Data Analysis Procedures

This section presents the data analysis procedures conducted in this study, which was designed to answer the research question: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? Subsequent questions explore how rubric instruction influences students' self-assessment of their writing and what comparisons between student self-assessments and teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development.

To answer the first main research question, 'How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom?' I analyzed the Student Growth Objectives (SGO) scores by comparing the preassessment scores with the final assessment scores. The SGO scoring encompasses construct measures for reading comprehension, written expression, and knowledge of language and conventions. The scoring criteria are categorized into 4 (exemplary), 3 (proficient), 2 (developing), and 1 (emerging). I adapted the state-provided rubric into a student-friendly version while retaining foundational grading criteria from the original rubric and integrating current English Language Arts practices. The specific rubric used for this research was an argumentative essay rubric, featuring categories

such as introduction, body paragraphs, counterarguments, organization, conventions, and conclusion. The scoring guide assigns 4 (exemplary), 3 (accomplished), 2 (developing), 1 (beginning), and 0 (not applied). The totals of these scores are then categorized into ranges that match the SGO scoring criteria, as follows: 0-11 total points = SGO score 0; 12-15 total points = SGO score 1; 16-18 total points = SGO score 2; 19-20 total points = SGO score 3; and 21-24 total points = SGO score 4. This research included a summative writing assessment conducted over two weeks, providing ample time for two rounds of revisions, two individual conferences lasting five minutes each, and three sessions of small group instruction, also lasting five minutes each.

The writing assessment that finalizes with the SGO scores provided measurements for growth in writing development of the participants in this study compared to their scores in September 2023. The scores were measured by the holistic rubric modified to reflect both state standards and current practices standards from the English Language Arts class. The writing skills addressed in this assessment were anchor standards from the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) for 8th Grade English Language Arts (New Jersey Department of Education Office of Standards, 2016), including creating context (NJSLS W.8.2.A) , developing a point of view (NJSLSA. W1), developing arguments (NJSLS W.8.1.B), understanding opposing views (W.8.1.A), and using coherent writing style with appropriate format employing effective conventions (NJSLS W.8.4).

To answer the subsequent questions of how rubric instruction influences students' self-assessment of their writing and what comparisons of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development, I gathered data sources including exit tickets, self-assessment samples, field notes, and student writing samples. These data sources

provides analysis for students' writing quality, understanding of rubrics and comparison of student self-feedback with teacher provided feedback.

The exit tickets provided an insight on student writing development by shedding light on student understanding of writing content and their knowledge of the requirements of the genre. It shed light to student misunderstandings and struggles with the assessment and topic. The exit tickets provided some reasoning behind the scores on each criteria of the writing assessment. Additionally it also provided insight on the depth of student mastery of rubric usage and application. Exit tickets were provided after completion of the sections of the essay starting from the introduction, body paragraphs and then the conclusion.

Self-assessment samples were collected to provide an analysis of student understanding of rubric usage and also provide insight of the comparison of how students assess themselves and compare it to teacher given feedback. This provided insight on student confidence and students' awareness of their own writing development. After collecting all student self-assessment samples, I analyzed them for recurring themes such as quality of student assessment and discrepancies between teacher provided scores and student-provided scores.

My field notes recorded the points that were made during small group instruction and individual conference. I analyzed the notes looking for recurring themes such as glows and grows, reteaching points and confidence during conference time.

The last data source is the student writing samples which are then scored according to the rubric. This data source provided insight on student application of learned skills such as convention and coherence, application of feedback and revision.

Validity and Reliability

This section presents the validity and reliability for this study. This study was designed to answer the research question: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? The data sources discussed in the previous section were analyzed to determine growth in writing development in 8th graders in a Social Studies classroom. Although the participants were notified about their involvement in the study as well as collection of consent forms from parents was conducted, the participants were included in mini-lessons, small group instruction and individual conference time – all of which are part of everyday routine in our class. Self-assessment and teacher assessment are a common practice in my classroom so students are accustomed into comparing scores and feedback as well as using rubrics for assessments. The formal writing assessment which is the main basis of growth analysis, was completed by all students in class and check-ins on writing progress, small group instruction and written feedback were regularly exchanged in class.

To answer the subsequent questions how does rubric instruction influences students' self-assessment of their writing and what comparisons of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development, the exit tickets and self-assessment were conducted to analyze student understanding of rubric usage, and to create a comparison between student self-feedback and teacher feedback both rubric centered. The exit tickets and self-assessment are also a normal routine in class.

The student writing samples were collected to analyze student writing quality focusing on the anchor standards of creating context (NJSL S W.8.2.A) , developing a point of view (NJSLSA. W1), developing arguments (NJSL S W.8.1.B) and understanding opposing views

(W.8.1.A), and using coherent style with appropriate format (NJSL S W.8.4) All of these are standards from the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSL S) for English Language Arts for 8th Grade (New Jersey Department of Education Office of Standards, 2016).

The field notes recorded points to re-teach, student misconceptions, self-efficacy and writing confidence of students.

The findings of this study are also valid. The rubrics used to grade the formal writing piece assessments are based on the scoring rubric for prose constructed response items from NJSLA scoring guide for grades 6-11 that includes standards for English Language Arts. These standards shaped the requirements of the rubric. The targeted skills of the writing conferences were based on student need and end-of-grade standard from NJSL S while also addressing the target skills of the district's curriculum.

