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## Teaching Writing To English Learners: Professional Development For Content Teachers By ELL Teachers

Elizabeth D. Gillaspey  
*Hamline University*

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TEACHING WRITING TO ENGLISH LEARNERS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR  
CONTENT TEACHERS BY ELL TEACHERS

by

Elizabeth D. Gillaspey

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

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Capstone Project Facilitator: Kelly Killorn-Moravec, Ed.D.

Content expert: Kate McNulty

Peer reviewer: Charity Coulter, MAT

### **Abstract**

The research question for this project was: what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing? After presenting literature on different types of professional development as well as best practices for teaching ELL writing, a modified version of train-the-trainer was used to develop four professional development sessions. The sessions were designed to be presented in a school by that school's ELL teachers and they each have a separate focus: background information, pre-writing strategies, during writing strategies, and post-writing strategies. The project contains slides and a presenter's guide as well as an observation tool to be used during observations between the professional development sessions.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

"Do you have a minute to talk about Ahmed? He's not doing any work for me. Is it a language issue or is he just not trying?" "I know this assignment is just too hard for Maria, so I'll just excuse her." "I didn't know Aisha was ELL. She speaks so well." As an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher, I have heard many comments like these throughout my years of teaching. They come from classroom or content teachers, who have generally received minimal training to work with English Learners (ELs), even though they have several of them in class. The need I saw for more ELL training for classroom and content teachers led me to this research and my question, *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?*

### Background

I came out of my undergraduate education with an interest in teaching, but without a teaching license. I started to think about teaching too late in my undergraduate time to switch my major. Instead, I spent time my senior year first as an intern and then as a volunteer in a high school ELL class in the town where I attended college. I enjoyed this time building relationships with students and beginning to learn how the education system functions. I left undergrad strongly considering pursuing a teaching license, but still undecided.

I had committed to going to Nicaragua the January after I graduated, and I filled the months before I left by working as a substitute teacher. I quickly became the sub of choice for many ELL teachers because, as they told me, they had trouble finding subs to take those jobs because subs were afraid to teach students who did not speak English. The ELL jobs were my favorite, so I happily took as many as possible. In January, I left for my year in Nicaragua,

where I worked as a tutor in a school for orphaned and abandoned children. I really enjoyed working with the students and I made the decision to pursue a teaching license when I returned to the United States.

When I returned to the United States, I started a graduate school program to get my ELL teaching license. While I was in graduate school, I worked as a bilingual Associate Educator at an urban public high school in the upper Midwest. I worked in sheltered (all ELL) content classes that included new-to-country Spanish-speaking immigrants. My job was to facilitate learning for students who spoke very little English and were taking classes like US History and algebra from teachers who spoke only English. I loved being able to help make content accessible for my students and I also tried to help them learn some key English words so that they could understand more without my help.

After I got my teaching license, I was hired at a K-8 magnet school in the same urban district. My first year, I worked with fourth grade, fifth grade, and middle school, teaching two middle school classes for WIDA level 3s and 4s (intermediate level) along with both small groups and push-in support for the fourth and fifth graders. The next year, I switched to working only with middle school students and have continued working with middle school for the past five years. During that time, I have always done some co-teaching and there were two years where I did exclusively co-teaching. I have co-taught in both reading and science, but mostly in science. When I co-taught, I taught in a content classroom with a teacher licensed in the subject area of the class. That teacher was responsible for the content of the class, while I was responsible for the language. The classes had a mix of ELs and native English speakers.

Through my time spent co-teaching, I saw the need for increased support and scaffolds for EL students in content classes. My co-teachers had the desire to provide quality education



for the ELs in their classes, but they did not always have the tools to meet their needs. My experience fits with research findings that show that many teachers are underprepared to work with ELs (Cruz, 2015; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Reeves, 2006). The teachers I worked with wanted to learn more and they welcomed me and the ideas I brought into their content classes. As I worked with them, they became able to incorporate certain supports, like sentence stems, without my help. It was rewarding to see teachers learning the strategies and supports needed to support their ELs and being able to implement them on their own.

While my ELL colleagues and I were able to help a few teachers learn ELL strategies through co-teaching, we knew that there were many other teachers who could also use support. We saw a particular need in our school for more writing instruction, because most EL students received the lowest score in the writing domain on the WIDA ACCESS, the test used in my state to measure ELs' English proficiency. My ELL colleagues and I started working together to increase students' writing skills by sharing strategies and making it a focus in our classes. We still were not seeing the results we wanted, and we realized that to accomplish our goal we would need to involve the classroom and content teachers in the building.

