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An effective methodology for teaching writing to adolescent English learners

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An Effective Methodology for Teaching Writing to Adolescent English Learners

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Abstract

This creative Honors project involves analyzing research in the area of second language acquisition and writing pedagogies for teaching English learners (ELs). The goal is to integrate several methodologies including the FIVES for Writing strategy and the process-writing approach to create a unit of lesson plans for teaching writing to 9th grade ELs. On examination of the research on pre-service teacher training and teaching writing to ELs, it is clear that there is a gap in the training and teaching of writing, particularly for ELs. This paper will synthesize research on best practices and find an effective methodology for teaching writing to adolescent English learners.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In schools today, writing skills are often overlooked, instruction often does not focus on writing skills to the detriment of students, especially English learners (ELs). These skills are rarely taught, for a variety of reasons; standardized testing does not emphasize written communication, pre-service teachers do not have adequate preparation in teaching writing strategies, and literacy focuses on reading (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Larsen, 2013; Panofsky et al., 2005; The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and College, 2003). Despite the fact that standardized testing such as Virginia Standards of Learning, the SAT, and the ACT do not require a written essay, students must possess writing skills if they wish to pursue higher education or be competitive in the job market.

Statement of the Problem

Writing pedagogy is underdeveloped in the field of teaching English as a second language. Universities and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) programs primarily prepare pre-service English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in the realms of teaching reading and oral production (Kibler, Heny, & Andrei, 2016; Larsen 2013). When these teachers' ELs enter an English classroom with their native-English speaking peers, they may not be adequately prepared to handle the writing demands of the mainstream classroom (Panofsky et al., 2005).

While native English speakers tend to be exposed to a certain amount of composition strategies in their English classes throughout their school career as part of their Language Arts curriculum, ELs entering the system at different points may not have the same exposure (Panofsky et al., 2005). ELs have the added challenges of acquiring a second language, spending

time in English as a Second Language classrooms that spend more time on oral communication, and adjusting to a new culture and therefore must be recognized as a unique body of students with individual needs (Freeman & Freeman, 2011).

Inquiry Questions

In search of an effective writing pedagogy to supplement a pre-service TESOL undergraduate course of study, this creative Honors project will address the questions:

1. What is an effective methodology for teaching writing to 9th grade English learners?
2. How does *Using the FIVES for Writing* provide an appropriate framework for designing lesson plans for teaching writing to 9th grade English learners?
3. How might the process approach to writing improve student engagement with texts?

Personal Connection

I am passionate about writing. It has always been something that I have enjoyed, and I wholeheartedly wish that others shared my passion. Unfortunately, many people around me dislike writing or write poorly, not due to a personal lack of motivation or desire to learn, but because they did not receive adequate instruction during their formative education and grew up in a setting where writing activities were treated as chores and focused on the final product rather than the writing process itself.

I have chosen this project in order to fill the gap that I have found in my own education. Pre-service teachers, myself included, are underprepared to meet the writing needs of ELs in their classrooms, and in doing this project I will be better prepared to serve my future students. If ELs are unable to express themselves effectively in mainstream classrooms, they can be marginalized by their classmates and their teacher and put into low-ability classrooms where

they are not challenged or presented with the same opportunities as their native-English speaking peers. This issue does not stop with their formal education, but continues into the workplace.

I have also witnessed writing challenges with ELs in the various practicum experiences I have had. There seems to be a general mentality among ESL teachers that "if they can say it, they can write it," which is not the case. Oral language production is certainly a good place to start, but writing requires different skills and specific instruction to effectively develop it. I have noticed that among ELs, writing can be a cause of great frustration for the students when they are unable to clearly articulate their ideas and can struggle with spelling and letter formation, which leads teachers to focus on other areas to avoid the frustration.

Definition of Terms

Differentiation.

Today's classrooms are becoming more and more heterogeneous with students coming from a variety of linguistic, cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. Despite the presence of resource or pull-out classrooms, most students will still spend the majority of their time in the mainstream classroom where it is the teacher's responsibility to differentiate instruction to adjust material and strategies based on the individual developmental needs of each student (Suprayogi, Valcke, & Godwin, 2017; Tomlinson et al., 2003). Differentiation is, in essence, a pedagogical rather than an organization approach and can be defined as:

> ...an approach to teaching in which teachers proactively modify curricula, teaching methods, resources, learning activities, and student products to address the diverse needs of individual students and small groups of students to maximize the learning opportunity for each student in a classroom. (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 121)

English Learner.

As defined by U.S. Department of Education Title IX General Provision 9101(25), an English learner, or a student who is limited English proficient, is someone

(A) who is aged 3 through 21;

(B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;

(C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;

(ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and

(II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or

(iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and

(D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual —

(i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);

(ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or

(iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society. (DOE, 2004)

Literacy.

UNESCO (2008) states that a literate person, a person who has acquired literacy, is someone "who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (her) everyday life" (p. 17). Yet while literacy in the United States can generally be defined as the ability to read and write, there is no globally accepted definition, as literacy changes depending on the context and cultural expectations and perceptions of those perceived as "literate" and "illiterate" (Keefe & Copeland, 2011). However, for the purposes of this paper, literacy will be defined as the ability to read and write.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this project is to investigate research related to adolescent second language acquisition and writing pedagogies to find an effective methodology for teaching writing to adolescent English learners. I will look at a variety of approaches in order to determine which can be effectively integrated with the chosen methodology.

The objective of this project will be to create differentiated, practical, and effective unit plan on writing for 9th grade English learners that can be implemented in the classroom to better help ELs develop the writing skills necessary for success in the mainstream classroom, higher education, and the workforce.

Outline

This project will consist of five chapters:

I. Chapter 1: Introduction
   - A. Statement of the Problem
   - B. Inquiry Questions
   - C. Personal Connection to the Project
   - D. Definition of Terms
   - E. Purpose and Objectives
   - F. Outline

G. Methodology and Timeline

II. Chapter 2: Literature Review
   A. Why Teaching Writing is Important
   B. Teacher Training Gap in Writing
   C. Literacy Focus on Reading and Oral Language Development
   D. Importance of Differentiated Instruction for Teaching Writing to ELs

III. Chapter 3: Unit Design
   A. Case for chosen methodology (the FIVES)
   B. Thorough introduction for chosen method
   C. Explicit statements of decisions regarding:
      1. Pace
      2. Length of lesson
      3. Output expectations
      4. Learning outcomes
      5. Lesson plan format
      6. Differentiation
      7. WIDA level of this project

IV. Chapter 4: Original Writing Unit
   A. 3 differentiated lesson plans

V. Chapter 5: Discussion/Conclusions

Methodology and Timeline

I have chosen *Using FIVES for Writing: Communicating, Thinking, and Learning Effectively* by Mary Shea and Nancy Roberts (2018), a strategy that utilizes the five-step process writing approach (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). This strategy posits that writing is a process and needs to be taught as explicitly as reading skills, as writing skills are often overlooked or assumed to naturally follow reading. With this strategy, teachers first model the lesson, then encourage and monitor collaborative work, then finally release responsibility entirely for students to complete their work independently. *Using FIVES for Writing* offers a framework for building constructed response and integrated response essays and walks teachers through each step of teaching the writing process, from interpreting a prompt to conducting research to final product publication (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

I will complete Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in the Spring 2018 semester and deliver them to my readers for review by March 28. Chapters 3 will be completed in the Fall 2018 semester, Chapters 4 and 5 will be completed in Spring 2019, and I will present my project for defense in Spring 2019.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In an era of high-stakes, multiple-choice testing, teaching writing skills has taken a subordinated and diminished position in both mainstream and ESL classrooms (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Larsen, 2013; Panofsky et al., 2005; The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and College, 2003). This review will explore why teaching writing matters, the teacher training gap in writing, the implications of the focus of literacy development on reading and oral language development, and the importance of differentiation for teaching writing to English learners. Due to the limited amount of literature specific to EL writing, this review includes literature on the state of writing in schools in general, in addition to EL-specific research. Because EL instruction is largely based on a student's proficiency in English rather than age, it is beneficial to look at writing practices across multiple grades as strategies can be applied to similar proficiencies across grade levels. The literature is not specific to 9th grade but has been expanded to include all adolescent ELs, from 6th grade until 12th grade.

Why Teaching Writing Matters

Writing in higher education and the workplace. While widely accepted as an essential skill, writing has taken a backseat in today's classrooms. By the time they reach their first year of college, nearly 50% of high school graduates are not adequately prepared for the demands of college level writing (Graham & Perin, 2007) and cannot write a paper that is largely free of grammatical and spelling errors (The National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges [NCW], 2003). In a 2012 report released by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), only 24% of 8th and 12th graders tested at the proficient level in writing, with proficiency meaning that the students have "clearly demonstrated the ability to

accomplish the communicative purpose of their writing" (NCES, 2012, p. 1), while 52% of high school seniors performed at the basic level, meaning they achieved a partial mastery of the prerequisite skills needed for writing at each grade level. A mere 3% performed at the advanced or superior level (NCES, 2012). These writing skills developed during formative education are critical to future workplace development. The National Commission on Writing (2003) found that 90% of mid-career professionals stated that the "need to write effectively" is a "skill of great importance" (p. 11), yet American businesses spend $3.1 billion per year for writing remediation because employees are unable to meet the writing expectations in their workplace (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Access to higher education and post-secondary technical training is limited to those who can clearly and accurately express themselves in writing. In developed countries, greater value is placed on those with a higher level of education, leading nearly three-quarters of American high school graduates to pursue higher education opportunities. These students realize that in this ever-growing and fast-changing world, university-level skills are necessary for acquiring a job (NCW, 2003). According to the National Commission on Writing (2003), this changing environment "places a greater premium on the ability of the average American to communicate clearly than it ever has before" (p. 11). Even jobs in fields such as engineering now emphasize written materials such as proposals and field reports (Kiuhara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009; NCW, 2003). Business professionals and those who work in politics are often expected to deliver written documentation, visual representations, technical reports, and electronic messages (Graham & Perin, 2007). Professions such as filmmaking, advertising, journalism, theater, recording, and politics are a few among many that require workers and employees to be

well-versed in the skill of writing. Even minimum wage and entry-level jobs demand the ability to keep clear records and reports in the workplace, and email has long since replaced the telephone as the main form of communication in the workplace and the general community (Kiuhara et al., 2009; Panofsky et al., 2005).

Social and cognitive benefits. In addition to occupational advantages, writing possesses countless other benefits. The ability to write to persuade, inform, and narrate is an essential skill in the workplace, school, and life and a powerful tool to share ideas, express emotion, recount experiences, and explore identity. Because of its preciseness and explicitness, writing pushes students to organize their thoughts, make connections between ideas, explore new assumptions, and improve critical thinking (Graham & Perin, 2007). Great writers and orators throughout history have used the power of words to spark revolutions and speak out against oppression, while at the same time other writers have expressed and explored the full range of human emotions and left the world with the great works of Hemingway, Wharton, Faulkner, and others which still inform the human condition to this day (NCW, 2003).

The National Commission on Writing (2003) found that when education was available only to the upper echelons of United States society, great importance was placed on "grammar, rhetoric, and logic" (p. 9). It was on these building blocks that real learning and self-knowledge were constructed, with policy and pedagogy centering on the idea that "how to say things correctly, how to say them well, and how to make sure that what one said made sense" (NCW, 2003, p. 9) were key.

Writing is more than a way for students to show what they know; it helps them understand what they know. While writing activities in different genres help students develop

their writing skills, writing is far more complex than that, requiring students to "stretch their minds, sharpen their analytical capabilities, and make valid and accurate distinctions" (NCW, 2003, p. 13). Students must put their thoughts down on paper and learn to express themselves clearly and accurately. If students are able to create prose that is "precise, engaging, and coherent" (NCW, 2003, p. 16), not only will they be prepared to meet the demands of their workplace, succeed in advanced courses across all disciplines, and have access to postsecondary education opportunities, they will also possess strengths in analysis and logic and will be able to "observe, think, and make judgments about the many complex and demanding issues that come before the citizenry in a democracy" (NCW, 2003, p. 18).

Teacher Training Gap in Writing

A study conducted in 2009 found that only 9% of graduate Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs require a course specifically in second language (L2) writing strategies and an additional 14% require a course that integrate both reading and writing pedagogy (Larsen, 2013). The field of ESL writing is rich and vast, but has traditionally been addressed in a general methods course and often gets overlooked or only superficially examined in the midst of all the other material presented in the class (Larsen, 2013). In a study conducted by Larsen in 2013, 54% of teachers reported that they were only marginally or not at all prepared to teach writing to ELs and only 1 out of 10 believed that they were adequately prepared. While only 34% of teachers stated that they were either required to or given the option of taking an L2 writing instruction course in college, every single one of those teachers considered themselves well-prepared to teach writing (Larsen, 2013).

Additionally, English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher preparation programs put a strong emphasis on oral language development, based on applied linguistics and language structure, not composition. Conversely, mainstream English teachers are prepared to teach composition and the study of literary texts, often working on the assumption that all their students have native-level fluency in English. Yet despite these discrepancies, ELs are held to the same standards and expected to pass the same assessments as their native-English-speaking classmates (Panofsky et al., 2005).

Writing training gap at the local level. Literacy training for pre-service ESL teachers following the TESOL licensure track at a mid-sized state university in the mid-Atlantic, includes only two 3-credit literacy courses, only one of which is specifically for teaching literacy to ELs (University Catalog, 2017-18). In the course READ 366 Early Literacy Development and Acquisition, one of the two required TESOL literacy courses at this university, approximately 15% of total instructional time during the semester is spent on strategies for teaching writing and only one of the course objectives specifically mentions writing (Wilson, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Literacy Focuses on Reading and Oral Language Development

Despite the definition of literacy encompassing both reading and writing equally, American education devotes more time to developing reading skills than writing skills, as reading skills are primarily tested as the sole literacy metrics. This inequity is likely due to the expectations of standardized testing in the United States and the two main college entrance exams in the U.S. being the SAT and the ACT. In recent years, both the SAT and ACT implemented a short essay section, which has since been rendered optional and students can

choose whether or not to complete this portion based on their university's requirements or recommendations. However, most liberal arts colleges in the U.S. do not require or recommend this essay portion. Both of these tests, however, have a required reading portion (ACT, Inc., 2018; The College Board, 2018).

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Standards of Learning (SOL) require certain end-of-course SOL tests each year, beginning in grade 3. There is a reading SOL test every year in grades 3 through 8, and then again in grade 11, but writing is only assessed in grades 8 and 11 (VDOE, 2018). These high-stakes tests emphasize display and structure rather than content and ideas; there is more concern over how the piece will appear to the test graders than how well the student accurately and clearly communicates his or her ideas (Kibler et al., 2016).