Limitations

This section outlines the limitations of the study, which aimed to explore the impact of implementing a student-tailored rubric on writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom. It examined how rubric instruction affects students' self-assessment of their writing and what comparisons between student self-assessment and teacher feedback reveal about writing development. A key limitation is the study's duration, which spanned only three weeks, covering instruction, writing, revision, small group instruction, individual conferences, and publication phases. Students had just two opportunities for revision, with feedback exclusively from teacher to student. Traditionally, the district mandates two days for this assessment, but this study extended it to three weeks, including two for writing, bypassing some writing workshop requirements. The timeframe precluded peer feedback, a standard part of writing practice. Additionally, student attendance was compromised due to school closures, half-days, and other

attendance issues, disrupting writing practice and reducing reflection and conference time. The effective participation days for all students totaled only thirteen, further constrained by scheduled activities like Yoga, Music, and Lexia. Student motivation, particularly evident in the waning responses from Students L and M and a general decline in morale from February to June, also limited the study. Consequently, data analysis leaned more on quantitative data and existing reflection notes.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

The primary research question of this study is how does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? And the subsequent questions are how rubric instruction impact students' self-assessment of their writing and what does comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development. The findings of this study indicates that the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development implementation of a student-tailored rubric improved overall student writing development and increased self-awareness of writing development. Additionally, the analysis of the findings of this research has underscored the essence of data analysis to inform a more targeted instructional strategy.

I collected quantitative and qualitative data in my mixed-method research. I gathered exit tickets, reflections including surveys, student self-assessment and teacher-provided feedback, student writing samples, and field notes for my qualitative data. For my quantitative data, I collected overall scores from the preassessment, midpoint, and final assessments, as well as individual student scores in the rubric graded from the final assessment. I have collected data from twelve participants who engaged in an argumentative writing assessment.

The results of the data analysis in this research developed into four themes found throughout the 3-week study. The first theme that emerged showed differences in perception of writing quality. The second theme shows association between student use of rubric and confidence in writing quality. The third theme showed developing self-awareness of writing

development focused on awareness of writing strengths and areas of growth. Lastly the fourth theme showed the impacts of rubric discussion on student writing development.

Differences in Perception of Writing Quality

In this theme, the data I gathered demonstrated that students may exhibit varying levels of perception of writing quality. The results within this theme reveal that the comparison between student self-feedback and teacher provided feedback shows that students still have a developing perception of a good writing quality. Teacher provided feedback not only aids but is fundamental in refocusing these views to specify the skills or elements that will improve student's writing quality. Students tend to provide more generalized feedback on their work, focusing on broad areas such as "introduction" or "body paragraphs." In contrast, as the teacher, I offered more detailed feedback, pinpointing specific elements within these sections, such as the clarity of thesis statements or the development of counterarguments. Students' reflections are generally positive about their overall capabilities but also recognize specific areas where improvement is needed, such as writing introductions or handling counterarguments. As the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), my feedback provided specific, targeted insights focusing on areas requiring development, often highlighting refinements and technical aspects of writing that students may overlook.

Table 1 shows a representative sample illustrating the difference between self-feedback versus teacher-provided feedback on the introduction and body paragraph criteria of the rubric. As presented, the participants in this sample showcase the common theme where they generally feel positive or at least aware of some aspects of their writing that are solid, while teachers provide feedback that often challenges their assessments, pointing to deeper issues or overlooked elements that could enhance their writing quality. In some cases, such as for Student B, F, I and

J, students may overestimate their proficiency in certain areas, while I may offer more critical feedback based on a holistic evaluation of the writing. This difference highlights the value of teacher feedback in helping students align their self-perceptions with academic writing standards.

Table 1

Student vs Teacher Feedback and Scoring

Student	Student Self Feedback	Teacher Provided Feedback
B	<p>March 12 I feel like I am confident enough that my introduction is good enough or a good way to start. The part I think I may need to work on a little more is the background information, to make sure it's good enough for others to understand.</p> <p>Score: 4</p>	<p>March 12 Glow: Thesis is on the right track.</p> <p>Grow: Hook needs to be related to background and thesis. We also need to simplify the thesis and organize arguments to improve clarity and directness of introduction.</p> <p>Score: 3</p>
E	<p>March 12 I feel confident in my first body paragraph. But I think I'll need to work on my second body paragraph.</p> <p>Score: 2</p>	<p>March 12</p> <p>Glow: effective reasons and great use of evidence.</p> <p>Counter arguments are present and related to your claims.</p> <p>Grow: We need to work on the 3rd reason and find supporting evidence. Consider counter arguments to your claim.</p> <p>Score: 2</p>
F	<p>March 12 Glow: the Body paragraphs have good explanations for each reason.</p> <p>Grow: Text-based reasons could have been stronger.</p> <p>Score: 3</p>	<p>March 12 Glow: topic statement is clear and simple, counterarguments are clear and related to topic, rebuttal answers the counter argument directly.</p> <p>Grow: We need to find better evidence that supports the claim and followed by a clear explanation</p> <p>Score: 2</p>