With the support of our administration, we developed a professional development (PD) session and presented it on a district PD day to teachers at our site. We started out the session with all teachers together and presented some basic information about the WIDA ACCESS test. We explained to teachers what the WIDA ACCESS test measures and what the scores mean. We also introduced a vocabulary strategy that could be used at all grade levels and in all content areas. We then broke into grade level clusters, with each ELL teacher working with their team. In teams, we showed teachers how to find WIDA ACCESS scores for their students and shared some grade-appropriate writing strategies. We got great feedback from our colleagues about our

session and almost all were interested in attending similar PD sessions in the future. As an ELL team, we are definitely interested in presenting more.

This experience sparked my interest in professional development for classroom and content teachers to help them better serve ELs. Designing our first PD session was somewhat challenging because initially we were unsure which information was the most important to present. We had a limited amount of time, so we knew we had to be selective. We had ideas of things to present in all four WIDA domains, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but we decided to keep the focus on writing.

For my capstone, I decided to continue our focus on writing because it was the area of greatest need at our school and I knew there was more information to share than what we could fit into one PD session. I decided to focus on middle school because I have the most experience with those grade levels. Much of what I developed would be applicable to other grade levels, but adjusting it to meet the needs of all teachers, kindergarten through eighth grade, was beyond the scope of the project. This process led me to my research question: what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?

### **Key Terms**

Throughout this paper, I use several abbreviations. I refer to students who are in the process of learning English as an additional language as ELs and teachers as ELL teachers. There are many acronyms that can be used to describe these teachers and learners (TESOL, 2017). I have selected these two for several reasons. First, they are different, which makes it less confusing to know when I am talking about teachers and when I am talking about students. Second, they are fairly common, and thus hopefully not confusing. Third, they avoid the

implication present in acronyms like ESL that students are learning a second language when in fact they may already know more than one language. As Cruz (2015) points out, it is crucial to remember that knowing multiple languages is an important skill in today's world. Sometimes teachers see students learning Spanish or French and commend that as something that smart, college-bound students do, but see students who are fluent in another language but learning English as struggling and behind even though the ELs are typically farther along the path to bilingualism. While there are acronyms like EAL (English as an additional language) and ENL (English as a new language) that specifically acknowledge that students may already know other languages, these acronyms are not widely used and so may be confusing. This is why I settled on ELs and ELL teachers (TESOL).

I also use the abbreviations of L1 and L2. L1 stands for first language and L2 stands for second language. It is important to acknowledge that for some students, languages referred to as L2s might in fact be students' third or fourth language; however, the abbreviation L2 is widely used in research to represent the language that students are learning. I use PD to refer to professional development, which I define as any sort of class that helps in-service teachers develop their skills.

Another important term is WIDA ACCESS. The WIDA ACCESS is the language proficiency test used in my state to measure ELs' English proficiency. The test assesses students in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are given a scale score and a proficiency level score in each domain. The proficiency level score is in a range of 1.0-6.0. Students also receive an oral language score (50% listening and 50% speaking), a literacy score (50% reading and 50% writing), a comprehension score (30% listening and 70% reading), and an overall score (15% listening, 15% speaking, 35% reading, and 35% writing) (The Board

of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2004). These scores are used to place students in appropriate ELL services and to make decisions about when students are ready to be exited from ELL services.

### **Guiding Questions**

When beginning this project, I had several questions that guided my research. Some were more general questions, such as 'what format makes the best PD?' and 'what information do content teachers need to know to teach ELs?' To narrow my content focus, I chose to focus on 'what are best practices for teaching middle school ELs academic writing?' I also looked at two questions that pertain to my school: 1) what specific strategies help teach writing to students who come from oral traditions? and 2) what are techniques to help students reduce the number of run on sentences in their writing? These questions all fit into my overarching question, which is *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?*

### **Summary**

In this project, I have focused on designing PD sessions that can be presented by ELL teachers to classroom and content teachers. These sessions focus on information about and strategies for teaching writing to ELs. Included are some general strategies as well as some specific strategies for students from oral traditions and strategies to help students fix run-on sentences. Observation tools that teachers can use to observe each other are also included. This process helped me become a better teacher by challenging me to consider how to apply research in the form of best practices, through which I could remind myself of strategies I already knew as well as learn new ones. It also helped me become a better teacher by pushing me to discover new ways to share my knowledge with colleagues. I hope this project will benefit other teachers

by helping them learn new skills and benefit ELs by improving the strategies used by their teachers.