State exams and high-stakes tests were rated as important or very important by 64% of middle school and 86% of high school teachers, and over three-quarters of English teachers reported that their students would take a high-stakes test this year (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Yet this importance does not bode well for the teaching of writing, as 30% of the high school and 18% of the middle school high-stakes tests require writing, but these statistics include writing in any form, from single sentences to whole essays (Applebee & Langer, 2011). Because of the great importance placed on these exams, teachers are teaching to the test and report teaching students how to take the test rather than crafting tasks to teach writing as "a way to demonstrate content knowledge or disciplinary thinking" (Applebee & Langer, 2011, p. 18), leaving students replicating formulaic structures designed for these high-stakes tests.

Oral communication. Furthermore, EL teachers are often prepared in the areas of oral communication and reading, not writing (Panofsky et al., 2005). When a student is exited from the ESL program in his or her school, he or she will enter the mainstream English classroom with little to no writing instruction, and it is unlikely they will have achieved native-like fluency, yet they are expected to write at the same level as their native-speaking peers (Panofsky et al., 2005). Traditionally, second language writing has focused on "reinforc[ing] oral patterns and test[ing] grammatical knowledge" (Hedgcock, 2005, p. 604) using a product-oriented approach. However, there has been a shift; rather than assume oral language precedes written language, there is a possibility that written language leads to oral language development (Panofsky et al., 2005).

Importance of Differentiated Instruction for Teaching Writing to ELs

Today's classrooms are becoming more and more diverse and gone are the days of "homogeneity by virtue of chronological age" (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 119). Classes are filled with students with learning disabilities, gifted students, unmotivated and motivated students, students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those who don't speak English as a first language, with varying learning styles and interests, from widely different socioeconomic statuses, and those who fit into two or three of these categories (Suprayogi et al., 2017; Tomlinson et al., 2003). These demographic trends are intensified by an emphasis on detracking students who might otherwise be placed in a low-expectations environment, mainstreaming ELs and students with special needs, and attempts to desegregate students with reading problems and to improve literacy instruction for all. This system forces teachers to address the varying needs and abilities present in their classroom using differentiated instruction (Suprayogi et al., 2017; Tomlinson et al., 2003; Valiandes, 2015). With differentiated instruction, teachers must "adjust

curriculum, material, and support to ensure that each student has equity of access to high-quality learning" (Tomlinson et al., 2003, p. 120).

While it is easy to generalize and group all ELs together for efficiency and ease of instruction, that practice has been proven detrimental to their education. There are multiple "types" of ELs present in the modern U.S. school system, including international students who have come to the U.S. to study, immigrants who have recently arrived (newcomers), long-term residents who have lived in the U.S. for years and may have been born here, and, more recently, refugees who are being resettled for a new life in the U.S. (Panofsky et al., 2005). Each of these groups comes from a different language background. For example, long-term residents have been educated in the U.S. school system and may have mastered social language but have yet to acquire adequate academic language, international students may be highly educated in their home cultures, and refugees often have had little to no formal schooling and may not even be literate in their native language (Murray & Christison, 2011).

Beyond these broader distinctions, it is important to recognize individual differences as well. Students come from unique backgrounds that inform their lives in and out of school. Some students will have experienced refugee camps or extreme poverty, while others have been subject to government oppression, and still others come from lives of educational privilege or wealth (Panofsky et al., 2005).

Differences in cultural expectations between the U.S. and students' home cultures must be recognized as well. For example, some students come from high-power distance cultures where it is considered impolite or even subversive to question teachers and professors, making it

socially unacceptable for a student to seek help. These cultures may discourage the expression of personal opinions, something that is often expected of American students (Panofsky et al., 2005).

When ELs enter the US education system, they may experience tension between their home culture and American school culture. Based on Schumann's 1978 Acculturation Model, which focuses on the sociocultural factors that affect groups of language learners, language acquisition can be linked to what happens when people move from one cultural setting into a new one, with particular emphasis on social distance (as cited in Freeman & Freeman, 2011). The greater the social distance, or differences, between two cultures, the less likely it is for members of that group to acquire the language of the new culture. Schumann's cultural congruence factor theorizes that social distance increases when the two cultures are very different and decreases when they are more similar (Freeman & Freeman, 2011).

Further, there are differences in how each student has acquired his or her current level of English. Some learners have acquired the language through lived experience and oral instruction for the purpose of using it in everyday life, and others have acquired it through study and written exercises for use in purely academic settings (Panofsky et al., 2005). These are just a few reasons that point to why differentiated instruction in the classroom is critical to ensuring the success of every student, no matter his or her background or language ability.

A differentiated classroom is a place where instruction is offered in different ways so students have "different avenues to acquiring content, to processing or making sense of ideas, and to developing products so that each student can learn effectively" (Tomlinson, 2017, p. 1). Teachers can differentiate content, product, process, and instruction, and while it may initially sound complicated, and differentiated instruction does indeed require forethought and

proactivity, it is not as time-consuming as one might think. It does not dictate individualized lesson plans for each student like what was attempted in the 1970s or a teacher to lose control of her classroom. What it does mandate is that teachers maintain a flexible classroom where students are able to drive their learning by selecting tasks appropriate to their level across various skills (Tomlinson, 2017).

Contrary to popular belief, grouping students by proficiency and creating different lessons for each group is not differentiation, merely an inflexible, homogeneous grouping system driven by teacher-selected tasks. Effective differentiation allows students to group themselves or be grouped based on preferences or readiness while selecting from a range of tasks suited to a variety of learners. This requires proactivity on the teacher's part in the way of planning for a range of learning needs instead of simply reacting to needs as they arise during the lesson. Additionally, differentiated instruction tends to be qualitative rather than quantitative -- i.e., rather than assigning extra work to advanced students, it is more effective to adapt the nature of the assignment itself (Tomlinson, 2017).

Throughout a unit, teachers who differentiate will effectively assess their students, informally and formally, to determine what works for each learner. Based on what the teacher learns, he or she will provide multiple ways to access content and to demonstrate learning while engaging the students in decisions about how and what they learn. Effective learning occurs when students are engaged with relevant content, and that happens when students share the responsibility of their growth and learn how to think on their own and develop a sense of pride in their learning. Students are trusted to form a variety grouping configurations based on their needs

(individual, small groups, and whole class) and the most efficient way to complete the task (Tomlinson, 2017).

These all sound like wonderful ideas for designing a classroom, but they will only work when not artificially imposed on students. Differentiated instruction is organic and dynamic in nature in that students and teachers are learners together, growing together through collaboration and the understanding that the teacher is not one who already differentiates but is one who is aware that every second in the classroom provides new ways to differentiate (Tomlinson, 2017).

WIDA. In order to help teachers identify these individual language differences, WIDA (formerly World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) developed five standards for English Language Development (ELD) which represent the "social, instructional, and academic language that students need to engage with peers, educators, and the curriculum in schools" (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System [Board of Regents], 2012a, p. 3). The 2012 standards are in the areas of social and instructional language where students will "communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting" (Board of Regents, 2012a, p. 3) and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies where ELs will "communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area" (Board of Regents, 2012a, p. 3). The standards are organized by grade level and cluster, with individual grades-level standards for Kindergarten through 8th grade, and grade clusters for grades 9-10 and 11-12. WIDA encourages teachers to follow the ELD of their students across grade levels to fully understand what language development looks like for each of their students (Board of Regents, 2012a).

These standards are aligned with state content standards including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the standards adopted by other states such as Alaska, Minnesota, and Virginia and use theories of language and language development as a point of departure to situate themselves within the framework of state instruction and assessment (Board of Regents, 2014a). Based on these standards, WIDA has also developed an assessment known as ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, which tracks student progress in acquiring academic English in each of the four language domains of speaking, reading, listening, and writing from kindergarten through 12th grade. These assessments serve a variety of purposes: to help families and teachers understand students' level of English along the language development process, to determine if students are sufficiently prepared to exit their ESL program and whether or not they have acquired enough language to participate in mainstream classes without ESL support, to provide teachers with information needed to develop instruction for their ELs, to help districts evaluate the effectiveness of their ESL programs, and to provide reports at the federal level to track progress of ELs towards English language proficiency (Board of Regents, 2014b).

Additionally, WIDA developed the Can Do Descriptors (Board of Regents, 2012b) intended to support teachers by providing them with information about the amount and type of language students can understand and produce at each stage in their English language development in each of the four language domains. These descriptors can be applied to all five English language proficiency standards and can be linked across all content areas (see Appendix A for full Can Do Descriptors) (Board of Regents, 2012b). They are intended for use in tandem with the Performance Definitions, which outline how much English students can "process,

understand, produce, or use" (Board of Regents, 2012b, p. 4) (see Appendix B for full Performance Definitions) in order for teachers to have an understanding of where each student should be in the language acquisition process at a given level of proficiency.

L1 and L2 writing pedagogical differences. Additionally, the differences between first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing instruction and pedagogies must be addressed. There has been a shift in both mainstream and ESL classrooms away from the traditional product-oriented approach to the process-oriented approach, which emphasizes writing as "a meaningful activity for thinking and problem-solving" rather than "concerns of correctness in grammar, usage, and mechanics" (Panofsky et al., 2005, p. 20), which, when implemented correctly and with appropriate differentiation, has been found to be beneficial in the ESL classroom as well as the native-speaker (NS) classroom (Lincoln & Idris, 2015; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017).

As a process, writing requires all writers to "think, write, and revise their writings" (Lincoln & Idris, 2015, p. 123), but teachers must take care to differentiate this process in such a way that it will help ELs improve their writing skills. For example, in the area of error correction, a hotly debated topic in the second language writing world, teachers need to recognize the difference between the types of errors that NS students make and those of ELs and when to treat them in the writing process. While NS students have a natural understanding of English grammar, they will still make mistakes in punctuation and pronoun references, but the errors of ELs result from a lack of linguistic knowledge of the target language such as misusing "grammatical tenses, articles, sentence structure, idioms, and punctuation" (Lincoln & Idris, 2015, p. 121).

In addition to using the process-approach to writing, research suggests that integration of the socioliterate approach may be of benefit to multicultural and multilingual learners (Panofsky et al., 2005). This approach integrates a wide range of genres and texts drawn from a variety of sources from the student's life in and out of school with the goal of helping students understand the social and interactive aspect of texts, rather than putting the focus on the individual and personal themes (Johns, 1999). Students spend time reading, analyzing, and discussing a variety of texts both in whole and small group situations and learning about a variety of strategies to develop a "metalanguage about texts and textual experiences" (Panofsky et al., 2005, p. 21). Johns (1999) finds that this approach prepares students for a range of texts that they will encounter both in academic and social contexts. Reynolds (2004) supports the integration of this approach because while the process approach is necessary for "developing students' awareness of invention, revision, and clarity" (p. 41), ELs fall short in the area of understanding "rhetorical appropriateness" (p. 41) and would benefit from interaction with a wider range of texts, both in reading and writing, and from experience writing for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Several pedagogical practices have been found to support EL writing in the classroom, including allowing ELs to use the process of inquiry on a topic that interests them. Multilingual approaches can also be implemented, particularly the use of a student's first language in certain exercises as many skills from a student's L1 can be transferred to their L2, so using both languages in classroom instruction or in various writing assignments could support EL writing (Panofsky et al., 2005). Research also notes the benefits of integrated reading and writing instruction, a specific example of which would be analyzing a historical text before writing an essay on a similar theme (Kibler et al., 2016). Though historically treated as separate tasks,

research has shown that reading and writing are inextricably linked, with the same cognitive strategies being used to accomplish a reading or writing task (Olson & Land, 2007). Reading provides a model for student writing and allows the students to see and hear repetitive phrases and familiar language. Through reading, students have meaningful interactions with various writing models and are able to establish patterns, which makes writing seem less intimidating and encourages students to write (Ivey & Broaddus, 2007; Olson & Land, 2007). Additionally, the inclusion of shorter writing exercises to help students understand a variety of grammatical manipulations and the use of models has potential in the ESL classroom (Pandey, 2012).

Conclusion

ESL teachers have reported focusing more on language during assessment, whereas NS and content-area teachers focus more on "content and genre-based conventions" (Kibler et al., 2016, p. 355). Based on the aforementioned research, a balanced combination of these two foci would be ideal for ELs; there is general agreement that ELs need grammar and vocabulary instruction (Panofsky et al., 2005), yet they also need to become comfortable with the U.S. style of writing, to understand how to write in different genres, and to develop the ability to communicate thoughts and ideas clearly for a wide range of audiences in order to achieve a successful transition into mainstream content classes, U.S. culture, and, eventually, the job market and life outside of school.

Chapter 3: Unit Design

This chapter will focus on an effective strategy for teaching writing to adolescent English Learners. The FIVES for Writing is a strategy for teaching writing to all students that utilizes the process writing approach and includes differentiated instruction, hands-on learning, and the use of relevant, engaging lessons and material. This strategy also walks teachers through the process of teaching writing, breaking down each step, providing lesson plans and rubrics, (Shea & Roberts, 2018). The second part of the chapter will lay out methodological decisions regarding the creation of the original unit design including student makeup, pace, student learning outcomes, lesson plan format, and WIDA level of the project.

What is Process Writing?

Process writing is an approach to teaching writing that emerged in the 1960s and 70s as "creative writing" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017) after teachers found that the product approach, or the focus on correctness and the final product, was not yielding satisfactory results (Panofsky et al., 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). While becoming familiar with different writing genres is useful for students, teachers were noticing that the learning process of writing was being sacrificed in exchange for traditional correctness. The students' focus on making their essay perfect was hindering their ability to express their ideas. This "creative" approach to writing views writing as a process that includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017).

Benefits of process writing. In order to be effective writers, "[students] need the freedom to solve compositional problems in their own ways" (Keen, 2017, p. 376), which the

process approach allows them to do by breaking writing down into manageable parts, allowing feedback from teachers and peers, and giving the students the freedom to generate their own ideas (Keen, 2017; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). However, despite ample evidence (Hedgcock, 2005; Keen, 2017; Kiuhara et al., 2009; Lincoln & Idris, 2015; Panofsky et al., 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017) demonstrating the effectiveness of teaching writing as a process and despite the fact that reading is taught as a process, teachers often fail to treat it as such (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Throughout their development, young students are immersed in reading activities. Teachers read with and to their students, and they are given time to read independently and with peers. Time is devoted to letter sounds, syntax, and the relationship between letters, words, and meaning, yet while doing this, teachers continuously read to students and present them with diverse genres and topics of interest (Shea & Roberts, 2018). However, rather than treating writing in the same way, people assume that once a student is a proficient reader, writing will follow naturally. This is not the case as most students need explicit writing instruction and exposure to various literary genres (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017; Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Differentiating the process for ELs. The process writing approach benefits ELs by allowing them to draw on their personal experiences, build relationships with peers and teachers through cooperative assistance, and gain numerous opportunities for oral and written language comprehension (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). Because topics are often chosen, not assigned (Keen, 2017; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017), the process approach gives students the opportunity to draw on funds of knowledge to create their piece of writing (Dworin, 2006). While the process writing approach can be highly beneficial when implemented properly, teachers must take into account

the differences in writing instruction between native speakers and ELs and adapt accordingly (Panofsky et al., 2005).