I	<p>March 12 Student I: Glow: I provided all 5 paragraphs and I have good organization.</p> <p>Score: 4</p>	<p>March 12 Glow: You organized your reasons well from most important to the least.</p> <p>Grow: Work on the missing requirements such as another counter argument and rebuttal and the conclusion.</p> <p>Score: 3</p>
J	<p>March 12 I feel very confident about my intro because I feel like I gave enough details and information in why owning a gun is a risk and it's not good. I think I need a bit more help on the hook.</p> <p>Score: 4</p>	<p>March 12 Glow: your thesis is clearly stated.</p> <p>Grow: Provide your understanding of the 2nd amendment to provide relevant background information.</p> <p>Look at the examples of hook provided and get inspiration from there to create your own hook.</p> <p>Score: 3</p>

Student Use of Rubric and Confidence in Writing Quality

Students frequently cite the rubric as a crucial tool that facilitates their understanding of the expectations and structure required for their essays. They acknowledge that the rubric provides a clear framework, aiding in organizing their thoughts and addressing all necessary components of a high-quality essay. Students who explicitly use the rubric to guide their writing process often produce more structured and complete essays, although these essays may not always achieve high scores without additional feedback from the teacher. Despite recognizing the importance of the rubric, some students still overlook critical elements of argumentative writing, such as the adequate development of arguments or the effective integration of counterarguments. This gap highlights where teacher feedback becomes crucial, not only in supporting writing development but also in providing reteaching opportunities through small group instruction.

As students use the rubric more often, the quotes evidence that students' confidence in writing quality is also developing. They are more comfortable using literacy language such as the required elements of their essay. Students are also more prone in explaining how they can improve their essays by focusing on a specific element and using that as a goal for improvement for the next draft as evidenced in Figure 2. For example, Student B and D, while recognizing their strength in explaining a chosen evidence, also elaborated on how they can improve their body paragraph by researching for a more effective yet understandable evidence to support their claim. Students who are on the moderate level of rubric reference are able to pinpoint the specific criteria and words in the rubric that shows their understanding of rubric. As shown in Figure 2, Student A did not provide comments but circled the area of the conclusion criteria that supports his self assessment. Student G, while also on the moderate level, still used the language in the rubric to identify his strengths and areas in need of assistance.

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supports his self assessment. Student G, while also on the moderate level, still used the language in the rubric to identify his strengths and areas in need of assistance.

Figure 2

Student Rubric Usage

Rubric Reference	Student	Representative Quotes from Data
<p>High Rubric Usage (> 5 rubric reference)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student B <input type="checkbox"/> Student C <input type="checkbox"/> Student D <input type="checkbox"/> Student E <input type="checkbox"/> Student F <input type="checkbox"/> Student H <input type="checkbox"/> Student I <input type="checkbox"/> Student J 	<p>Student B: Talking or explaining my evidence is a part I feel the most confident about because if my evidence is strong enough to prove my claim then I can explain better. The part I need to work on is to work more on the evidence and trying to find ones that are better explained.</p>
		<p>Student D: The rubric helps me out to find what I did wrong. It helps understand what I can do better at what I am having trouble with.</p>
		<p>Student H: I feel confident about my body paragraphs. I need more help on the introduction. I don't think it has a good hook.</p>
<p>Moderate Rubric Usage (3-4 times rubric reference)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student A <input type="checkbox"/> Student G 	<p>On conclusion Student A No comment. Student circled "concluding statement that summarizes the supporting arguments, builds to new ideas or call to action." Score: 4</p>
		<p>Comment on Body Paragraphs Student G: I feel more confident in my first body paragraph. I need to work on more details in my first body paragraph. Score: 3</p>
<p>Low Rubric Usage (< 2 rubric reference)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student K <input type="checkbox"/> Student L 	<p>Student K: It helps me know what to look for when reviewing my essay. It helps know what mistakes I have to look for, or what I need to have.</p>
		<p>Student L: it shows me how to form my essay and paragraphs.</p>

Figure 2 also depicts students categorized based on the frequency of their rubric references during small group instruction and individual conferences. Participants who demonstrated high rubric usage by referencing it more than 5 times during these sessions not only exhibited a strong engagement with rubrics but also expressed confidence in their writing abilities. They recognized the rubric's value in guiding their writing process, appreciating its role in clarifying essay expectations. Their confidence likely emanated from effectively utilizing the rubric as a self-assessment and improvement tool.

Participants categorized under moderate rubric usage referenced the rubric three to four times during small group instruction and individual conferences. These students displayed a moderate level of confidence in their writing, alongside a comparable engagement with rubrics. Although they acknowledged the rubric's significance in their writing process, their confidence levels may not have matched those of students with higher rubric reliance. This suggests that while rubrics are beneficial, they may not entirely alleviate uncertainties about writing abilities.

Participants identified with low rubric usage referenced the rubric less than twice during conferences or small group instruction. These students exhibited a lower level of engagement with rubrics, and their confidence in writing abilities was less evident from their self-assessment comments. Their minimal reliance on rubrics might have contributed to uncertainties about their writing. Without the structured guidance provided by rubrics, these students may have felt less assured about meeting essay expectations. Additionally, these participants also demonstrated low motivation in completing their essays.