### **Chapter Overviews**

In Chapter One, I introduced my project by establishing the purpose, significance, and need for the project. I briefly introduced the context as well as my personal background. I also defined key terms and provided my research questions. In Chapter Two, I provide a review of the literature relevant to designing professional development and teaching writing to ELs. Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the current project, including the intended audience, timeline for implementation, method for assessing the impact of the project, and rationale behind the choice of a PowerPoint and handouts as the format for the project. Chapter Four presents the conclusions and my reflections about the research process, including what I learned and opportunities for further research and PD development.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

The goal of this project is to determine the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching English Language Learner (ELL) writing. The first section covers what type of professional development (PD) is most effective, with effectiveness determined by positive impact on teachers' confidence in teaching ELs and on students' progress in language development. This section will examine both specific formats for delivering PD and general characteristics that make PD effective. The next section focuses on best practices for teaching EL writing along with specific strategies to target skill gaps at my school. Lastly, special considerations for teaching writing to students from oral cultures will be included.

#### **PD Formats**

In school year 2014-2015, 9.4% of students in the United States were English Learners (ELs), which is an increase from 8% in 2000-2001 (Aud et al., 2012; McFarland et al., 2017). Due to the increasing number of ELs in classrooms, it is more important than ever for teachers to have the training to teach ELs. Lucas et al. (2008) suggested that a separate class should be offered to pre-service teachers about teaching ELs, or at least special attention given to ELs in a course on diversity or differentiation. However, this clearly is not yet happening, as Verplaetse found that many teachers feel unprepared to teach EL students (as cited in Reeves, 2006). This claim was bolstered by Reeves' (2006) research, showing that 81% of teachers did not feel like they had enough training to teach ELs. While more classes for pre-service teachers would help fix the problem for the future, these statistics show the need for more PD for in-service content teachers on instructional strategies for ELs.

Although professional development is needed, not every type of PD is worthwhile and leads to a change in teachers' beliefs and practices. As Song (2016) discovered, even after a significant amount of PD on sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) as well as guided coaching, 10% of teachers said their job was to only teach content and it was the English Language Learner (ELL) teachers' job to teach language. In the same study, 27% said it was frustrating to teach ELs. However, 83% of those who responded to a survey and 71% of those interviewed said that the SIOP PD changed their attitude about teaching ELs (Song, 2016).

Song's (2016) research showed that PD has the potential to change teachers' perspectives about teaching ELs and help them feel better equipped to do so. Unfortunately, PD about best practices in EL teaching is still not common, despite the growing number of EL students in the US (Cruz, 2015). This paper examines several formats for delivering PD with the goal of finding their strengths and weaknesses and determining which are the most effective.

**University classes.** Many studies examined the impact of university classes for in-service teachers. These classes gave teachers the chance to study ELL theories and methods that they may not have been exposed to in their pre-service program. Berg and Huang (2015) studied a program where university classes were developed in partnership with a school district. Teachers took two classes on methods emphasizing socio-cultural perspectives for second language development, one course on the special needs of ELs, and one course on systemic functional linguistics. Teachers also received mentoring and coaching in their classrooms. As part of the coursework, teachers designed a unit and analyzed language requirements in order to better support ELs. The results showed that teachers felt more confident in teaching linguistically diverse students and their lesson plans and classroom observations showed the same (Berg & Huang, 2015).

In another program studied by He, Prater, and Steed (2011), teachers took year-long classes (9 class sessions, 46 hours) at the district, taught by instructors from a local university. To foster collaboration, they recruited at least one ELL teacher and one content teacher working with the same grade level. Class topics included ELL best practices and cultural awareness. The fact that the classes extended over the whole school year provided time to present new material as well as give teachers time to share experiences and reflect (He et al., 2011).