ELs may come from a culture that does not give equal respect to the suggestions of peers -- for example, a teacher may be seen as the only legitimate authority and the student will respond differently to student feedback (Panofsky et al., 2005). Teachers with ELs should not disregard this step, however, but should provide a mixture of peer and teacher feedback, with the teacher validating student feedback. Additionally, students will come from cultures ranging from individualist to collectivist, with each culture using collaboration for different purposes; individualist to improve personal work and collectivist to maintain group relationships (Panofsky et al., 2005). In order for peer-review to be valuable, the peer-response revising and editing processes need to be modeled and structured (Panofsky et al., 2005, Peregoy & Boyle, 2017).

Benefits of Reading in the Writing Classroom

While writing is often considered an active or productive skill and reading a passive or receptive one, both are "acts of composing" (Hirvela, 2004, p. 9). Readers do not simply decode meaning and information, they actively construct meaning (Hirvela, 2004).

As reading and writing involve some of the same subprocesses, the two areas are inextricably linked (Huh & Ha, 2017; Lee & Schallert, 2015; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017; Shea & Roberts, 2018). Lee and Schallert (2015) found that adolescent students learning English in Korea who received either additional extensive reading support or extensive writing support improved more in both written expression and reading comprehension than their peers who did not receive this targeted support. While both these groups improved, there was no significant difference between the two groups, except for those students with a higher English proficiency

level -- these students who received additional extensive reading support improved their writing at an even greater rate than those with a lower proficiency level (Lee & Schallert, 2015).

Huh and Ha (2017) suggest that an unskilled reader can become a skilled writer (and vice versa). Reading various genres, including literature, provides good models for writing and can provide ideas and information that students can write about or respond to. It also enables them to engage in textual interpretation and study different language features.

Writing as a Complement to FIVES for Reading Comprehension

Using Shea and Roberts' (2016) *FIVES Strategy for Reading Comprehension*, readers use Fact, Inference, Vocabulary, Experience, and Summary to develop their reading comprehension competency. Following this approach, readers distinguish facts from opinions, read between the lines, determine the precise meaning of words to understand a message, learn specific terminology to increase clarity, make connections based on experience, negotiate meaning between themselves and the author, and express what they have understood from the text. All these skills are transferable to writing (NCW, 2003; Shea & Roberts, 2016, 2018). Readers using the FIVES actively construct meaning from the text (Shea & Roberts, 2016), the same skill that many have argued is essential to writing (Grabe, 2003; Hirvela, 2004; Huh & Ha, 2017; Lee & Schallert, 2015) The goal of the FIVES Strategy for Reading Comprehension is that a student will not only "flexibly self-initiate strategies taught as habits of mind when reading independently" (Shea & Roberts, 2016, p. 14) but also be able to transfer "language and formats for comprehension instruction regardless of the text type or content area" (Shea & Roberts, 2016, p. 14-15).

Additionally, the FIVES Strategy for Reading Comprehension follows a whole-part-whole process. The student interacts with the world as a whole, others help him/her break it down and identify and label stimuli, then the student applies this new knowledge and skills while interacting with the world (Shea & Roberts, 2016). This process is applied to textual comprehension and the writing process (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017).

The FIVES for Writing

Using the FIVES Strategy for Reading Comprehension helps students internalize the process for "navigating through text, gathering ideas, processing them, thinking deeply, making personal connections, expanding and elaborating on information gleaned, forming and explaining conclusions, organizing content, and expressing thoughts" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 2). The FIVES for Writing is an extension of that process and the idea that reading and writing are processes that develop in sync with one another. The acronym for the FIVES Strategy for Reading Comprehension has been adapted to include the processes for writing:

F poses that writing is a *Fundamental Life Skill*

I reminds writers to *Identify the core request*

V directs writers to *Visualize the plan*

E encourages *Expanding the process to an essay*

S describes *Synthesizing information from multiple sources* (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 3).

The ABBC paragraph. As part of the FIVES for Writing, Shea and Roberts (2018) encourage the use of the ABBC paragraph, a guide to paragraph formation that helps students learn how to start building paragraphs and essays, as they were noticing that secondary students had difficulties figuring out where to begin. This format helps students write with "purpose and

process" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 3) and express themselves concisely, precisely, and clearly through writing. The ABBC paragraph includes *Announcing* their purpose, *Building up* and *Backing up* their purpose with detail and evidence, and *Connecting and Concluding* their response (Shea and Roberts, 2018). Through building up and backing up their claim with evidence, the students learn to synthesize information from a text they have read and inform readers of the source of their claims -- both skills that will also help them evaluate and determine the legitimacy of information or claims presented to them throughout their lives (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Writing as a fundamental skill. As thoroughly discussed in the literature review, Shea and Roberts (2018) believe that writing is essential to communication throughout life. Writing skills are critical to college and career readiness, and state standards reflect the drive towards competence in the written word and the ability to form an effective constructed response piece of writing (Shea & Roberts, 2018). In the Virginia State Standards of Learning (SOLs) determined by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), children as early as second grade are required to demonstrate an understanding of writing as a process, use prewriting strategies, support a main idea with detail, and revise for clarity (VDOE, 2017). Students and teachers continue to build on these skills throughout a student's K-12 career and in ninth grade students must:

- Plan, organize, and writing for a variety of audiences and purposes
- Introduce and develop topics, incorporating evidence and maintaining an organized structure and formal style
- Communicate clearly the purpose of writing using a thesis statement
- Clearly state and defend a position using reasons and evidence from credible sources as support
- Identify counterclaims and provide counterarguments
- Determine the best kind of evidence to use for a claim, and effectively use fact and opinion to support a position
- Use textual evidence to compare and contrast multiple texts

- Arrange paragraphs in a logical progression, using transitions between paragraphs and ideas
- Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and depth of information
- Self- and peer-edit writing (VDOE, 2017, 15-17).

These standards, among others, recognize that writing is a life skill and encourage students to make meaningful connections between their academic and daily lives. It is also critical to integrate the standards into content and other English SOLs. The writing SOLs were designed to expose students to a variety of texts and compositions and write for a variety of purposes and audiences (VDOE, 2017).

Through instruction and observation, writers learn conventions for writing : adjectives, verb tense, adverbs, sentence structure, details, evidence, mood, and more. Yet, while teachers and administrators often assume that writing follows reading, students need explicit instruction on applying and implementing what they are learning and expressing themselves effectively. Students may not know where to begin or how to organize or conclude their writing (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

While young elementary students are still exploring composition and text, upper-elementary and secondary students are generally in the transitional state of writing. They are continuously perfecting their use of language and their skills used to express themselves while acquiring new skills to refine their application and the creation of more complex pieces of expression. People often remain in this stage throughout their lives, with improvement and growth driven by "purpose and need" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 15). To foster this growth, teachers need to provide students with continuous practice in writing with voice, ample opportunities to talk about their writing, listen and respond to texts and the work of others, and interact with the world around them (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Identify prewriting considerations. Strong prompts for a constructed response (CR) or an integrated response essay (IRE) tell students what their purpose is and stimulate inquiry into a text, yet when students do not respond properly, it often means they misread the prompt, do not possess enough information to adequately respond, or provide a response that is only marginally related. However, a significant struggle for students is attempting to write too much -- as such, an effective prompt provides an appropriately narrow issue or question, so students cannot embark on tangents and can clearly identify what their purpose is. As such, explicit practice in interpreting the prompt and identifying purpose is essential to the prewriting stage (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Components of an effective response. Students will also need explicit instruction on the basic components of an effective response: "addressing the prompt, staying on topic, paraphrasing, and using strong vocabulary and transition words" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 20). For constructed responses, such as a single, focused paragraph, students must demonstrate what they have learned and their thinking in a "coherent, cohesive, and concise paragraph" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 20). In order to write a successful constructed response paragraph, students must be able to support their claims, make inferences, and draw on prior knowledge; all higher-order thinking skills that students can improve through interaction with others, guided practice, and feedback (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

In order to better understand how to answer a prompt, students engage in practice prompt and petition writing and then construct their responses. In this stage, the teacher explains the meaning of the ABBC paragraph, highlights why each letter is essential, and then shows rather than tells how to apply it through the modeling of effective responses. By constructing responses

to their own prompts, students develop the ability to accurately use language to express themselves and can determine how prompts demand information and how to include that information (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Once students are familiar with types of prompts, they then need to learn the rest of the essential components of a constructed response paragraph: effective leads, remaining on topic, paraphrasing with voice, powerful words, and transition words. Students first need to develop what is commonly referred to as a "hook" that grabs the reader's attention and offers a guide to help the writer stay on topic. Often, students are taught to use part of the question or petition to guide them in the creation of their lead. This is the Announce step and must be mastered because it gives way to the steps that follow (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

The ABBC paragraph helps students stay on topic, as the lead (the A point) defines the boundaries of the piece of writing, the details and evidence (B points) tie into the lead, and the conclusion (the C point) links the B points back to the lead. When the writer can see how everything in the paragraph must connect, he or she is not left with room to stray into tangents or to give unimportant details. For integrated response essays, each point of the ABBC paragraph can be expanded to a paragraph or more and is still entirely applicable to longer pieces of writing (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Another key aspect of using the FIVES for Writing is the ability to paraphrase without plagiarizing. In order to write in their own words, students need to understand the concept of voice, or the idea that a piece of writing tells the reader something about the author. It is an author's personal style and method of expressing thoughts and ideas to a reader. It is not an easy

task to learn to paraphrase and is best taught through extensive modeling, group work followed by revision, pair work, and finally individual work (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Finally, students need to use powerful words and transition words. Word choice has the ability to "evoke emotion, interest, curiosity, deeper understanding, and clarity of intent" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 27) and is developed through reading and listening. Additionally, the use of transition words from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph guides readers smoothly through the piece and demonstrates relationships between ideas (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Visualize the constructed response paragraph. First and foremost, students must thoroughly read and understand the prompt to determine exactly what is expected of them. After reading the prompt, students can then read the text again and make notes, identifying information that will be useful to them in responding to the prompt (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

To help students visualize the format of the response and how they should begin to formulate it, the teacher models her notes while reading an article aloud and sharing her thinking. She then gives her interpretation of the prompt and explains how she knows what it is asking her to do. This step is not to be glossed over or taken lightly as prewriting and brainstorming are key parts of the writing process and help students determine the direction in which they will take their writing and to organize their thoughts into coherent ideas. As such, the teacher models multiple examples of texts from across all subject areas until the students have a solid grasp on reading strategies, note-taking, and interpreting the prompt (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Announce with introduction of the theme. Because there are distinctions between the topic, theme, and main idea of a piece of writing, writing a "lead" sentence can be a difficult concept to grasp. Students often assume that the first sentence is the main idea, but that is not

necessarily the case, so the FIVES for Writing calls that sentence the "lead," or what hooks the readers and makes them want to learn more without giving them too much information. Through discussion of real-life examples such as newspaper articles and announcements, the teacher can help students differentiate between topics, themes, and main ideas and provide them with examples of effective leading sentences (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Build up and back up. After the lead sentence, students may feel unsure about where to go next and many misunderstand the purpose of a constructed response and try to base their answer on personal background knowledge. By explaining the purpose of building and backing up, students understand that they do not need to invent an answer on their own because it is already within the text they read. However, while it is easier to pick out supporting details or evidence in a lower-level expository-type text, more sophisticated pieces of writing generally contain both facts and opinions, and even opinions expressed as facts. In order to effectively determine which statements in a text are useful to them for building up and backing up their lead sentence, students must be able to distinguish fact from opinion and identify bias (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Connecting back and a strong conclusion. Students may struggle with writing conclusions, opting to simply state "This is why…" or "This is how…", avoiding voice and missing the point of a conclusion, which is to tie the whole message together and bring the paragraph full circle by connecting the ending to the lead sentence. In this part, the teacher reads the entire response aloud and the students make revisions for flow and clarity. In independent work, students could also read each other's work or revise their own. Shea and Roberts (2018) elect to distribute the rubric after students have completed these initial revisions. However,

Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), recommend distributing a rubric at the onset of the process, just after the prompt is shared. Once the rubric is distributed, the teacher goes through it with the students line by line. The students can then use it as a guideline for the first draft. After the students make their initial revisions, the students score their peers' responses based on this rubric. Not only does this reinforce the writing process and the components of the ABBC paragraph, but it allows the grading process to be completely transparent and shows students exactly what is expected of them (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Reviewing, revising, editing, publishing. This step in the process can often be the most taxing, as students have just spent a lot of time crafting the piece but then have to go over it again and again with a critical, unbiased eye. Several best practices for this stage include reading aloud to peers to check for flow, clarity, and mechanics, discussing changes, and deciding what to keep or delete. Teachers should offer feedback as well at this point. In individual revising, students will need to read their work as if they are a stranger to it with no prior knowledge of the topic and ask themselves if a stranger could indeed understand (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Throughout this step it is essential to remain sensitive to the needs and feelings of students, as some may feel hurt that writing they have worked hard on is being changed. The teacher can continuously remind students kindly that their work is like a piece of art and they are the artists, making changes and adding or removing details until it is perfect. Finally, the students will publish their writing, an important step that permits authenticity and meaning. Students have a purpose to write when they know others will read it (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Expand the process to an essay. A constructed response (CR) paragraph and an integrated response essay (IRE) are both responses to what the writer has seen, read, or heard;

however, an IRE is more complex in that it requires an elaboration of the CR process. Students must connect what they have read across multiple sources, demonstrate their thinking and learning, and provide evidence (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Identify key aspects to examine. The FIVES for Writing recommends using an I-Chart or an inquiry chart. This chart is a visual representation, which helps students identify sources and subtopics, how to connect them, how they support their claims, how they link back to the lead sentence, how to conclude the piece, and where information may be lacking. As with the rest of the FIVES for Writing, this step requires ample modeling and practice before students can effectively utilize an I-Chart on their own, and a collaborative I-Chart can be an effective way to introduce it to a class. This chart also provides a structure in which students can determine which information is superfluous to their purpose, which will be useful, and what they need more information about. However, before beginning their chart, students must understand how to find reliable sources (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Select reliable sources. In an age where facts, opinions, and intentional misdirection are immediately accessible on the Internet, the ability to distinguish valid from invalid sources is a critical skill. Not only do students need to be able to detect bias and differentiate fact from opinion, but they also need to learn how to evaluate sources for credibility. This includes checking an author's credentials, understanding which sources may present certain biases and which do not, knowing which press companies are known for printing reliable works, and understanding the value of peer-review. Learning practices for finding reliable research is best modeled by the teacher (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Recording notes and citing sources. Still part of the prewriting stage, students use their I-Charts to organize their sources and the information in those sources. Vertically on the left, students list their sources. Horizontally across the top, students fill in their subtopics, their build up and back up parts. Then, students evaluate and read each source and write the pertinent details in the boxes going across the chart, lining the details up vertically with the appropriate subtopic. This chart also leaves room for students to add more subtopics or more details that could lead to another subtopic and can be expanded to add more sources as well (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Introduction, subsections that build up, conclusion. The IRE follows an elaborated ABBC format with the writers first determining the purpose of the prompt and their hook, then demonstrating "an overall awareness of the evidence discovered and recorded" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 78). They then build their Announce/Introduction paragraph using the format of an ABBC paragraph. The difference between a CR and IRE Announce is the former is shorter, based on a single source, and the latter integrates multiple sources and preps the reader for a longer discussion on a topic. An Announce for an IRE would also briefly present the B parts, whether two or more (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

