

USING GRAPHIC ELEMENTS IN CARTOON SEQUENCES TO IMPROVE WRITTEN
NARRATIVES OF HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS

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This study tests three different interventions for hard of hearing students who have written language needs. Participants wrote first drafts of narratives, and retold the narrative to the investigator, who represented the retelling in three ways: through simple picture sequences, through picture sequences with added graphic elements, and with direct instruction in graphic element meaning. The addition of graphic elements to picture sequences allowed participants to improve second drafts of stories, resulting in syntax, semantics and story grammar that more closely approximated the writing of children with normal hearing. Direct instruction in the meaning of graphic elements resulted in further improvement in second drafts by three of the four participants, with an observable impact on certain variables, specifically: 1) length of story, 2) length of T-unit, 3) increase in precise vocabulary use, 4) decrease in proportion of syntactic cohesive ties, 5) increase in the number of cohesive categories and 6) improved total scores for story grammar elements.

Although general trends were noted, in all cases there were complex interactions between student characteristics, targeted writing skills, and intervention types. Implications of the findings from this investigation for teachers of students who are hard of hearing are presented. The need for further study is discussed.