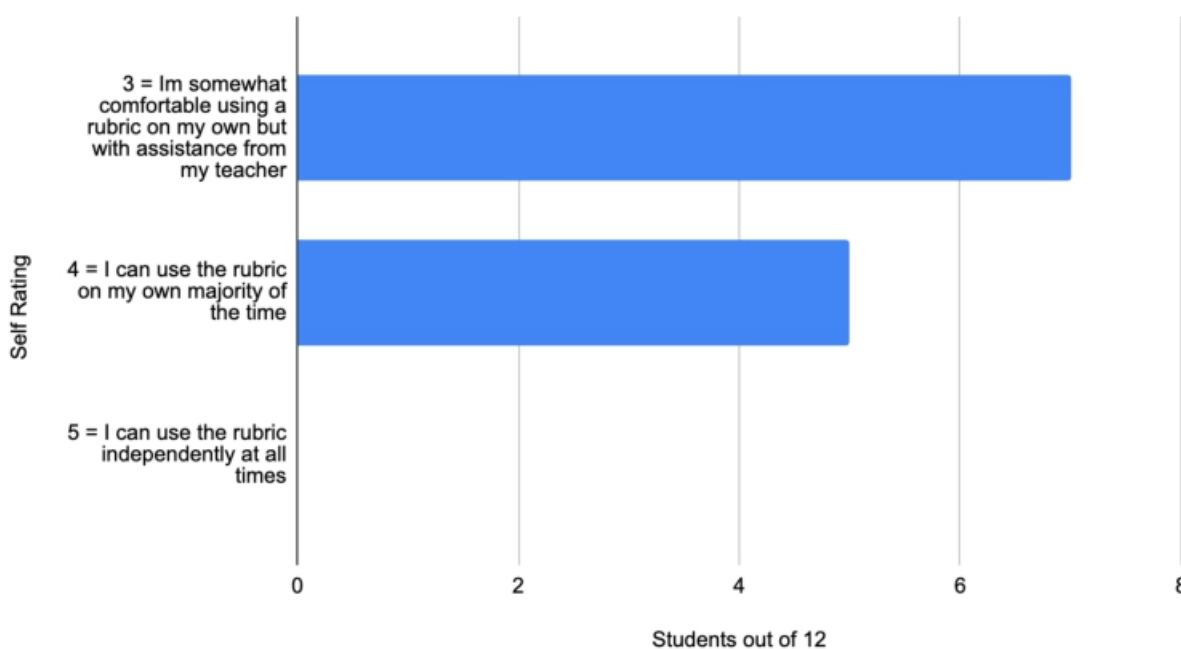
As part of both data collection and standard classroom practices, participants completed an Exit Ticket as a daily reflection and closure for each lesson. Figure 3 illustrates the responses of the study participants regarding their self-assessment of their understanding of rubric usage.

Seven out of twelve participants rated themselves a 3 on a scale of one to five, indicating that most participants are developing a level of comfort with rubric usage. Considering the participants' age group, this level of comfort in using writing tools is reasonable, as they are only introduced to rubrics in ELA and Social Studies. For many of these students, this intensive rubric instruction represents their first exposure to such tools, highlighting the significance of their developmental progress in understanding and utilizing rubrics effectively. This is also an indication that further practice and exposure to this tool is essential in supporting writing development.

Figure 3

Exit Ticket on Understanding of Rubric

Self Rating on Understanding of Rubric Usage



1 = I do not know how to use a rubric, 2 = I need guidance on how to use a rubric, 3 = I'm somewhat comfortable using a rubric on my own but with assistance from my teacher, 4 = I can use the rubric on my own majority of the time, 5 = I can use the rubric independently at all times.

Self-Awareness of Writing Development

The results within this theme showed that rubric discussion aided in students' awareness of their writing development. It prompts them to pinpoint the extent and limitations of their writing skills using the language in genre specific writing and literacy. Students used the rubric to evaluate their strengths and areas for improvement, demonstrating reflective practice. They referenced sections of their essays that aligned with or diverged from the rubric's criteria. Students consistently provided positive feedback ("glow") and identified areas for growth ("grow") during reflection sessions, highlighting criteria they felt confident in and areas needing more support. Many students showed increased awareness of their writing abilities and shortcomings through customized rubrics, engaging in reflective practices by offering 'glows' and 'grows' while assessing their work. Examining themes in student self-assessments and essays revealed strengths, areas for growth, misconceptions, and specific points requiring reteaching. This emphasizes the role of rubrics in promoting students' deeper self-understanding and informing targeted instructional strategies.

Figure 4 evidence a representative sample of students' self-assessments of writing progress throughout the study. The self-assessment data illustrates a landscape of student writing where students develop awareness of their strengths and more clearly see their areas of growth. In the classroom, this also assists in reaching out to students who are less likely to advocate for themselves verbally.

Figure 4*Student Self-Assessment of Writing Development*

Student	Glow	Grow
A	I feel like I'm good at the background information since I am good at summarizing things.	I feel like I need more help on the hook since I don't know how to start an essay.
B	Talking or explaining my evidence is a part I feel the most confident about because if my evidence is strong enough to prove my claim then I can explain better.	The part I need to work on is to work more on the evidence and trying to find ones that are better explained."
H	I feel confident about my body paragraphs.	I need more help on the introduction. I don't think it has that good hook.
I	The part I feel most confident about explaining my evidence of cases happening in a public space when adults have a weapon near children. Who can easily get harm.	The part I need to work on more is finding MORE evidence to support my claim.