The students will then craft their B parts in the same way they would do so for a CR, but more detailed evidence and analysis will take place. It should be noted that while ABBC is a general rule, students can have as many "Build ups" as they would like without sacrificing clarity or going on tangents, but it must be at least two. After creating the ABB portion of their response, students are encouraged to read through their work for clarity and flow. Doing a read-through at this stage also helps students synthesize their writing to create a coherent, comprehensive conclusion (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

An IRE conclusion serves the same purpose as a CR one, but often has more of a "punch" and are expected to deliver a more memorable line while "connecting back to the lead, "establishing purpose/intent, offering reasons/rationale for the position, and drawing a conclusion related to the intent" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 80).

Evaluating writing craft for CR and IRE responses. Most writing evaluation employs rubrics that clearly outline expectations and provide a guideline for what to include in the writing piece. In this stage, students can assess models as a class, discuss them, and assess the responses of their peers in order to fully understand what is expected of them, what they are missing in their own response, and what they need to do to improve (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Name _____ Date _____ Topic _____			
Category	Weak 1 pt.	Satisfactory 3 pts.	Exemplary 6 pts.
Restates the prompt in the lead			
Sets a direction in the lead			
Builds up with a detail			
Builds up with a second detail			
Circular conclusion that closes and connects			
Stays on topic			
Uses conventions appropriately			
Overall total =			

Figure 1. Rubric for Evaluating a Constructed Response Paragraph. (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 81) *Adapted from Cole (2009).*

Name _____ Date _____

Title of the Writing Piece _____

Record the date when significant evidence has been gathered to the support the determination of skill level as Beginning, Developing, or Early Fluent

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Fluent
Composition			
● Writing is focused on a theme			
● Strong, relevant ideas are used to address the theme			
● Ideas are supported with relevant, interesting, important, or informative details			
● Message is clear to author and reader			
Organization			
● Effective opening			
● Ideas flow logically, building on each other			
● Transitions between ideas and sentences are smooth; sentences blend together			
● Effective closing			
Sentences			
● Uses simple sentences			
● Expands sentence with details and descriptors			

• Constructs appropriate compound sentences with conjunctions (for example, and, but, or)			
• Creates appropriate sentences of varied length, type, and style			
Vocabulary			
• Colorful language is used appropriately			
• Precise language is appropriately used			
• Interesting words are used appropriately			
• Effectively incorporates new words from literature and conversations			
Communication			
Purpose			
• Intention directs the writing			
• Writer can explain his intention			
• Uses writing for multiple purposes			
• Appropriately matches purpose to genre for writing			
• Effectively writes in different genres			
• Has a sense of audience; considers needs and interests of readers			
Voice			
• A personal tone comes through - a sense that the writer is			

speaking to a reader			
Secretary			
Mechanics			
● Tracks print while reading message back; notices missing words			
● Spelling (Beginning = semi to early phonetic; Developing = phonetic; Early Fluent = transitional to conventional)			
● Appropriate punctuation			
● Appropriate capitalization			
● Standard grammar			
Skill			
Appearance			
● Print progresses from L to R, line under line (unless purposefully placed for aesthetic reasons)			
● Correct letter formation			
● Appropriate spacing between letters, words, sentences			
● Clear handwriting			
● Generally neat			
Comments:			

Figure 2. Rubric for Evaluating an Integrated Response Essay. (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 82-84)

Synthesize information from multiple sources. The ABBC format, or ABBBC for IREs, is designed to help students know where to begin and to organize their ideas and sources clearly and concisely. This process helps students maintain focus while synthesizing information from multiple sources. If following the FIVES for Writing, teachers are encouraged to model each part of the A, Triple B, and C and construction of an IRE I-Chart. The teacher will model her thinking and ideas aloud and write them down, demonstrating that if students take it one step at a time, writing a sophisticated response can be "as simple as ABC" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 86).

To help students understand how to better collect, categorize, and synthesize information, Shea and Roberts (2018) recommend the RAFT strategy developed by Santa and Havens (1995). Students determine their Role (e.g., reporter, eyewitness, character), their Audience of readers, the Format (or genre, such as article, interview, diary), and the Topic. Using this strategy, students "transform information they've synthesized into a new composition, typically in a different genre, expressing their interpretations rather than merely replicating information in paraphrased words" (Shea & Roberts, 2018, p. 90).

Conclusion. It has long been noted that American students consistently score low on writing tasks and are often unable to meet the challenges of academic writing and writing for career readiness, but if they are taught strategies from the beginning, writing will not remain out of reach (Shea & Roberts, 2018). The FIVES for Writing breaks writing down into manageable parts that all students can understand. It encourages creative and analytical thinking,

collaboration and discussion, organization and focus, and the integration of all four domains. Additionally, this strategy pushes students to self-assess and self-reflect, respond positively to constructive feedback, and give their own constructive feedback to others. The teacher is in a facilitator's role rather than in a director's one. The teacher provides appropriate scaffolding through modeling, slowly removes that scaffolding during group and pair work, and remains accessible for students when they reach the individual work stage and are able to write successfully independently.

Unit Design Methodological Decisions

Students and classroom design. This unit of lesson plans will be designed for hypothetical 9th grade students in the state of Virginia. It will be in a mainstream 9th grade 90-minute English class consisting of 20 students, 15 of which will be ELs. The students will be ages fourteen to fifteen. I, the ESL specialist, will be co-teaching with the classroom teacher. The ELs will be WIDA levels 3 to 5 in writing and speaking and slightly higher, levels 4 to 6, in reading and listening with a few individual variations (See Appendix A for full Can-Do Descriptors for these WIDA levels) (Board of Regents, 2012b). The lessons will include differentiation for various WIDA levels. The school will be on block scheduling, so the students will have English every other day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday one week, Tuesday/Thursday the next, and so on).

The fifteen ELs will come from various backgrounds. Ten will be native Spanish speakers from Central America, two will be Nepalese, one will be a Congolese French-speaking, one will be a Kinyarwandan speaker from Rwanda, and one will be a Kurdish speaker from Iran. Most of the students will have had at least some formal schooling, though a few had limited or

interrupted formal schooling prior to their arrival in the US. Out of all the ELs, thirteen have experienced some sort of trauma ranging from gang violence, the death of a family member, war, life in a refugee camp, or natural disaster. Only the Congolese student and one Spanish speaker come from a background free of major trauma.

All of the ELs arrived in the US at least three years ago, but all students, including the native English speakers, still struggle expressing themselves in the written word. However, several of the ELs enjoy writing poetry and stories in their native languages. The lesson plans will be differentiated in order to teach writing to all students in the class by providing extra scaffolding and adapting the process or product to suit the student's needs. However, the students will be appropriately challenged and all lessons will meet grade level standards.

Pace. This unit will begin during the second month of school. This project assumes that the students have never been exposed to the FIVES for Writing strategy prior to beginning their 9th grade year. While the strategy can be used across content areas, this unit will center around the 9th grade English SOLs and common literature that 9th graders are expected to read and be familiar with.

Length of lesson. This unit will cover the course of six weeks, with 90-minute classes every other day. The original unit of lesson plans will consist of three individual lesson plans interspersed throughout the unit at strategic locations with the rest of the lessons in between being described more generally rather than with a detailed lesson plan.

Output expectations. In this unit, students will build their knowledge of writing by talking about it with their peers and the teachers, will see writing practices modeled, and read samples of good writing. They will then practice the skills they are acquiring by producing

written work, including several constructed response paragraphs and an integrated response essay. The written products will be academic writing, which will prepare them for later grade and college-level writing tasks.

Student learning outcomes. There will be an overarching student learning outcome for the whole unit and then student learning outcomes for each individual lesson plan.

Lesson plan format. The lesson plans and unit as a whole will follow the Gradual Release of Responsibility model developed by Fisher and Fray (2009). This model includes an "I do", "We do", and "You do" format in four stages. In the first, the teacher models the task while speaking aloud to demonstrate her thinking. She then guides the students through the task, working collaboratively with the students to complete it. Next, the students do an activity similar to the ones that were modeled while working in groups, and finally the teacher removes more scaffolding to allow the students to do the task on their own (Freeman & Freeman, 2011). The FIVES for Writing is also a proponent of this type of lesson plan format (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

Chapter 4: Unit Plan

Unit Overview

Day 1: How to read and interpret a prompt and practice interpreting various prompts

Day 2: The introduction to the ABBC paragraph, modeling of its various components, and practice identifying the components in a text

Day 3: How to write a topic sentence ***(attached)***

Days 4-5: Close reading and note-taking strategies with practice analyzing prompts and articles and crafting a constructed response as a class.

Days 6-7: Practice using the ABBC paragraph to respond to prompts and articles in groups and then individually ***(attached)***

Days 8-9: Expanding the process to an essay including introduction of the Inquiry Chart, finding reliable sources, paraphrasing, and writing a short persuasive letter

Days 10-15: Final writing assignment ***(attached)***

Subject Area and Grade Level

English – 9th grade – This is a 6-week unit, 90-minute classes every other day (15 classes total).

Unit Name/Theme

Persuasive Writing

Four Unit Goals

1. SWBAT analyze academic texts using close-reading strategies.
2. SWBAT use the ABBC paragraph to write constructed responses and an integrated response essay.
3. SWBAT conduct research using reliable sources.
4. SWBAT craft a persuasive letter to a politician using details and evidence to back up their main idea.

Curriculum SOLs

English SOL 9.5 - The student will read and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts.

a) Apply knowledge of text features and organizational patterns to understand, analyze, and gain meaning from texts.

e) Summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize ideas, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events within and between texts.
i) Analyze, organize, and synthesize information to solve problems, answer questions, complete a task, or create a product.
k) Analyze ideas within and between selections, providing textual evidence.

English SOL 9.6 - The student will write in a variety of forms to include expository, persuasive, reflective, and analytic, with an emphasis on persuasion and analysis.

c) Objectively introduce and develop topics, incorporating evidence and maintaining an organized structure and a formal style.
e) Communicate clearly the purpose of the writing using a thesis statement.
f) Compose a thesis for persuasive writing that advocates a position.
g) Clearly state and defend a position, using reasons and evidence from credible sources as support.
k) Arrange paragraphs in a logical progression, using transitions between paragraphs and ideas.
l) Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and depth of information.

English SOL 9.7 - The student will self- and peer-edit writing for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English.

Lesson 1: Topic/Lead Sentences

SOLs:

- English 9.6e - Communicate clearly the purpose of the writing using a thesis statement.

Objectives:

Content:

- SW work in groups to write their own topic sentence.

Language:

- SW identify the topic sentence in a paragraph.
- SW understand the various components of an effective topic sentence.

Key vocabulary:

- Topic
- Main idea
- Topic sentence
- Details

Lesson Introduction

1. Vocabulary activation
    a. Students each receive a notecard at the door (10 different cards, will be doubled up) including vocab words they already know and the new vocab word, topic sentence

   b. The other cards will be: main idea, detail, paragraph, writing, topic, introduce, lead, beginning, sentence
   c. Students mingle and talk with each other to put together the clues on their notecards to try to figure out what the lesson will be about
2. Slide 1: Teacher projects presentation and asks students to tell what the picture is about (salad)
   a. Teacher explains that the "topic" of this picture is salad
3. Slide 2: Ask students to tell what picture is about (World Cup)
   a. Teacher asks students to point out details they see in the picture that makes them think it's about the World Cup - elicit responses such as trophy, field, stadium, soccer ball

Sequence of Lesson Activities

4. Slide 3: Teacher calls on volunteer to read, then whole class repeats after her
5. Slide 4: Teacher reads examples and asks students other questions such as, "What was the topic of your math class today?" "What was the topic of your history class?"
6. Slide 5: Teacher explains how a topic sentence announces your ideas, it's like introducing yourself to another person
7. Slide 6: Teacher explains that students will use the ABBC format to write paragraphs in the future
   a. Points out that students are at the Announce stage and that they will learn how to do the rest later
8. Slide 7: Students fill in the blanks using their notes (the answers were on slide 5)
9. Slide 8: Teacher calls on volunteers to read each step in writing a topic sentence
10. Slide 9: Teacher reads the paragraph, identifies unfamiliar words, and asks students to identify the topic sentence
    a. Discuss main idea and topic of the paragraph - note how they are both included in the topic sentence
    b. Teacher asks about details that the students see that support the topic sentence
11. Slide 10: Teacher reads paragraph and identifies unfamiliar words
    a. Students work in groups to identify topic sentence, main idea, and topic
    b. Discuss as a class
    c. Students work in groups again to identify details in the paragraph that support the main idea in the topic sentence
12. Slide 11: Teacher asks volunteers to read slide
    a. Teacher models creation of topic sentence that includes the main idea and topic sentence
    b. Teacher models thought process of making sure details support the topic sentence
13. Slide 12: Teacher does quick assessment of student knowledge by having them answer the questions in their notebooks
14. Slide 14: Students work in groups to write a topic sentence for this slide
    a. Teachers walk around to monitor and observe - she will see which students still struggle and which ones get it
    b. Class comes together and share their topic sentences
    c. Discuss topic sentences and ask the class to evaluate their peers' topic sentences

    d. Clarify any areas of confusion
15. Slide 15: Students work in groups again to write a topic sentence for this slide
    a. Teachers walk around to monitor and observe
    b. When students finish, do a jigsaw - rearrange the students so that one student from each group comes together to form a new group
    c. Students each share their group's topic sentence and reasoning for creating it and discuss
    d. Each new group then discusses the sentences and decides if there is a clear winner or if they want to write a new one that they think is better than any that originally came to the table
    e. Each table shares their final topic sentence with the class

Lesson Closure

16. Slide 17: Students will individually do exit ticket at the end of the slide presentation and hand in to the teacher before leaving the classroom

Note on Differentiation

This lesson does not move past the "We do" stage in the "I do," "We do," "You do" progression. As a result, I have chosen to use two different groupings - one while they're writing the same topic sentence as a group and another when they switch groups to share their different topic sentences. A key component of effective differentiation is using flexible grouping systems sometimes based on student choice, but other times based on readiness or skill in various subject areas (Tomlinson, 2017). The desks in this class are in five groups of four, and students have assigned seats that they must sit in at the beginning of class, but the students understand that seating arrangements change from activity to activity. Their assigned seats are based on readiness with students at different levels of proficiency seated in the same group.