**"Train the trainer" model.** While university classes can be an effective way to deliver instruction, not all teachers are able to take advantage of them because of districts' financial constraints (Hansen-Thomas, Casey, & Grosso, 2013). "Train the trainer" models, where one group of teachers receives university instruction and then shares what they learn with colleagues, can help stretch limited school district resources. In one program that focused on peer mentoring, a group of math and science teachers went through training at a university (Hansen-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015). They took classes on ESL methodology, second language acquisition, diversity, and mentoring. When they finished the classes, each teacher partnered with another teacher who had not taken the courses to apply the knowledge to better serve ELs in their school. They applied the learning in their own classrooms as well as by sharing it with their colleague and went beyond it by noticing problems in their school and looking for solutions. Many pairs also brought their learning to the rest of the staff. Another benefit was that the mentor teachers gained confidence in their knowledge base and ability to teach others about teaching ELs (Hansen-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015).

In another program, a group of nine teachers took three consecutive courses on multicultural education, second language acquisition, and ELL methods (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013). After taking the classes, they led PD for their peers. Teachers developed greater cultural



awareness and became aware of the challenges students faced trying to learn content and language at the same time. Teachers in the program valued receiving researched-based PD and were able to transfer knowledge from the classes into PD for their peers. They found that learning theory helped them understand why strategies were effective, which helped them explain those strategies to peers. The teachers in the program became confident in their ability to advocate for and teach ELs (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013).

These two programs provided education to a wide group of teachers. The teachers in the university classes received direct instruction around ESL theories and methods. They were then able to apply their learning in two ways: first, in their classrooms, which benefited their students; and second, by teaching their peers, which spread the knowledge to other classes at their school, benefitting all students.

**District provided classes.** Another form of PD is classes provided by the district, rather than by a university. Song (2016) studied a district where classes on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) method were combined with the guided coaching model (pre-conference, observation, post-conference). Teachers attended at least monthly classes with two coaching sessions a semester. The teacher attendees showed improved confidence in many areas related to applying best practices for teaching ELs and they also developed a more positive attitude about having ELs in their classes. However, some teachers did complain that the training was too time-consuming and too much work, which can be a struggle with any long-term PD program (Song, 2016).

**Book clubs.** One type of PD is a book club, where teachers get together to read and discuss a specific book. In a study by Andrei, Ellerbe, and Cherner (2015), teachers read a book about teaching writing to ELs. The teachers felt like they learned new strategies and were

inspired to continue their learning when the book club finished. In addition, they felt inspired to share their discoveries with colleagues at their school, many by loaning the book to peers and encouraging them to read it. They also indicated they would share strategies with teachers in planning meetings and school based PD. Two teachers who were involved with curriculum writing were inspired to share ideas there. The fact that many teachers had a positive response to this PD format along with the fact that teachers were able to elaborate on specific actions they took in their schools as a result of the PD suggests that it may be an effective way to improve teachers' instruction of ELs.

### **Characteristics of Good PD**

While the format of PD is important to consider when designing effective PD, some characteristics of good PD can be found in multiple formats. Two strengths present in all the formats described above are research-based content and longer-term duration. There are other characteristics needed to create high-quality PD including PD that treats teachers like professionals, PD guided by a specific need, and PD that includes strategies that teachers can easily apply in their classrooms (Andrei et al., 2015; Gleeson & Davison, 2016; Hanson-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015; He et al., 2011).

Similar to their desire for research-based content, teachers prefer PD that makes them feel like professionals. The book club model achieved this by having an open-ended structure so that teachers can draw their own conclusions (Andrei et al., 2015). Peer coaching can accomplish the same effect when both teachers are willing to learn from each other (Hanson-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015). This reciprocal teaching makes both teachers feel respected and also enhances the learning. When all voices are heard and appreciated, teachers are better able to learn (Andrei et al., 2015).

PD needs to be tied to a specific need (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). Teachers need to feel like they have a lack of skill or gap in knowledge in some area before they are truly committed to having PD on the subject. Many teachers tend to put more weight on classroom experience than on theory, until they see a need for growth (Gleeson & Davison, 2016). Additionally, Elfers and Stritikus (2014) found that PD is most effective if goals and priorities are set at the district level but details of PD are tailored for individual schools. Content teachers have expressed dissatisfaction with PD that is not specific to content areas (He et al., 2011). Peer-coaching or train-the-trainer models can also be effective for meeting the specific needs of a school or individual because teaching is improved when the teacher knows the learner (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013). When the learners are other teachers in the same school, the teachers giving PD can tailor it to their specific situation. However, a diverse perspective can also be beneficial. Andrei et al. (2015) found that teachers liked learning from peers at other schools and those who taught different age groups.