Impacts of Rubric Discussion on Student Writing Development

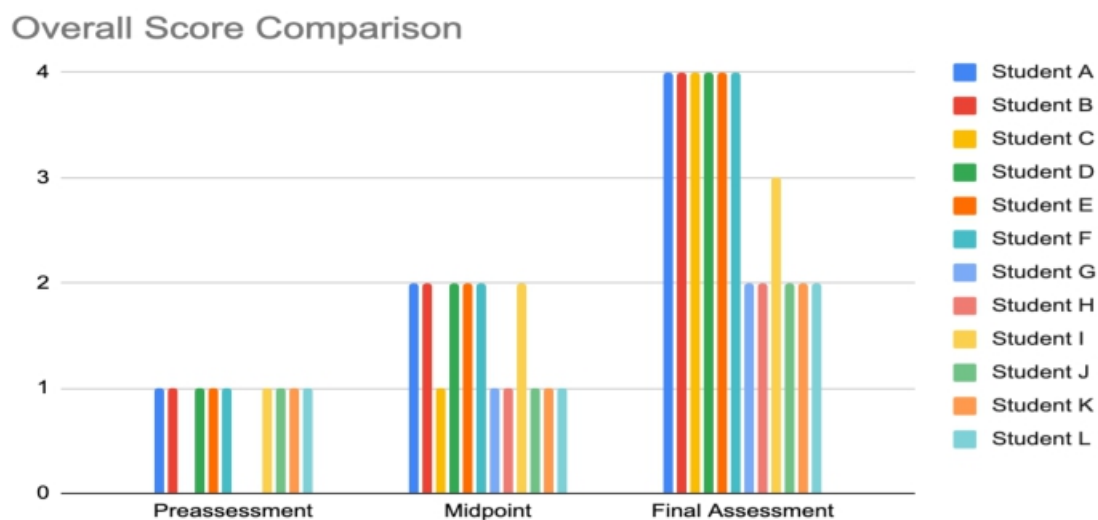
In this final theme, I address the overarching question: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact writing development in a middle school social studies classroom?

This analysis is based on student scores from pre-assessments, midpoint checks, and final assessments. It was observed that student writing scores increased by the final assessment, suggesting that rubric instruction coupled with revision opportunities significantly contributed to this improvement. This trend underscores the efficacy of targeted rubric interventions in enhancing students' writing skills, as measured through structured assessment milestones.

Figure 5 shows an overall score comparison chart comparing scores from the preassessment, midpoint check, and final assessment. This chart shows growth in the participants after engagement in rubric instruction tailored to their specific needs, feedback, and revision opportunities. Student writing scores increased in the final assessment as rubric instruction and revision opportunities were provided. In the preassessment, students were not provided rubric instruction, no feedback was provided, and no revision opportunities were provided. The NJSLA scoring guide assigns 4 (exemplary), 3 (accomplished), 2 (developing), 1 (beginning), and 0 (not applied). The central tendency of the preassessment resulted in a mean score of 1. For the Midpoint Check, the participants were given the revision opportunities from their first essay, but no rubric instruction was given. The mean score for the participants was 1.5. For the final assessment, after rubric instruction, tailored feedback, and revision opportunities were provided, the mean score increased to 3, showing growth in writing development.

Figure 5

SGO Score Comparison



Summary

The data collected for this research examined the effects of implementing a student-tailored rubric on writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom. The primary research question explores how such rubric implementation affects student writing development. Supplementary questions investigate the impact of rubric instruction on students' self-assessment of their writing and how comparisons between student self-assessment and teacher-provided feedback elucidate aspects of student writing development. The findings suggest that using a student-tailored rubric not only enhances overall student writing development but also fosters increased self-awareness among students regarding their writing skills. Moreover, this study highlighted the critical role of data analysis in refining instructional strategies to better meet educational objectives. The analysis revealed four principal themes: differences in perception of writing quality, the relationship between rubric use and confidence in writing, the development of self-awareness regarding writing skills, and the impacts of focused rubric discussion on writing development. Each theme is explored in detail, supported by direct evidence from field notes, student submissions and scores, which illustrate the tangible benefits of the instructional strategies employed.

The first theme revealed varying levels of student confidence in writing abilities. Students exhibit varying levels of perception of their writing quality, often providing generalized feedback while the teacher offers more detailed insights. Student reflections generally highlight their overall capabilities but also recognize specific areas needing improvement. The feedback provided by the teacher focuses on areas requiring development, emphasizing refinements and technical aspects of writing that students may overlook.

The second theme showed that the rubric is acknowledged by students as essential for understanding essay expectations and structure, helping them organize their thoughts and comprehensively address essay components. While the rubric guides students to produce structured essays, gaps remain in mastering argumentative elements, underscoring the importance of teacher feedback and additional instruction to bridge these gaps.

The third theme revealed that students use the rubric to identify their writing strengths and areas for improvement, engaging in reflective practice by aligning or noting deviations from the rubric's criteria. This self-assessment process allows students to recognize their competencies and pinpoint specific areas where they need more support.