The students begin the lesson in these mixed-proficiency groups. The idea behind this is that the more advanced students can help guide the struggling students through the first stage, all students will be required to share and explain their topic sentence once they move to their new groups. Each student has a responsibility to their group. In this lesson, I am not altering the content or the product. Rather, I am providing multiple opportunities for students to observe the writing process and work in different grouping systems to practice themselves.

As this classroom is a co-teaching situation (an ESL specialist and mainstream English teacher together), there is always a second person in the room to circulate during the lesson and clarify points for struggling students and to help monitor during group and individual activities.

Slides

1

2

3

Topic = what something is mostly about

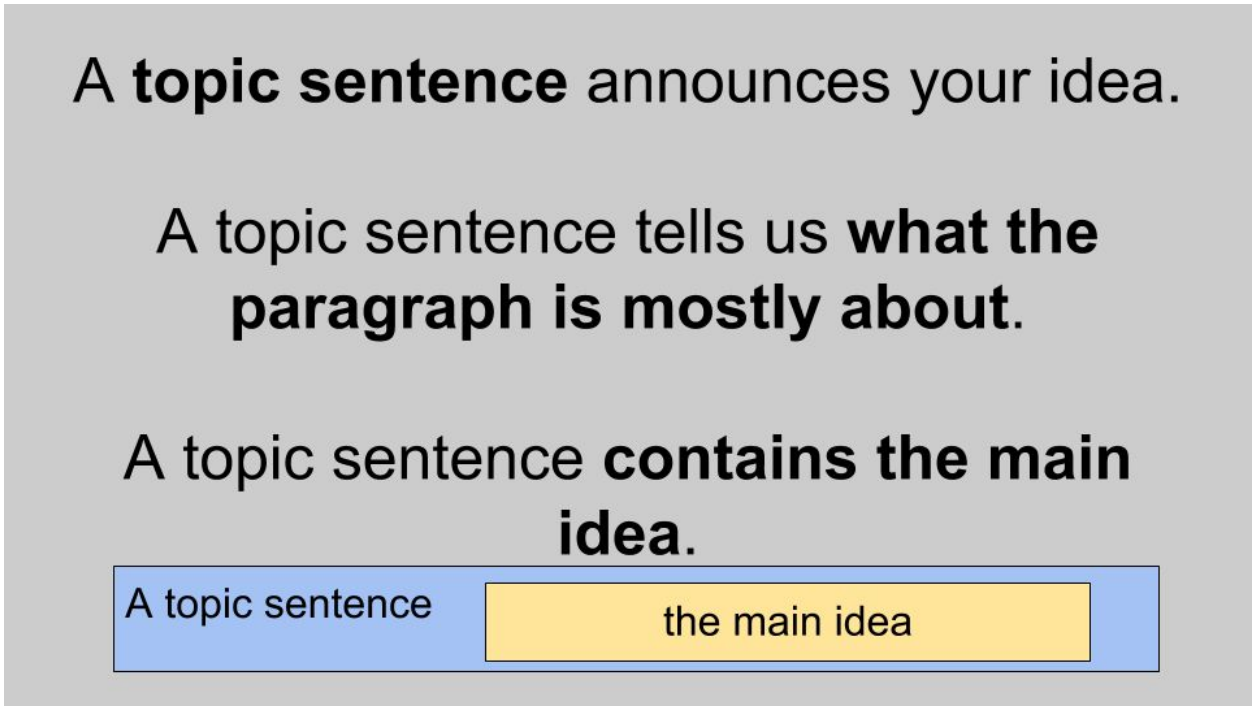
4

Example: The topic of today's class is how to introduce a paragraph using a topic sentence.

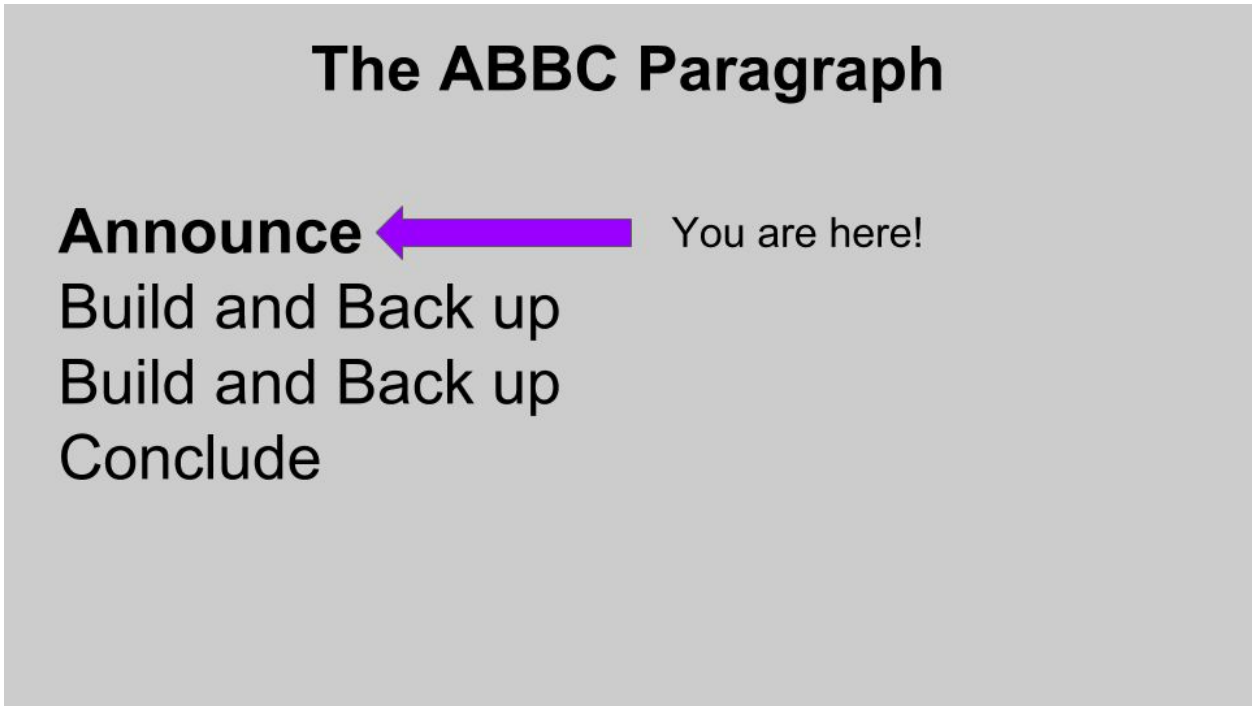
Example: The topic of yesterday's reading was the Civil War.

Example: When you want to decide what to write about, you choose a topic.

5


A **topic sentence** announces your idea.
A topic sentence tells us **what the paragraph is mostly about**.
A topic sentence **contains the main idea**.
A topic sentence
the main idea

6


The ABBC Paragraph
Announce
You are here!
Build and Back up
Build and Back up
Conclude

7

1. A topic sentence tells us

_____

_____.

2. In other words, a topic sentence contains the

_____.

8

Steps for Writing a Topic Sentence:

1. Choose a topic.
2. Figure out your main idea.
3. Write details.
4. Analyze details to see if they support the main idea.
5. Write a complete statement with the main idea that generally tells what the paragraph will be about.

9

Let's find the topic sentence!

When I was 17, my family and I spent a week at the beach in Emerald Isle, North Carolina. We rented a small condo with a kitchen right next to the beach. My mom and dad shared the bedroom while my brothers and I slept in the living room. Every day we ate breakfast together and ran to the beach to swim, build sand castles, read, and play! We had a great week spending time together and getting sunburned!

Where's the topic sentence?

What is the main idea and topic of the paragraph?

What are the details that support the topic sentence?

10

Let's find the topic sentence!

Traveling is one of the best ways to learn a language. When you travel to a country that speaks a different language, you are immersed in the language. You hear and see it all around you. Before you go on your trip, it's a good idea to learn some common words and phrases that you can use while you're there. It's fun to use a new language with native speakers and see a language in action!

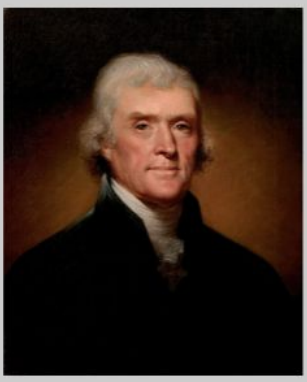
Where's the topic sentence?

What is the main idea and topic of the paragraph?

What are the details that support the topic sentence?

11

Topic: Thomas Jefferson



Main Idea: Important things he did for the U.S.

Details:

1. Wrote the Declaration of Independence
2. Started the University of Virginia
3. Was the 3rd president of the United States

Topic Sentence:

12

What is the first step in writing a topic sentence?

The details need to support and explain the main idea. [True / False]

13

Practice

14

Topic: Trash

Main Idea: How it hurts everything

Details:

1. Trash in oceans hurts animals
2. Burning trash makes air hard to breathe
3. Landfills leak poison into soil

Topic Sentence:

15

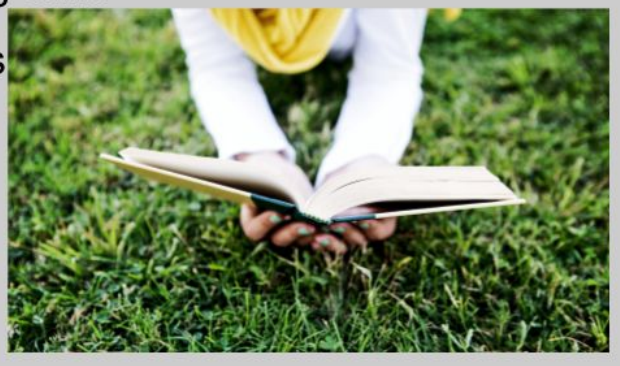
Topic: Reading

Main Idea: How it helps children

Details:

1. Develops critical thinking skills
2. Helps grow imaginations
3. Increases vocabulary

Topic Sentence:



16

Exit Ticket

17

Topic: Long car rides

Main Idea: How to make them easier

Details:

1. Bring your favorite book

2. Watch movies or TV shows on your phone
3. Play a game like "I Spy" with others in the car

Topic Sentence: **Write your topic sentence on your notecard WITH YOUR NAME and give it to the teacher.**

Lesson 2: Practice with ABBC Paragraph (Individual)

SOLs:

- English SOL 9.5 - The student will read and analyze a variety of nonfiction texts.
- English SOL 9.6 - The student will write in a variety of forms to include expository, persuasive, reflective, and analytic, with an emphasis on persuasion and analysis.

Objectives:

Content:

- SW work in assigned groups to craft a paragraph analyzing a chosen non-fiction text.
- SW individually respond to a narrative prompt.

Language:

- SW use the ABBC paragraph format to write a response to a Newsela article.
- SW discuss the components of an effective paragraph in groups.

Key Vocabulary:

- Announce
- Build and Back Up
- Conclude

Lesson Introduction

Note: Students have already been introduced to the ABBC paragraph, have seen its various components modeled by the teacher, and have practiced identifying the components in sample paragraphs and articles. This lesson will guide students through using the ABBC paragraph in small groups.

1. Teacher has students name the format of the paragraph they learned (elicit response - ABBC paragraph)
    a. Teacher lists on board and asks students to explain what each letter stands for
    b. Teacher explains that today students will be taking what they've learned and working together to write a new paragraph using ABBC

Sequence of Lesson Activities

2. For this task, the students will log into their Newsela classroom and view the 5 articles they can choose from. Each student will choose the article they wish to read and then the teachers will digitally assign that article to that student.
    a. Newsela has a feature that allows the teacher to alter the word count and level of difficulty of a text without compromising content. Once groups have chosen their articles based on title, the teacher will digitally "assign" that text to that group and alter the difficulty to suit the readiness of each student.
    b. During this task, the teachers will continuously circulate around the room to monitor student progress and answer questions.
    c. They will be given 15 minutes of quiet reading time after which they are free to continue reading, ask questions, and move on to writing
3. As students complete the task, they will open their journals and work on quietly and individually responding to one of two prompts. The goal is to have them use the ABBC paragraph, but it is essentially a free-writing activity.
    a. Tell me about a time that you surprised someone. Why did you decide to surprise them? What did you do? Did it work?
    b. Tell me about a time something happened that you will never forget. Who was there? What happened? Where were you?
4. When all students have finished, the students who read and responded to the same article will all sit together to do the following tasks:
    a. Each student shares their Announce and underlines it in their paragraph
    b. Discuss which Announce sentences are effective and write 2 of them on a piece of paper as a group
    c. Each student shares 2 Build and Backups that they used to support their topic sentence (at this point, many students will have used the same details) and groups will discuss if the details chosen were appropriate. The group will add 2 Build and Backups to their paper.
    d. If time, each student will share their Conclude sentence and groups will determine which conclusion sentences seem the most effective and add 2 to their paper.
5. Students will write the names of all students in the group at the top of the paper and hand the paper in to the teachers at the end of the discussion. The teacher can use this to determine if students are able to, as a group, understand the effectiveness of the various components of the ABBC paragraph.

Lesson Closure

8. When group discussions wrap up, the teachers will hold an informal discussion about student understanding of the ABBC paragraph. They will elicit feedback from students on areas of confusion, areas they want to work on more, areas they feel comfortable with,

and what sorts of things they might be interested in doing in later lessons that they feel would help them improve their writing.