A related important characteristic of effective PD is including strategies that are easily applicable to teachers' classrooms (He et al., 2011; Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013). This correlates to findings that teachers dislike PD that they see as too time-consuming or too much work (Song, 2016). Vansant-Webb and Polychronis (2016) studied teachers at a turn-around school with a high population of ELs. The teachers were receiving PD around teaching ELs due to their students' low performance on standardized tests. They found that teachers wanted more support around teaching ELs, but stated that the support needed to be easy to integrate into their classrooms. Similarly, teachers in a book club liked that the book they read had strategies that could easily be used in their classes (Andrei et al., 2015). To facilitate the application of strategies, presenters should model and integrate them into the PD presentation (He et al., 2011).

When learnings from PD are more easily integrated in the classroom, it not only makes it more likely that teachers will be willing to participate, but also that the PD will benefit students.

### **Best Practices for Teaching ELL Writing**

To be effective, PD needs to have a format and characteristics that set teachers up for success, while also including beneficial content. All teachers need to know how to effectively teach ELs for these students to exhibit growth (He et al., 2011). Even teachers who feel proficient at teaching their content area can benefit from PD on teaching ELs because good teaching for ELs is more than "just good teaching" (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Good teaching practices can benefit ELs, but, in order to be successful, ELs need additional linguistic support beyond teaching practices that help students learn content. Teachers are often lacking the knowledge of how to give students this linguistic support (de Jong & Harper, 2005). To understand what content will create effective PD for teaching ELL writing, it is necessary to look at best practices for teaching ELs.

**Background about students.** Teachers need some background knowledge about their students as a base to their work with ELs. Cruz (2015) reminds us that, just like with any other student, the most important first step "is to get to know the student as a person" (p. 35). Next, teachers need to learn students' language level and at least a little bit about their country of origin (Cruz, 2015). While some of this information can be obtained through student surveys, most states have a language proficiency exam that is given to ELs every year. Learning where to access that data and how to interpret it is an important step in gaining background information about students (Cruz, 2015). Teachers should also learn about their students' educational background in their first language (L1) because ELs with strong native language skills can achieve proficiency faster than those with no L1 education (Lucas et al., 2008). With this

background knowledge, teachers will be able to select appropriate teaching strategies to help their students.

**Background about language acquisition.** Besides background information about their students, teaching also need some basic knowledge about how students acquire language. One crucial piece of knowledge about language development is that everyday English is different from academic English (Lucas et al., 2008). Teachers also need to be aware that students develop proficiency in everyday English first (Lucas et al., 2008). Without this knowledge, teachers may mistakenly assume that students who speak fluent conversational English are also fluent in academic English. Many teachers are familiar with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, which states that students can do more with support than without and that instruction should be aimed just beyond what students can do on their own (Peregoy and Boyle, 2001). A similar idea exists in language acquisition in Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, which states that language instruction should be understandable by students, but at a grammatical level just beyond what they can produce on their own (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). These theories remind teachers that instruction must not be too far beyond students' current level or else the instruction, no matter how excellent, will be ineffective.

**Strategies.** Once teachers have the necessary background knowledge about their students and about language acquisition, they can start learning about strategies to deliver effective instruction. One key teaching strategy is using visuals (Cruz, 2015). Visuals can be used to give directions, teach new words and concepts, and help students remember previously taught words and phrases. Students with appropriate first language (L1) skills should also have access to dictionaries (including picture and bilingual) or access to an online translator (Cruz, 2015).

L1 support can go beyond dictionaries. It is important that teachers allow native language use in the classroom (Lucas et al., 2008). L1s can be used to have conversation about a topic before writing, which can help students become comfortable with their ideas before trying to write in a language they are just learning. Students who are literate in their L1 can even write their first draft in their L1. Writing in their L1 can be beneficial because it can help increase L1 skills and students with stronger L1 skills tend to become proficient in English more quickly (Lucas et al., 2008). Peer support is another important scaffold, such as triads with one EL, one bilingual student who is strong in both languages, and one native English speaker (Cruz, 2015; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Within this triad structure, the EL gets support, including in his or her L1, while the other students can support each other in English and also get the benefit of teaching another student.