Lastly, the final theme notes improvements in student writing scores from initial to final assessments, attributing these gains to the strategic use of rubric-based instruction and revision opportunities. This finding supports the effectiveness of rubrics in enhancing students' writing skills through structured learning and assessment.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions, Discussions and Recommendations

This chapter deliberates on the conclusions drawn based on the data analysis of the previous chapter. These conclusions explain how rubric instruction impacts student writing development, including their self-feedback. These conclusions directly answer the primary research question in this study: How does the implementation of a student-tailored rubric impact student writing development in a middle school Social Studies classroom? And the subsequent questions are: how does rubric instruction impact students' self-assessment of their writing, and what does the comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveal about student writing development? Based on the research of my study, the following conclusions have been made: (1) Rubric-guided instruction, coupled with revision opportunities, contributes to student writing improvement; (2) the comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveals varying levels of perception of good writing quality, and (3) teacher feedback is instrumental in refining student perception of good writing quality.

Conclusion I

Rubric-guided instruction, coupled with revision opportunities contributes to student writing improvement.

Discussion

From the data analysis comparing the pre-assessment scores, the midpoint check, and the final assessment, a significant increase was observed between the midpoint and final assessments as students engaged in rubric discussions and were provided with revision time.

During the pre-assessment, students received the prompt and background information on gun use and incidents in the U.S. They were tasked with writing a five-paragraph argumentative essay. This assessment spanned two days in Google Classroom, with immediate grading but no feedback. The mean score during the pre-assessment was 1 out of 4, indicating a beginning level.

At the midpoint check, students had the opportunity to revise their pre-assessment essays over two days, with the rubric still attached but no additional instructions beyond the prompt. The mean score during this check was 1.5, indicating progress towards the developing level.

During the final assessment phase, students received rubric instruction in one class period. They were given the weekend to revise their midpoint essays. After completing their initial drafts, students engaged in self-assessment using the rubric, identifying strengths ("glow" points) and areas for improvement ("grow" points). They were then grouped based on their growth points for tailored small-group instructions. Following this, students had three class periods to revise their initial drafts, incorporating feedback. Exit tickets provided feedback on rubric usage and efficacy. The mean score for the final assessment was 3, more than doubling the pre-assessment mean score, indicating significant improvement.

This conclusion aligns with the research conducted by Lipnevich et al. (2023), which presents similarities in the impact of rubric instruction on writing development. In their study, Lipnevich et al. found that high school students (grades 9 and 10) who used rubrics scored higher in writing opportunities compared to those who used exemplars. Similarly, the findings from Chapter 4 of my research demonstrate that rubric instruction significantly bolstered students' confidence in writing by clarifying expectations and providing structure to their writing processes. The research by Lipnevich et al. (2023) also supports this sentiment, showing that

rubrics improve writing performance, especially when students are trained on how to use them effectively. However, there are differences between these studies: Lipnevich et al. (2023) explored the impact of both rubrics and exemplars on student writing development among a population of high school students, whereas my research focused solely on rubric instruction, feedback, and revision opportunities with eighth graders.

Conclusion II

The comparison of student self-assessment with teacher-provided feedback reveals varying levels of perception of good writing quality.

Discussion

In analyzing the data comparing student self-feedback with teacher-provided feedback, I concluded that students hold varying perceptions of what constitutes good writing. Their evaluations often diverge from those provided by the teacher, indicating a developmental understanding of writing quality. This conclusion stems from the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4, Table 1. By juxtaposing student feedback with teacher feedback, I observed that students tended to offer more generalized assessments of their own writing, focusing on broad areas such as the "introduction" or "body paragraphs." In contrast, the feedback I provided as their teacher was more detailed, pinpointing specific elements within these sections, such as the clarity of thesis statements or the development of counterarguments. This detailed feedback aided students in refining their understanding of good writing practices.

For example, Student B expressed confidence in starting their introduction but acknowledged the need for assistance in presenting cohesive background information related to the topic of the 2nd Amendment. While the student struggled to articulate how to achieve coherence for the reader, my feedback highlighted parts of the introduction, such as the thesis, in

which the student excelled. Additionally, I guided the student to simplify the introduction into a shorter paragraph for a stronger impact. Comparing these two sets of feedback revealed that the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), represented by the teacher, possessed a more detailed perception of good writing quality. The teacher could readily identify areas requiring refinement and pinpoint specific areas of growth needing minimal adjustments, whereas the student exhibited a lack of this skill.

This conclusion aligns with Andrade's (1999) research on the impact of rubric instruction in writing. Andrade's findings support the idea that instructional rubrics can broaden students' understanding of good writing qualities. It emphasizes that while students may initially struggle with technical aspects of writing, engaging with rubrics and receiving detailed teacher feedback helps them develop a more refined understanding. This aligns with my observation that students may be confident in general aspects of their writing but often require detailed feedback to identify specific areas for improvement. Moreover, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of the MKO in supporting writing development. It underscores the importance of feedback and guidance in the writing process, highlighting that interactions between teachers and students foster a deeper understanding of writing. Through small group instruction and individual conferences, students gain insights into the reader's perspective and learn to proactively address potential questions or concerns. Without feedback from the MKO, students would struggle to identify areas of growth and refine their writing skills effectively.

Conclusion III

Teacher feedback is instrumental in refining student perception of good writing quality.