Note on Differentiation

Student choice is another key component of a differentiated classroom where students take responsibility for their learning (Tomlinson, 2017). In this lesson, students choose their article based on their own interests. The reason I chose not to let them choose any article on Newsela is that the sheer amount of articles available on the website is overwhelming. I instead picked five articles that I felt incorporated various interests and subject areas and let students choose from those five.

I am also differentiating content in this lesson. A main feature of Newsela is I have the ability to instantly adapt the reading level of each article to suit students' needs simply by selecting a level from a dropdown bar. Once each student has chosen their article, I can individually adapt the article to their proficiency level and digitally "assign" it to them on Newsela. While Newsela does adapt the language of the article, it does not change the content. Each article, regardless of proficiency level, has the same content, but this content can be presented with simpler or more complex grammatical and syntactical structures. By adapting the text in this way, it becomes accessible to all students regardless of language proficiency.

In a differentiated classroom, student-directed tasks come to the forefront (Tomlinson, 2017). That is the purpose of the group work after the individual work. Rather than doing a whole-class review of work and discussion, the students are in charge of discussion and leading their peers. This puts the responsibility on the students and demonstrates that the teachers trust them to direct their own learning. During this activity, the teachers will not be leading groups but will be walking around monitoring conversations and helping guide students in the right direction if they get off-track.

Newsela Articles

Latest group of Egyptian mummies discovered has scientists intrigued (USA Today, 2019a)

By USA Today, adapted by Newsela staff

Text Level **5**

02/12/2019

Egyptian archaeologists have uncovered a burial tomb with mummies more than 2,000 years old. They say this new discovery is very important. It can shed light on the lives of "middle-class" Egyptians in ancient times.

Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities studies and preserves the country's ancient culture. Part of its work includes managing new discoveries such as this one. The tomb was discovered in Minya, a desert area south of Cairo, the capital. There were more than 40 mummies in the tomb. About a dozen of them were children, said Mostafa Waziri, who is the head of the council.

The discovery was one of the largest and most important in recent times. It helps to show the day-to-day lives of ordinary people living more than 2,000 years ago. Waziri said the mummies are from several hundred years before Queen Cleopatra's death in 30 B.C.

Mummies Were Well Preserved, In Good Condition

Kathryn Bard is a professor of archaeology at Boston University. She said that such a large number of mummies found in one location is unusual, especially because they had never been disturbed.

Waziri said the mummies appeared to be in good condition. The mummification process was advanced so the mummies were well preserved. This means that the dead were probably from the upper middle class. Ancient Egypt had four classes starting with the pharaoh at the top and going down to farmers at the bottom. The middle class included artisans and skilled workers.

Jennifer Gates-Foster is an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina. She thinks that it might be a stretch to call the mummies middle class, but she definitely doesn't think they were royals.

"They probably had standing in their communities. But this class does not get much attention, so this is a great find," she said.

Egyptian Pride

Waziri emphasized the importance of the find being made by Egyptians. Many similar discoveries have been made in the past by Americans and Europeans. It is a source of pride that the Egyptians found such a new and exciting discovery in their own country.

Image 2. An artifact on display at the necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel. Photo by: Mohamed El-Shahed/AFP/Getty Images

Waziri thinks that the remains are from about 2,300 years ago. Archaeologists still do not know who the people were. They have not found any names written in the hieroglyphics on the tombs.

Hieroglyphics was the ancient form of writing that used symbols and pictures instead of letters of an alphabet.

The mummies were discovered at the Tuna el-Gebel archaeological site. They were inside four 30-foot-deep burial chambers. Some were wrapped in linen or decorated with Demotic handwriting. Demotic handwriting is a form of cursive hieroglyphics used by ordinary people in the region back then.

Discoveries Are A Message To The World

A year ago, the antiquities ministry announced the discovery of eight tombs. They contained about 40 coffins of priests and more than 1,000 statues near the site. The tombs were full of jewelry, pottery and jars.

In December, Egyptian officials said they discovered a 4,400-year-old tomb linked to the ancient pharaohs. That find was in Saqqara, which is a burial ground west of Cairo.

Egypt has been widely advertising these archaeological finds. The government thinks it will convince more tourists to visit the country. Minister of Tourism Rania al-Mashat said the discoveries were an important message to the whole world that Egypt "has it all."

Prompt: Read the article. Why was the archaeological find was such an important discovery? Use details from the text to explain your answer.

Deadly wildfires in California could give birth to wealth of wildflowers (Atlas Obscura, 2019)

By Atlas Obscura, adapted by Newsela staff

Text Level **5**

02/12/2019

California was really hurt by wildfires last year.

In the northern part of the state, the Camp Fire destroyed an estimated 18,804 buildings. It burned down the town of Paradise. Down the coast, the Woolsey Fire burned 96,949 acres of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. It could take some areas years to recover. Others may never recover at all.

It was a horrific tragedy. While it's little consolation, there is something that could emerge from the destruction. Some experts think that the extensive burning could result in a huge spring growth of wildflowers in Southern California. This is also known as a "superbloom." It is also a sign that things are recovering.

Intense Fire Followed By Constant Rain

A superbloom is an exceptionally productive season of wildflowers. It generally occurs as a result of two steps in the environment: intense fire followed by constant rain. The fire prepares seed banks in the soil. These are then nourished by rain, resulting in blooms in dozens of wildflower species.

Mark Mendelsohn is a biologist, studying living things, with the National Park Service in California. He works in the field and was directly affected by November's Woolsey Fire. "Either the heat or the smoke physically causes the seed to germinate," or bloom, he says via email. "Steady, but not necessarily heavy, rains throughout our normal wet season of November through March … encourage most of our species to bloom in a given year."

Scientists See Signs

When the wet season yields more than average rainfall totals, that's when the flowers can change the landscape. In the region surrounding the Santa Monica Mountains, he says, there could be twice as much rainfall than normal up to this point. This increase in rain can also result in blooms in desert regions that did not burn. One example is Joshua Tree. It experienced a superbloom in 2017.

The possibility of a Los Angeles–area superbloom will become more clear in the coming months. Still, scientists see signs of a strong one this year.

The significant rains have caused "a tremendous green-up on the slopes and fields of the Santa Monica Mountains," Mendelsohn says. It's suspected that trees and larger animals in the area will bounce back from the Woolsey Fire slowly. However, signs of revival are already appearing.

"Carpets" Of Wildflowers

Species that commonly bloom following a fire are in the poppy, popcorn-flower, lily, lupine, snapdragon and sunflower groups. Mendelsohn expects to see all of these before the close of April. He also expects "carpets" of morning glory and wild cucumber. The superblooms will be most prominent in the steep-sided canyons. This is where the fire burned most intensely. To be exact, this is about 90 percent of National Park Service lands in the Santa Monica Mountains.

If all goes along with nature's plan, the balance will be restored soon and springtime will bloom. However, concerns about wildfires will rise again.

Prompt: Read the article. Wildfires are destructive, but they can help in certain ways. Explain one way that wildfires in California have benefited the environment.

Not just for ladies: Male cheerleaders join Rams squad (USA Today, 2019b)

By USA Today, adapted by Newsela staff

Text Level **6**

02/07/2019

ATLANTA, Georgia — Napoleon Jinnies described his walk through the double doors of USC's Galen Center on March 11, 2018. He was there to try out for the Los Angeles Rams cheer squad. He says it was an "I have to put on my jazz shoes" type of feeling. He was ready to dance his best.

Then he saw, amid a sea of fellow dancers, another guy in the corner.

"I was fired up to kick whoever's butt that was," Jinnies told USA Today Sports.

After all, what were the chances there would be another guy there?

Male Cheerleading Pioneers

No male had ever tried out for the Rams cheerleading squad in its 80-plus-year history. Tryouts had never technically been limited to females only. A few men had registered in the past, Rams cheer director Keely Fimbres said, but never showed. Now Jinnies and Quinton Peron did.

Peron reckoned maybe he could at least be a mascot if his technique held up. However, after he landed kicks, jumps and turns so well he advanced to the second round of tryouts, it dawned on him. He realized that maybe the Rams really were providing a chance to cheer. That's when a slight sense of intimidation set in.

"Seeing the hair, seeing the rhinestoned outfits and all the makeup like, 'Oh, shoot,'" Peron said. "All the fans and you're like, 'Whoa, what did I step into? Am I sure I want to do this?'"

On February 3, the two became the first men in Super Bowl history to perform as cheerleaders.

Image 2. The L.A. Rams cheerleaders, including Napoleon Jinnies (right) and Quinton Peron (left), do a routine at the Super Bowl. Photo by Timothy A. Clary/AFP/Getty Images [click to expand]

The Baltimore Ravens had "stunt men" in Super Bowl 47. According to spokesman Chad Steele, they are referred to now as cheerleaders. When the team played in the Super Bowl in 2013, however, they were called "the male stunt team."

Why Not Try New Things?

The Rams figured, why not? After all, guys have been in cheer squads at the high school and college level for decades. What's more, the team prides itself on being unafraid to be the first to do new things. After all, they are a team run by female owner Georgia Frontiere for 30 years.

They hired the youngest-ever head coach in Sean McVay at 30, and they preach "pioneering with purpose."

"If you have the talent and skill set, you shouldn't be discriminated on the basis of sex," Molly Higgins said. She is team vice president of community affairs and engagement. "I'm proud it didn't scare us," she added.

Handling the details, the Rams say, of welcoming a cheer squad that is female and male was easy. Their uniform designer crafted blue, gold and white short-sleeve shirts and pants to match the women's crop tops and shorts. The guys asked to go without the pompoms. Music now features more Meghan Trainor and T-Pain, and less "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" and "Single Ladies." The cheerleaders comfortably share one locker-room trailer. They don't worry about asking a teammate to turn around if someone's changing.

Some rude comments have been heard from the stands and social media. Maybe "one or two" season ticket holders requested refunds on their purchases, according to Higgins, and the organization granted them. Fans still cheer "Napoleon" and "Quinton." Peron, who also teaches dance, received excited texts supporting "Mr. Q." He encountered one slightly rude stranger on the sidewalk who scoffed at the thought of men cheering. By conversation's end, however, this man was wishing Peron and Jinnies good luck.

"People just need to open their minds a little bit," Peron said. "Males dancing with females is nothing new."

More About The Dance And The Community

Cheerleading has evolved during the last couple of decades, Fimbres said, with less emphasis on teased hair and more on technically sound dance. Cheerleaders connect the Rams to the community. They represent the team.

The latest showcase - the Super Bowl - was on the biggest stage yet. The Rams say they are already seeing excited dancers across the country reach out. Some are older men who wish they had had the opportunity years ago. Others are younger guys saying Peron and Jinnies' leap of faith has given them the confidence to try out for their own dance squad.

Jinnies explained that he feels strange being called "inspiring" and "famous," when he's just doing what he's always done - dance. He doesn't see himself that way.

"But if it's inspiring people, helping motivate them not just in dance but in any goal, I'll take it."

"My hope is that this is going to become the new normal," Higgins added.

Promt: Read the article. Explain 2 ways male cheerleaders have inspired change in the NFL. Use details from the text to support your answer.

Bringing virtual reality to sports fans in the stands (Agence France-Presse, 2018)

By Agence France-Presse, adapted by Newsela staff

Text Level **5**

10/17/2018

Sports businesses are coming up with new technologies to make fans feel the experience of athletes. One big way is through virtual reality, also known as VR.

In VR, users often wear a headset that holds a screen up to their eyes. The screen changes based on how the user moves. The results can be dramatic. Users don't just feel as if they are seeing another world through the headset. They feel as if they are actually inside another world.

Virtual reality is going to change how people train for sports and experience sports, said VR expert Michael Ludden.

For two days in early October, sports business leaders met in London, England, to discuss VR. The meeting was called the Leaders Sport Business Summit.

Much discussion was about augmented reality, too. In this technology, computer-generated images blend with real-world places.

The "Pokemon Go" phone app was a popular example of augmented reality. Users could see the world around them with their phone's camera. However, on top of that world, they would see Pokemon monsters on their phone's screen.

Together, VR and augmented reality are called "mixed reality," or MR.

Into Another World

American football players are already using VR "to better train their minds, read the field," Ludden said. This can allow quarterbacks to improve their skills without risking injury.

"You can train with a real baseball bat that's tracked in virtual reality against real pitchers," added Ludden. It would re-create the pitches and style of a particular pitcher. After swinging, batters could get detailed information on how good a swing they took.

Mixed reality brings people into another world with just video and audio. However, other technologies could soon re-create the true physical feeling of pro sports. It would change the way people watch athletes.

Canadian company D-BOX Technologies designs and manufactures seats that move and vibrate. These are often found in cinemas and theme parks. The company is now moving into sports. It showed off its Formula One (F1) racing simulator at the London event.

The seats mimic the force of speed and every vibration of driving in an F1 race car.

In The Driver's Seat

The simulation seat uses data it already has from past races. However, it could also use information sent by a car that is racing in real time. This would allow fans to feel as if they are in their favorite driver's car. They could experience the full racing adventure like that driver does, said Veronique Maheu. She helps lead D-BOX.

Then, that live experience could be shown live in special theaters around the world, she said.

The seat technology can be used to help train athletes in other sit-down sports such as rowing. Maheu said she had also gotten interest from people in the horse-racing world.

Sensors could also be placed on sports fields, balls and on players. All together, these remotely re-create the feel of football, soccer or baseball games. They can even make real events more intense.

Say you wanted to feel the stress of hitting against a pitcher in the major league. "You can have a heartbeat added to the sensation on the seat and then you can feel it, boom, boom," Maheu explained.

When the batter swings and hits the ball, you can feel that smash, she said.

A Pro Football Game Experience

The seats currently cost $10,000 each. That cost is a bit too much for the average fan. However, the prices of simple VR headsets, such as Oculus Rift, are falling. Other VR equipment may come down in price soon too.

Ludden also said that future technology could create "augmented stadiums" for live spectators.

Panasonic is an electronics company. It recently showed off its "Smart Venue" plans at an event in Las Vegas, Nevada. The company imagined a pro football game experience. Photos, replays and player statistics would be shown on top of the actual football field.

Ludden sees this as being useful for people sitting high up in cheaper seats.

Mixed Reality could also change halftime entertainment. Fans may someday join in stadium-wide games. They could use the field as a virtual video gaming area, he added. From their seats, they could participate in VR games that are shown live on the field.