The EL's need for help in beginner skills should not be seen as slowing down the group, but rather as giving the other students the opportunity to teach (Cruz, 2015). Since students can develop conversational and academic English through social interaction, working with peers is a valuable way to accelerate language growth (Lucas et al., 2008; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). ELs, just like all students, learn better in a safe environment where they are not afraid to make mistakes, so partner work should be structured in a way that ELs feel safe to take risks (Lucas et al., 2008)

Students learning a second language can develop literacy skills concurrently with oral skills, so working with partners can help students increase their writing skills (de Jong & Harper, 2005). However, ELs also need specific writing support to grow as writers. ELs often struggle with things that are natural to native speakers, like word order, articles, and prepositions, so teachers need to be aware of the structure of English and that ELs may struggle in this area (de

Jong & Harper, 2005). Students need explicit instruction on these grammar features, but teachers should not try to teach everything at once (Cruz, 2015; Lucas et al., 2008). Teachers need to first identify the grammar features that are most likely to challenge students (Lucas et al., 2008). Then, teacher should pick the most important elements of a writing project for ELs to focus on and leave the rest for later (Cruz, 2015; Andrei et al., 2015). Teachers will need to expose students to grammar features multiple times over several weeks for them to truly master the concept (Cruz, 2015). Editing and revising in peer groups can help students catch grammar mistakes because different students have different strengths and weaknesses in grammar (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). However, in order for this group work to be effective, students need explicit guidelines on what types of feedback to give (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001).

Although ELs may need explicit instruction on grammar, grammar should not be the primary focus of writing instruction (Andrei et al., 2015). ELs need comprehensible input and opportunities to produce language for a purpose (Lucas et al., 2008; Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). One way to achieve this is to have students produce different types of writing assignments, such as a personal narrative and research paper, on the same topic (Andrei et al., 2015). This allows students multiple chances to practice different types of language about the same content. Anytime students are writing, graphic organizers help students organize their initial ideas (Lucas et al., 2008). As they begin to write, sentence stems and frames can help students organize their thoughts into writing (Cruz, 2015). For example, sentence frames are used extensively in the English 3D curriculum, to scaffold both sentences and essays (Kinsella & Scholastic, n.d.).

Besides needing supports around the mechanics of writing, students also need to learn language in the context of a subject area (Berg & Huang, 2015). This systemic functional linguistics perspective, the idea that language as inextricably tied to content, was used by WIDA

to develop its English Language Development (ELD) standards (2014). Learning language in context is important because content classes have specialized language, including vocabulary and syntactic structures like passive voice and transition words (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Content teachers need to become aware of the special language of their content and explicitly teach it to ELs.

A study by Panero (2016) looked at a school that implemented a writing program integrated into content areas, which included a focus on specific grammatical functions. This "typical, large, comprehensive US struggling high school with a population comparable to other urban schools", including EL and special education (SPED) students, implemented a writing program based on *Teaching Basic Writing Skills* (Panero, 2016, p232). The program increased student engagement, including that of ELs and SPED and also raised student scores on written exams like the AP US History exam. The program focused intensely on complex sentence writing and students did not even start writing paragraphs until second semester of ninth grade. They began working on essays in tenth grade. The author calls this method "progressive mastery through deliberate practice" (Panero, 2016, p235). This method is very teacher dependent, as explained by Panero (2016):

The teacher's role in a sense is to protect the student from feeling overwhelmed by what he or she cannot yet master. The teacher deliberately selects and sequences small pieces of instruction based on knowledge of how they spiral and build in response to the evidence of student learning needs that each instructional activity yields. Students experience mastery of the small pieces along the way, which cultivates engagement and self-efficacy (for teacher and student) and spurs student motivation. (p.235)



Many of the pieces taught might be seen as too basic for high school, such as the teaching the proper use of the conjunctions "because", "but", and "so". However, Panero (2016) argues that if teachers select the skills being taught based on gaps in student knowledge and connection to content, then this method can have great impact. Teaching these small pieces can help students beyond just improving their writing; it can help them learn concepts that appear in many disciplines. For example, if instead of just teaching topic sentences and detail sentences, the teacher first teaches the difference between general and specific statements, it will not only help students be better writers but also teach a skill that is useful beyond writing.

Progressive mastery is different from the typical approach to teaching writing because the typical approach assumes that students are disengaged from writing because the topic is boring (Panero, 2016). Progressive mastery assumes that students are disengaged because they are lacking the skills to be a successful writer. Rigor is also viewed differently in progressive mastery as compared to traditional approaches. Traditional approaches see rigor as access to grade-level materials and expectation to produce grade level assignments, whether or not a student is ready and has the prerequisite skills. Progressive mastery sees rigor as providing exactly the right instruction to help a student keep progressing in order to eventually attain grade-level mastery. While not every school will choose to implement this program, its success shows the benefits of a program that includes content-focused writing instruction with adequate scaffolding and support.