Discussion

In analyzing the data collected from both Table 1 and Figures 3 and 4, I reached this

conclusion: teacher feedback is essential for students to improve in the specific requirements. The data suggests that the usage of rubrics facilitates students' self-assessment by providing specific criteria for evaluation and guiding them toward areas of improvement, however it also highlights that teacher feedback is essential for students to develop students' perception of what good writing looks like. The rubrics included clear evaluation criteria across various aspects of writing, with an effort made to prioritize specificity in their construction. Criteria were provided for evaluating Introduction, Body Paragraphs, Counterarguments, Organization, Conventions, and Conclusion. Students were tasked with self-assessing their essays using the rubric and providing themselves with "glow" and "grow" points. This clarity enables students to discern their strengths and weaknesses more accurately. By comparing their work against the rubric's standards, students engage in guided self-assessment, leading to a deeper understanding of their writing proficiency. However, it can be observed as well that without the teacher feedback and rubric instruction, students at the middle school level may have difficulties in understanding and interpreting the criterias in the rubrics as evidenced by the superficial feedback they provided themselves during reflection opportunities. The process of reflection guided by teacher feedback, modelling and instruction encourages reflective practices as students consider their writing choices in light of the rubric's criteria. Armed with specific feedback, students develop targeted improvement strategies, leading to incremental progress over time, as evidenced by increasing scores on the rubric.

For example, as shown in Figure 4, Student A acknowledges strengths in providing background information but identifies the need for improvement in crafting an engaging hook. Student B feels confident about her introduction but identifies areas for improvement in providing background information and organizing her arguments. In these two instances, after

small group instructions, students were able to specify specific parts of their essays in which they excelled, as well as areas that required refinement or assistance, demonstrating evidence of a growth mindset.

This conclusion aligns with the study of Poehner and Yu (2022), whose findings showed that rubrics served as a mediator to identify emerging skills in writing. Dynamic assessment, combined with rubrics and verbal feedback, facilitated writing skill development, fostering independence in writing and self-assessment. Rubrics, when used in conjunction with dynamic assessment and targeted feedback, contribute to writing skill development in L2 learners. Specific feedback targeting individual needs promotes growth and improvement in writing abilities. Their research employed a methodology centered around Dynamic Assessment (DA), a process involving the evaluation of learners' abilities before and after mediation. In this case, rubric ratings were utilized as a means to assess learner writing both before and after mediation sessions. During mediation, participants engaged with mediators who provided specific feedback based on the rubric criteria. The mediation process involved discussions, verbal feedback, and guidance through the thinking process regarding the participants' writing. Their participants also engaged in self-assessment. In my study, students self-assessed and also received feedback from the teacher. They were given time to apply that feedback and make revisions, similar to Poehner and Yu's (2022) study. However, their study was mainly conducted with learners in L2 and L4 enrolled in an intensive English program, while mine was conducted in a general education classroom with middle school students in a public school.

This conclusion also aligns with the cognitive process theory of writing and the sociocultural theory. According to cognitive process theory proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981), writing involves a series of cognitive processes, including planning, translating ideas into

written text, and reviewing, taking in feedback and revising the written product. In this conclusion, the emphasis is on how the usage of rubrics facilitates students' self-assessment by providing specific criteria for evaluation and guiding them toward areas of improvement. Strengthened with teacher feedback and guidance, this process aligns with the cognitive processes involved in writing, as it encourages students to engage in reflective practices, consider their writing choices in light of the rubric's criteria, and develop targeted improvement strategies with the help of a MKO (Vygotsky, 1978). The incremental progress observed over time, as evidenced by increasing scores on the rubric, reflects the iterative nature of the writing process described in the cognitive process theory.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, further research is recommended to investigate the applicability of rubric-guided instruction across different subject areas or disciplines. This study focused on the application and impact of rubric instruction in a middle school social studies classroom. There can be added value in investigating whether the benefits observed in writing development extend to other areas such as science, mathematics, or language arts, and exploring potential adaptations needed for different content areas.

Secondly, I recommend further investigation of the role of teacher training in effectively implementing rubric-guided instruction. Additional research is needed to explore how teachers' understanding of rubric usage and their ability to provide targeted feedback impact students' writing development and self-assessment skills.

Lastly, based on the experiences during the present study, the final recommendation is to investigate the integration of technology tools, such as online platforms or automated feedback systems, in conjunction with rubric-guided instruction. In the present era where technology and

artificial intelligence are mainstream, it is of essence to provide culturally appropriate and up to date quality of instruction by investigating how technology can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of providing feedback and supporting self-assessment in writing development.

Recommendations for Teachers

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations emerge for educators aiming to incorporate rubric instruction into their teaching practices for writing. Firstly, teachers are encouraged to prioritize fostering reflective practices in students by guiding them to analyze their own writing alongside teacher feedback. This process of identifying areas for improvement and developing growth strategies facilitates a self-regulated learning experience.

Secondly, educators can benefit from recognizing the significance of individualized feedback and intervention in the development of writing skills, as evidenced by the results of the SGO scores after rubric instruction. Tailoring feedback to address each student's unique needs and learning style enables educators to effectively reach and support a diverse range of students. Moreover, based on the conclusion that rubric instruction enhances self-awareness and self-efficacy in students, it is recommended that teachers continue to integrate rubrics into writing instruction across various disciplines. It is imperative for educators to ensure that rubrics are clear, specific, and aligned with learning objectives to effectively facilitate students' self-awareness and self-assessment. Additionally, educators should recognize and celebrate students' incremental progress in writing development, utilizing rubrics to encourage students to set achievable goals for improvement based on feedback.