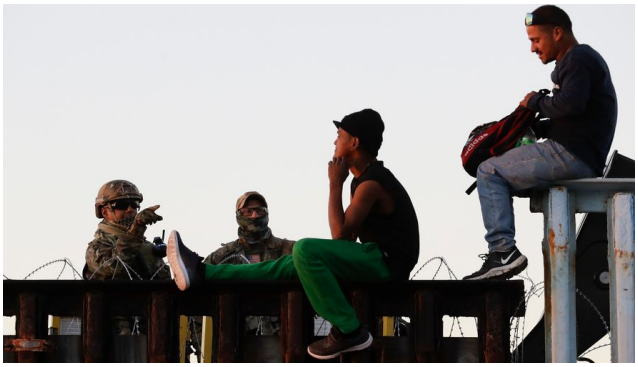
Prompt: Read the article. How is virtual reality changing the experience of watching sports? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Migrants make 3,000-mile journey in hopes of protection

By Sarah Kinosian, The Guardian, adapted by Newsela staff

Text Level **7**

11/20/2018



Carlos Castellano stood on the beach where Mexico meets the United States, resting his hand on the fence posts. The fence divides Tijuana, Mexico, from San Diego, California. He smiled broadly.

"I feel so excited. Just getting this far was difficult, but it went well, and people helped us a lot," he said.

It was the end of a journey of more than 3,000 miles that took more than a month. It began when Castellano fled his home in the Honduras capital of Tegucigalpa after the MS-13 gang killed one of his brothers and shot and wounded another.

Endangered In Home Countries

It was also the start of a new challenge: applying for asylum in the United States, a protection the government can grant to people who would be endangered if sent back to their home countries.

"Now we wait. We come in peace, asking for asylum, but only God knows what will happen," he said as he peered through the steel mesh fence at a group of U.S. border patrol agents whose job is keeping the country secure.

Castellano, age 24, is among the first members of the migrant caravan traveling from Central America to reach Tijuana. Castellano and a group of about 80 members of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) group reached the city on November 11. Around 360 more people arrived on November 13, and another 300 on November 14, with several thousand more expected to arrive in the coming days.

Most of those coming from Central America are poor. They come carrying the belongings that fit into a knapsack and fleeing gang violence or poverty.

Tougher To Cross The Border

Meanwhile, U.S. authorities have started making it tougher to cross the border. Earlier in November, President Donald Trump's administration established new measures to restrict asylum requests.

U.S. troops have erected fencing with concertina wire, which is razor sharp, on the border.

At least two more caravans of Central Americans are following the first group north, though. Tijuana officials worry the border city will not be able to handle more people.

Thousands of people are already waiting in the city to claim asylum in the United States. Even before the arrival of the first groups from the caravan, resources for migrants were stretched thin, said César Palencia, director of the Tijuana municipal migration affairs office.

"We are trying to find shelter space for people, but we are worried. The shelters are 90 percent or more full. Right now we are looking into other options — maybe a soccer field, or other public space," he said. "We definitely feel abandoned by Mexico's federal government. We requested extra funds and a coordination strategy from them and still nothing."

The United Nations refugee agency and Red Cross set up offices in the city. Local volunteers are donating food and clothing to the migrants.

Most of the recent arrivals are staying in a temporary shelter in a sports center in the north of the city. There, city employees set up mattresses for 360 migrants on the gym floor.

Among Tijuana residents, opinions of the migrants are mixed. The city has long been a staging post for Mexicans heading north. More recently it has served the same role for travelers from much farther away. Since 2016, more than 15,000 Haitians have come to the city.

Víctor Coronel is the head of the migrant affairs unit of the Tijuana police. He said, "We haven't had any problems with the Haitians. They came and they worked — it's two years later and I'm still shocked at how great they've been — I hope the same for this group."

Not All Locals Are Welcoming

However, not all locals are as welcoming. Some have even responded in terms similar to those employed by the caravan's most prominent opponent, U.S. President Donald Trump.

Residents protested in a wealthy beachside neighborhood where some migrants had set up camp.

"The United States already said they can't come, so what's going to happen?" asked Tere Lamas, a longtime resident.

Other locals moved down to where the migrants were sleeping, chanting "Out of Tijuana" and singing the Mexican national anthem. Scuffles broke out as screaming protesters threatened and attacked residents defending the group, journalists and the migrants themselves.

Throughout the protest, other locals quietly handed out tacos to migrants.

Waiting For Months

Meanwhile, at the border, some migrants have been waiting for asylum for months. The waiting list has 3,000 names, said Joel Coyado, age 27, who fled political unrest in Nicaragua.

"We are all waiting here, waiting to apply for asylum. They will have to do the same, some have already gotten here, but they cannot get in if they do not get on the list."

Many caravan members plan to apply for asylum, including the group of 80 LGBT migrants.

"I'm not sure how the asylum process will go, but I hope that the United States lets us in," said Loly Méndez, a transgender woman from El Salvador. "I have been violently assaulted, robbed, discriminated against so I can't get work, I've had friends killed — I can't go back there."

Still, others are well aware that not everyone can get asylum.

"Us on the caravan would rather die fighting than sitting in Honduras waiting to starve or be killed," said Carlos José Romero, age 20. He also predicted what would happen if they're sent back to Honduras. "We'll come right back."

Prompt: Read the article. What are 2 difficulties that migrants are facing as they travel towards the United States?

Lesson 3: Persuasive Writing Assignment

Grade level: 9th grade

Proficiency level/WIDA level: 3-6 (reading/listening: 4-6, speaking/writing: 3-5)

SOLs:

English 9.6 The student will write in a variety of forms to include expository, persuasive, reflective, and analytic, with an emphasis on persuasion and analysis.

a) Engage in writing as a recursive process.
b) Plan, organize, and write for a variety of audiences and purposes.

c) Objectively introduce and develop topics, incorporating evidence and maintaining an organized structure and a formal style.
d) Communicate clearly the purpose of the writing using a thesis statement.
e) Compose a thesis for persuasive writing that advocates a position.
f) Clearly state and defend a position, using reasons and evidence from credible sources as support.
g) Identify counterclaims and provide counterarguments.
h) Determine the best kind of evidence to use for a claim, and effectively use fact and opinion to support a position.
i) Arrange paragraphs in a logical progression, using transitions between paragraphs and ideas.
j) Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and depth of information.

English 9.7 The student will self- and peer-edit writing for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, paragraphing, and Standard English.

a) Use parallel structure across sentences and paragraphs.
b) Use appositives, main clauses, and subordinate clauses.
c) Use commas and semicolons to distinguish and divide main and subordinate clauses.
d) Distinguish between active and passive voice.
e) Use a variety of sentence structures to infuse sentence variety in writing.

Objectives:

Content:

The student will investigate a current US political issue.

Language:

The student will engage in writing as a recursive process to create a persuasive letter.
The student will back up a claim with evidence using credible sources.
The student will self- and peer-edit writing for capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.

Introduction: Before completing this assignment, the teachers will pass out and read a sample persuasive letter and students will identify persuasive phrases such as “I think,” “because,” “you should,” etc.

Directions: Over the next few days, you will be investigating a current issue from the list below. You will choose a side of the argument and then do research to fill out your inquiry chart and take notes. After you complete your chart, bring it to the teacher to check. Then, write a 1-2 page letter to Bob Goodlatte, our representative in the U.S. House of Representatives. You are trying to convince him to create a bill that will encourage others to make a change in the country. We

are going to mail these to him after you finish! Use 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced.

Topics:

1. The flying of the Confederate Flag - should people be allowed to fly it or not? Why or why not?
2. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline - is it a good idea to allow it to be built? Why or why not?
3. Renewable energy - is there a renewable energy source you think we should use more? Tell Representative Goodlatte which one you think would be a good idea and why.
4. Gun control - should there be stricter gun laws or not? Why or why not?
5. Border wall - should the government build a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico? Why or why not?
6. Another idea - if you have another topic you want to write about, ask me!

We will do all the work in class. Please bring your paper to me to review during 1 of the 2 peer review times. You may use online resources to find examples of persuasive letters, use an online dictionary or thesaurus, look up how to do citations (CitationMachine and EasyBib are not allowed, please use Owl Purdue like we used in class), and find research about your topic, but this must be entirely your own work and cannot be corrected by anyone other than your classmates and teacher during the assigned time in class. Plagiarism in any form will result in a 0 for the assignment.

You will be graded using the rubric we went over in class. The total number of points you can get on this assignment is 54.

Remember that I am here to help anytime you need it! There will be a signup sheet on my door so you can sign up for a 30-minute meeting with me before or after school, during lunch, or during my planning periods. I want to support you while you do your writing!

Timeline:

- Day 1: Research and filling out I-chart
- Day 2: Brainstorming, outlining, and beginning first draft
- Day 3: Writing first draft
- Day 4: First peer review, revising drafts
- Day 5: Second peer review, revising drafts, turn in final draft at the end of the class

Assessment:

Sample inquiry chart: (students will not get italicized information)

	Build up #1 Evidence: *Advantages of hydroelectric power*	Build up #2 Evidence: *Disadvantages of hydroelectric power*	Build up #3 Evidence: *How it compares to others*	Other Interesting Facts	Additional Build up
Source 1 *https://water.usgs.gov/edu/wuhy.html*	*-Minimal pollution* *-Water is free* *-Reliable*	*-Expensive start up* *-Can cause flooding*		*-Most widely used form of renewable energy*	
Source 2 *https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.php?page=hydropower_home*	*-Relies on the water cycles*	*-Relies on the water cycle*	*-Takes up more space than some non-renewable sources*		
Source 3					
Source 4					
Source 5					
Summary Summarize the information in each Build Up column for a draft of each subheading.					
Thoughts for conclusion:					

Scoring: This rubric will be the rubric used for most pieces of extensive writing, with some variation. The teacher will thoroughly go over each aspect of the rubric before the students begin the task. This will also be a process including brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The students will revise their own and each other's work, as will I. After the final draft is turned in, we will mail our letters to our state representative.

Name: Date: Title of Work:			
I need to keep working on this - 0 pts.	I'm getting there, but it needs more work - 1 pt.	I'm almost there - 2 pts.	I did it - 3 pts.
Composition			
Ideas: 20%			
My writing is unfocused; there is no (or almost no) common theme in my paragraphs	My writing is somewhat focused; there is a theme, but it is sometimes unclear in my paragraphs	My writing is mostly focused; the theme is clear, but not every paragraph focuses on it	My writing has a clear focus; I follow the theme in every paragraph
None of my ideas are backed up with important details or evidence; the details I use are not interesting or relevant	Some of my ideas are backed up with important details and evidence; some of my details are are interesting and relevant	Almost all my ideas are backed up with important details and evidence; most of my details are interesting and relevant	All my ideas are backed up with important details and evidence; all of my details are interesting and relevant
My message does not make sense to the reader	My message sometimes makes sense to the reader	My message almost always makes sense to the reader	My message always makes sense to the reader
Organization: 20%			
I don't have a topic sentence, but my paper does not follow it	I have a topic sentence, but my paper often does not follow it	I have a topic sentence, and my paper often follows it	I have a topic sentence, and my paper always follows it
I do not use transition words and my sentences do not blend together	I sometimes use transition words and sometimes my sentences blend together	I almost always use transition words and my sentences often blend together	I always use transition words and my sentences blend together
I do not have a conclusion	My conclusion simply lists exactly what I said in my paper and does not connect them	My conclusion summarizes what I said in my paper, and I try to connect them to a main idea to persuade the reader	My conclusion connects my ideas together and gives a conclusion idea to further persuade the reader
Sentences: 10%			
I don't use compound sentences or I do not use appropriate conjunctions (and, but,	I sometimes use appropriate conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.) for my	I almost always use appropriate conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.) for my	I always use appropriate conjunctions (and, but, or, etc.) for my compound sentences

or, etc.)	compound sentences	compound sentences	
I use the same type, length, and style of sentence with little or no variation	My sentence type, length, and style are sometimes varied	My sentence type, length, and style are usually varied	My sentence type, length, and style are always varied
Vocabulary: 10%			
My words are not precise; it takes many words to say what I want to say or it is hard to understand what I want to say	My words are somewhat precise; it often takes many words to say what I want to say and it is sometimes hard for the reader to understand what I want to say	My words are usually precise; I can almost always say what I want to say with a few good words and the reader can almost always understand what I want to say	My words are always precise; I can always say what I want to say in a few words or less and the reader always understands what I want to say
I use boring words that are not appropriate to the content	I sometimes use interesting words that are appropriate to the content	I almost always use interesting words that are appropriate to the content	I always use interesting words that are appropriate to the content
Communication			
Purpose: 20%			
My opinions are not backed up with facts	My opinions are sometimes backed up with facts	My opinions are almost always backed up with facts	My opinions are always backed up with facts
My writing is not appropriate for a US Representative; it is informal, rude, or doesn't tell things he would be interested in	My writing is somewhat appropriate for a US Representative; it is somewhat informal and sometimes tells him things he would be interested in	My writing is mostly appropriate for a US Representative; it is mostly formal and usually tells him things he would be interested in	My writing is always appropriate for a US Representative; it is always formal and always tells him things he would be interested in
Voice: 5%			
My writing does not have a personal tone; my reader cannot tell that it is me writing	My writing sometimes has a personal tone; sometimes my reader can tell it is me	My writing almost always has a personal tone; my reader can almost always tell it is me	My writing always has a personal tone; my reader can always tell it is me
Secretary			
Mechanics: 15%			
I have many misspelled words, at least 7	I have some misspelled words, between 4 and 7	I have a few misspelled words, less than 4	I have no misspelled words

I don't use appropriate punctuation (periods, commas, colons, etc.)	I sometimes use appropriate punctuation (periods, commas, colons, etc.)	I almost always use appropriate punctuation (periods, commas, colons, etc.)	I always use appropriate punctuation (periods, commas, colons, etc.)
I don't use appropriate capitalization (sentence beginnings, proper nouns, etc.)	I sometimes use appropriate capitalization (sentence beginnings, proper nouns, etc.)	I almost always use appropriate capitalization (sentence beginnings, proper nouns, etc.)	I always use appropriate capitalization (sentence beginnings, proper nouns, etc.)
I don't use standard English grammar; I have more than 10 grammar mistakes	I sometimes use standard English grammar; I have 6-10 grammar mistakes	I almost always use standard English grammar; I have 1-5 grammar mistakes	I always use standard English grammar; I have no grammar mistakes
I don't cite my sources or they are improperly cited	I sometimes cite my sources and sometimes they are correct	I always cite my sources and they are mostly correct	I always cite my sources and they are always correct
Comments:			

Adapted from The FIVES for Writing by Shea & Roberts (2018)

Note on Differentiation

This is a complex assignment that will need to be scaffolded for the various ELP levels present in the class (reading: 4-6, writing: 3-5). The original assignment is designed for writing WIDA level 5, but will be appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all students. All students will be graded on the same rubric that we will review in-depth before assigning the task. Students will all gain a thorough understanding of what is expected of them and exactly what they need to do to meet those expectations. The differentiation is noted below. After I go over general instructions for the assignment and students begin work, I will walk around the room and quietly tell each student how many sources they are expected to use and how many pages they will produce.