Lastly, offering targeted feedback to students based on their individual strengths and areas for growth identified through rubric assessment should become a routine practice in the classroom. This approach will help students develop specific strategies for improvement and

further enhance their writing skills.

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APPENDICES

Grades 6–High School Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items

The scoring rubric identifies the criteria for scoring Prose Constructed Response (PCR) items. The rubric is used to score responses to the Research Simulation Task and the Literary Analysis Task.

Research Simulation Task (RST) and Literary Analysis Task (LAT)

Construct Measured	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	Score Point 0
Reading Comprehension and Written Expression	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates full comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and inferentially by providing an accurate analysis; addresses the prompt and provides effective and comprehensive development of the claim or topic that is consistently appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; uses clear reasoning supported by relevant text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic; is effectively organized with clear and coherent writing; establishes and maintains an effective style. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a mostly accurate analysis; addresses the prompt and provides mostly effective development of claim or topic that is mostly appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; uses mostly clear reasoning supported by relevant text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic; is organized with mostly clear and coherent writing; establishes and maintains a mostly effective style. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates basic comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a generally accurate analysis; addresses the prompt and provides some development of claim or topic that is somewhat appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; uses some reasoning and text-based evidence in the development of the claim or topic; demonstrates some organization with somewhat coherent writing; has a style that is somewhat effective. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates limited comprehension of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially by providing a minimally accurate analysis; addresses the prompt and provides minimal development of claim or topic that is limited in its appropriateness to task, purpose, and audience; uses limited reasoning and text-based evidence; demonstrates limited organization and coherence; has a style that is minimally effective. 	<p>The student response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates no comprehension of ideas by providing an inaccurate or no analysis; is undeveloped and/or inappropriate to task, purpose, and audience; includes little to no text-based evidence; lacks organization and coherence; has an inappropriate style.
Knowledge of Language and Conventions		<p>The student response to the prompt demonstrates full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage, but meaning is clear.</p>	<p>The student response to the prompt demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding, but the meaning is generally clear.</p>	<p>The student response to the prompt demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that often impede understanding.</p>	<p>The student response to the prompt does not demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English at the appropriate level of complexity. Frequent and varied errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage impede understanding.</p>

Appendix B Customized Argumentative Essay Rubric for Student Growth Objective P.1-2

Argumentative Essay RUBRIC

Criteria	4	3	2	1	0
Introduction	Student identifies the topic providing a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hook • Background • Thesis 	Students address the prompt and provide some development of the topic that is generally appropriate to task, purpose, Thesis needs to be highlighted for clarity	Students address the prompt and provide some development of claim or topic that is somewhat appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Background and thesis unclear.	Student addresses the prompt and provides minimal development of claim or topic that is limited in its appropriateness to task, purpose, and audience; No thesis provided	Student's introduction is undeveloped and/or inappropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Body Paragraphs	All body paragraphs uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic statements that are clear. • Reasons are supported by text based evidence • Evidence are directly from the texts discussed in class • Counter arguments and Rebuttals • All reasons strongly support the main argument and is connected to the main topic 	body paragraphs Use mostly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear reasoning • relevant text based evidence • 1 counter argument identified • All reasons strongly support the main argument and is connected to the main topic 	2 out of 3 body paragraphs use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some clear reasoning • Some relevant text based evidence • No counter argument • Some reasons strongly support the main argument and is connected to the main topic 	Body paragraphs Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited reasoning • Less than 2 text-based evidence • Reasons that do not support the main argument effectively 	Body paragraphs Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reasoning • No text based evidence • Reasons do not support the main argument effectively
Counter arguments	Examines at least 2 different perspectives on the issue and fully responds to counterarguments	Shows some recognition of complexity by providing some response to counterarguments to the writer's position. Only 1 counter argument recognized.	Acknowledges 1 counterargument to the writer's position, but discussion of it is brief or unclear.	There is little recognition of a counterargument to the writer's position. No specific counter argument is provided	The essay shows no recognition that there is another side to this issue.

Argumentative Essay RUBRIC

Organization	Overall organization is effectively organized with clear and coherent writing and following the structure of the genre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • 3 Body Paragraphs with evidence • Counter arguments • Conclusion 	Essay is organized with mostly clear and coherent writing following the structure of the genre but arguments are not organized in an effective order	Essay mostly organized with understandable writing following the structure of the genre but arguments are not organized in an effective order	Little effort is seen in writing structure following the genre and arguments are not organized in an effective order	There is not organization of arguments and essay structure is not observable.
Conventions	The Students' essays have a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar and spelling but the meaning is clear.	There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that occasionally impede understanding, but the meaning is generally clear.	The student response to the prompt demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity. There may be errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage that often impede understanding.	The student response to the prompt does not demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English at the appropriate level of complexity. Frequent and varied errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage impede understanding.	
Conclusion	Essay provides a concluding statement that summarizes the supporting arguments, builds to new ideas or call to action. The conclusion continues to use quotes and sources to support its claims.	Essay provides a concluding statement that summarizes the major points, explains their significance, and builds to new ideas and insights.	Essay provides mostly summary and explanation but offers few new ideas and insights.	Essay provides mostly summary and offers little explanation and no new ideas and insights.	No conclusion paragraph written.

Glow

Grow

Total points:	SGO SCORE
21 or above	4
19-20	3
16-18	2
12-15	1
0-11	0