By allowing students a choice of writing topic, students will be able to investigate something that interests them and that is appropriate to their level of understanding. All students will work with me one-on-one at least twice during the 5-day class time so I can monitor progress. The students who are at a WIDA writing level 3 (see below) will need more scaffolding, so it will be during this time that I provide them with the persuasive letter outline that will help guide them while doing their research and writing their letter.

WIDA Writing Level 5: Students at this level are able to write for a variety of purposes and synthesize research from various sources (Board of Regents, 2012b). They will be expected to use 5 different sources. These students will be able to complete the assignment as is. They will write a full 2 pages using the I-chart for support.

WIDA Writing Level 4: Students at this level can write narrative and expository texts and are able to defend and justify opinions (Board of Regents, 2012b). They will be expected to use 4 different sources and will write 1 and a half pages using the I-chart for support.

WIDA Writing Level 3: Students at this level can write "short narrative and expository pieces [and] outline ideas and details using graphic organizers" (Board of Regents, 2012b, p. 7). They will need more support as it will be more challenging for them to write a persuasive letter. They will be expected to write 1 page using 3 different sources. They will use the I-chart for support as well as the persuasive letter outline below which is to be completed in tandem with the I-chart. For these students, the Secretary section of the rubric will not apply.

Persuasive Letter Outline

Topic:

What is my argument? What do I believe? Write it in the box below.

What is one reason I believe this?

List 2-3 details that support the reason you wrote above.

1.
2.
3.

What is another reason I believe this?

List 2-3 details that support the 2nd reason you just wrote.

1.

2.
3.

Now, you will take everything you wrote down and put it into a letter. Make sure your details are backed up by evidence that you have in your I-chart!

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Analysis

Writing has consistently been under-prioritized in school curriculum, despite the importance placed on this skill by employers, colleges and universities, and state and national high-stakes tests (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Graham & Perin, 2007; Kibler et al., 2016; Kiuhara et al., 2009; NCW, 2003; VDOE, 2018). Students are unprepared for workplace and college writing (NCES, 2012), leaving employers to spend billions of dollars each year to provide writing remediation to their employees (Graham & Perin, 2007).

This deficiency is caused by a range of factors, not the least of which being the disproportionate focus on reading in high-stakes testing (Kibler et al., 2016; VDOE, 2018) which leads educators to focus more on reading in the classroom (Applebee & Langer, 2011), letting writing fall to the wayside. While reading does indeed help students drastically improve their writing (Huh & Ha, 2017; Lee & Schallert, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Pandey, 2012; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017; Shea & Roberts, 2018), writing requires the same explicit teaching as reading (Shea & Roberts, 2018). There is an assumption that writing skills will naturally follow the acquisition of reading and oral communication skills for ELs, but that is misguided as writing involves extra processing and must be taught explicitly (Panofsky et al., 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). *The FIVES for Writing* recognizes this need for explicit writing instruction in today's society and provides a clear, useable framework that can be implemented even with the nation's youngest students as they first begin learning how to write (Shea & Roberts, 2018).

The FIVES for Writing also recognizes that teachers are often unprepared to teach writing or are ill-informed (Shea & Roberts, 2018), another factor which has led to the ill-preparedness

of students for advanced writing tasks. Larsen (2013) found that the majority of teachers felt unprepared to teach writing and few colleges and universities required a course explicitly teaching how to teach writing. As a result, teachers are unsure how to proceed and either inadequately or superficially teach the writing process (Larsen, 2013).

ELs come from a vast range of educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, all of which impact the speed of their English language acquisition (Freeman & Freeman, 2011; Murray & Christison, 2011; Panofsky et al., 2005; Suprayogi et al., 2017; Tomlinson et al., 2003). Due to this incredible variation in students, differentiated instruction is critical to the success of all students, ELs and native-speakers of English alike (Tomlinson, 2017). *The FIVES for Writing* is a proponent of student choice and maintaining a flexible classroom (Shea & Roberts, 2018), key components of effective differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2017). By allowing for student choice and flexibility, students can choose tasks that suit their academic needs, language proficiency, and background knowledge and experiences (Tomlinson, 2017). Shea and Roberts (2018) and Tomlinson (2017) encourage the use of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, which slowly but surely allows students to take control of their learning (Fisher & Frey, 2009).

The 5-step process approach to writing has been shown to be beneficial to both ELs and native English speakers (Lincoln & Idris, 2015; Panofsky et al., 2005; Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). It includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Process writing breaks writing tasks down into manageable parts, making it more accessible to all students (Peregoy & Boyle, 2017). *The FIVES for Writing* identifies writing as a process, and the framework it provides treats it as such (Shea & Roberts, 2018). This project aims to contribute to my own knowledge of

teaching writing as well as to provide a small sample of effective lessons for teachers seeking to use the FIVES to address this writing gap in their classrooms.

Limitations and Future Interest

There seems to be a gap in research related to L2 writing, particularly in regards to national statistics on the literacy of ELs. There is a fair amount of statistical information about U.S. students in general, but it does not state if or how ELs were included in the research. It was difficult to find statistics relating specifically to ELs. In future, it would be beneficial to locate more specific national data and statistics regarding EL writing performance so as to better target the needs of a specific group or groups of ELs living in the U.S. Additionally, the amount literature available for reading instruction far outstrips that of writing literature.

The FIVES for Writing was published in July 2018 and, as a result, there is not yet any published literature in academic journals discussing its effectiveness as a teaching strategy. However, it is based on sound academic research and shows potential to be a highly effective tool for teaching writing to students of all ages. It would be beneficial to find research in academic peer-reviewed journals that discuss *The FIVES for Writing* and incorporate it into any future research.

As English as a Second or Foreign Language extends globally, there is a vast amount of research in the field available in a number of languages that I am unable to read. For this project, I was confined to English-language articles and books most often published by American or British authors and was unable to access the vast pools of pedagogical knowledge available from other countries. In future, I would like to collaborate with others in the field from around the

world to see what strategies are used in other educational systems and what research is available on second language learning.

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Appendix A

WIDA CONSORTIUM

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
LISTENING	• Point to or show basic parts, components, features, characteristics, and properties of objects, organisms, or persons named orally • Match everyday oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs • Group visuals by common traits named orally (e.g., "These are polygons.") • Identify resources, places, products, figures from oral statements, and visuals	• Match or classify oral descriptions to real-life experiences or visually-represented, content-related examples • Sort oral language statements according to time frames • Sequence visuals according to oral directions	• Evaluate information in social and academic conversations • Distinguish main ideas from supporting points in oral, content-related discourse • Use learning strategies described orally • Categorize content-based examples described orally	• Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases in social and academic contexts • Analyze content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse • Categorize examples of genres read aloud • Compare traits based on visuals and oral descriptions using specific and some technical language	• Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse • Make inferences from oral discourse containing satire, sarcasm, or humor • Identify and react to subtle differences in speech and register (e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy) • Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly
SPEAKING	• Answer yes/no or choice questions within context of lessons or personal experiences • Provide identifying information about self • Name everyday objects and pre-taught vocabulary • Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks of language	• Describe persons, places, events, or objects • Ask WH- questions to clarify meaning • Give features of content-based material (e.g., time periods) • Characterize issues, situations, regions shown in illustrations	• Suggest ways to resolve issues or pose solutions • Compare/contrast features, traits, characteristics using general and some specific language • Sequence processes, cycles, procedures, or events • Conduct interviews or gather information through oral interaction • Estimate, make predictions or pose hypotheses from models	• Take a stance and use evidence to defend it • Explain content-related issues and concepts • Compare and contrast points of view • Analyze and share pros and cons of choices • Use and respond to gossip, slang, and idiomatic expressions • Use speaking strategies (e.g., circumlocution)	• Give multimedia oral presentations on grade-level material • Engage in debates on content-related issues using technical language • Explain metacognitive strategies for solving problems (e.g., "tell me how you know it.") • Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions
Level 6 - Reaching					

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

WIDA CONSORTIUM

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

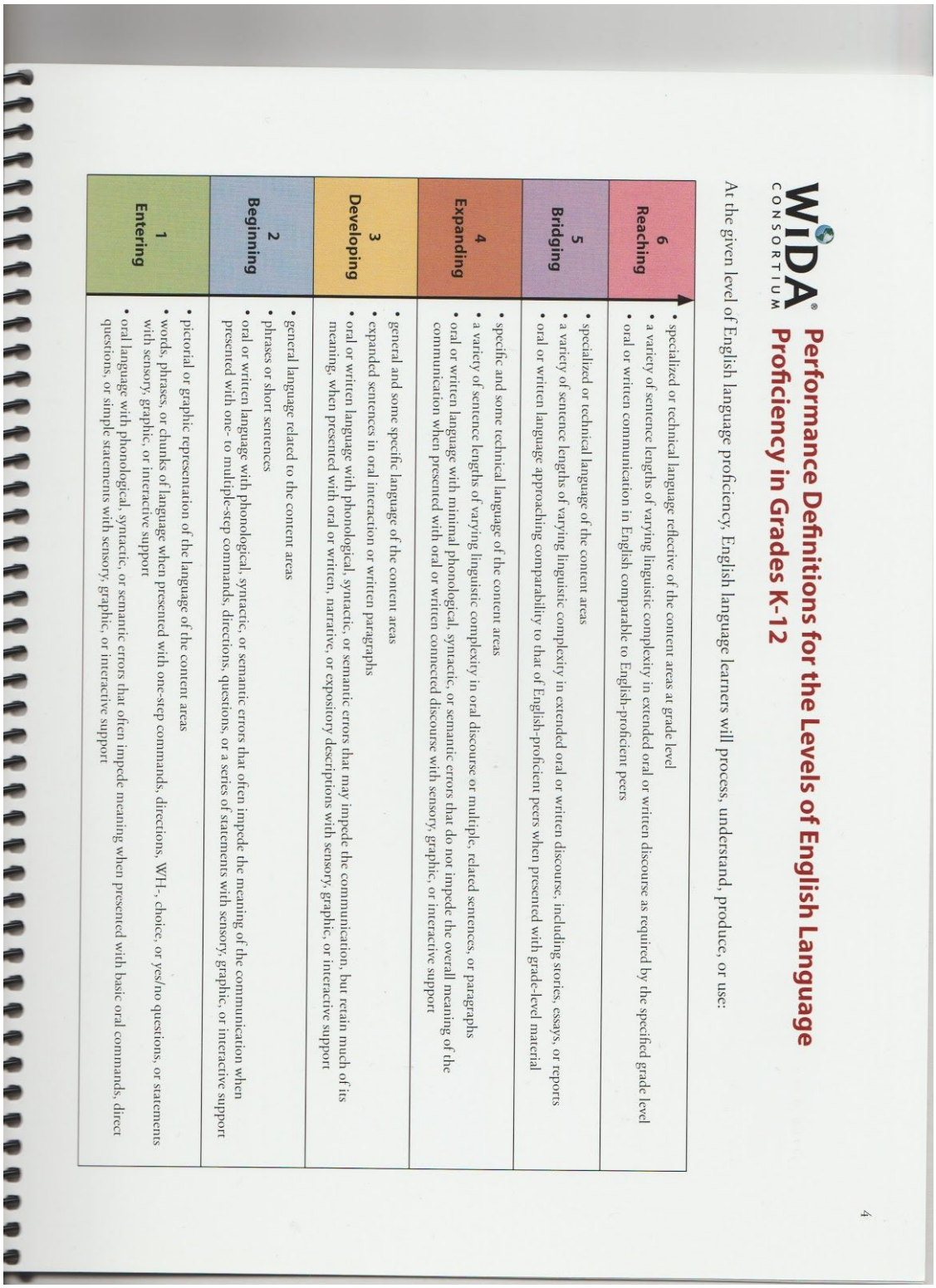
For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
READING	• Match visual representations to words/phrases • Read everyday signs, symbols, schedules, and school-related words/phrases • Respond to WH- questions related to illustrated text • Use references (e.g., picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, technology)	• Match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of element to its symbol on periodic table) • Classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs • Follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data • Match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations • Compare content-related features in visuals and graphics • Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences	• Apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts • Identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs • Answer questions about explicit information in texts • Differentiate between fact and opinion in text • Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs	• Compare/contrast authors' points of view, characters, information, or events • Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information • Infer meaning from text • Match cause to effect • Evaluate usefulness of data or information supported visually or graphically	• Interpret grade-level literature • Synthesize grade-level expository text • Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text • Infer significance of data or information in grade-level material • Identify evidence of bias and credibility of source
WRITING	• Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word/phrase banks • Provide personal information on forms read orally • Produce short answer responses to oral questions with visual support • Supply missing words in short sentences	• Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions • Take notes using graphic organizers or models • Formulate yes/no, choice and WH- questions from models • Correspond for social purposes (e.g., memos, e-mails, notes)	• Complete reports from templates • Compose short narrative and expository pieces • Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers • Compare and reflect on performance against criteria (e.g., rubrics)	• Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text • Revise work based on narrative or oral feedback • Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes • Justify or defend ideas and opinions • Produce content-related reports	• Produce research reports from multiple sources • Create original pieces that represent the use of a variety of genres and discourses • Critique, peer-edit and make recommendations on others' writing from rubrics • Explain, with details, phenomena, processes, procedures
Level 6 - Reaching					

The Can Do Descriptors work in conjunction with the WIDA Performance Definitions of the English language proficiency standards. The Performance Definitions use three criteria (1. linguistic complexity; 2. vocabulary usage; and 3. language control) to describe the increasing quality and quantity of students' language processing and use across the levels of language proficiency.

7

Appendix B



WIDA CONSORTIUM

Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency in Grades K-12

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:

6 Reaching	• specialized or technical language reflective of the content areas at grade level • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse as required by the specified grade level • oral or written communication in English comparable to English-proficient peers
5 Bridging	• specialized or technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports • oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers when presented with grade-level material
4 Expanding	• specific and some technical language of the content areas • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related sentences, or paragraphs • oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
3 Developing	• general and some specific language of the content areas • expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning, when presented with oral or written, narrative, or expository descriptions with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
2 Beginning	• general language related to the content areas • phrases or short sentences • oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one- to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support
1 Entering	• pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas • words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, WH-, choice, or yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support • oral language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede meaning when presented with basic oral commands, direct questions, or simple statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support