**A common problem in academic writing: run-on sentences.** Generation 1.5 students, who have been through US schools but are not native speakers, are particularly prone to run-on sentences (Marshall & Decapua, 2009). An example would be "I didn't want to go out, I wanted to stay home because it was raining" (Marshall & Decapua, 2009). Because sentences like this

are easily understood, students are sometimes reluctant to see them as a problem, because they feel like they are effective communicators in English. In order to address run-ons with students, teachers need to shift the focus from the writer's mistakes to the conventions of academic English. To do this, they can point out that while the reader will certainly understand what a student means, run-ons can distract a reader because they do not follow the conventions of academic writing, and can be ungrammatical (Marshall & Decapua, 2009).

It is problematic to isolate the problem of run-ons from the problem of fragments because both are sentence boundary errors. Marshall and Decapua (2009) have developed a system called *Glue* to teach students to recognize and correct sentence boundary problems. *Glue* is defined as "all clause markers, including coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns, and noun-clause introducers" (Marshall & Decapua, 2009, p. 177). Words from these categories are called *Glue* words because they join together two clauses, just like glue joins two items.

To teach this method, the teacher first teaches the students to recognize SVs, which are subjects and verbs. Next, the students receive a list of basic *Glue* words (and, but, or, because, although, if, who, which, that, what, where, and how) and are taught to identify SVs and *Glue* words in sentences (Marshall & Decapua, 2009). They then learn the basic *Glue* rule, which is that each sentence needs one more SV than *Glue* word. For example, a sentence with two SVs needs one *Glue* word. A sentence with a *Glue* word, but only one SV is a fragment and a sentence with two SVs but no *Glue* word is a run-on. The glue analogy can be used to help students remember these rules. For example, having two SVs with no *Glue* word is like trying to stick two pieces of paper together with no glue.

The next step is teaching students how to fix problem sentences using the *Glue* strategy (Marshall & Decapua, 2009). Students can approach it like a math problem and either add or subtract something until they get to the right balance of SVs and *Glue* words. Students can use analysis with *Glue* and SV to discover more complex sentence structures, like when the *Glue* word begins the sentence or when there are longer sentences with three SVs and two *Glue* words. An initial study of this technique comparing students' written work before and after learning the *Glue* strategy showed a decrease in the number of run-ons and fragments (Marshall & Decapua, 2009).

### **Teaching Writing to Students from Oral Traditions**

Teachers need to understand the cultural background of their students so they do not mistake cultural differences for non-compliance or rule-breaking. Different cultures have different norms for things like collaboration, how to interact with teachers, and if it is acceptable for students to share ideas if they are not sure if they are right (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Somali language has a "rich oral tradition" (Farid & McMahan, 2004). This is in part due to the fact that Somali had no written form until 1972 (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Because of the strong oral culture, Somali students may have strong listening and memorization skills, which may be put to good use in the classroom (Farid & McMahan, 2004).

A common struggle in teaching writing is how to create space for students to keep their voice while also teaching them to follow academic writing norms (Rubin, Goodrum, & Hall, 1990). L2 students may experience interference from language features of their L1, which native English speakers often notice as "mistakes" or improper tone or style. They may also experience interference from rhetorical structures common in their L1, and these are not usually as easily noticeable by students (Rubin et al., 1990). Rubin et al. (1990) give two reasons why students

may not notice L1 rhetorical influence. One is that they have done very little writing and have spent more time in workbook exercises. Another is that much of their schooling has been in their L2, and so they have adopted some L2 rhetorical structures even when writing in their L1. Although many students do not recognize rhetorical differences, some do. For example, a Japanese student realized that not taking a side or being "fair" is valued in Japanese writing, whereas in US writing students are expected to choose and argue for a side (Rubin et al., 1990).

Rubin et al. (1990) point out that while examining ELs' writing for L1 influence is useful for analyzing writing, it can be problematic as an instructional tool. If instructors teach students to ignore and weed out any L1 influence, their writing may lack voice and it may also "place the instructor in an ethically untenable sociopolitical posture: the composition teacher as colonizer" (Rubin et al., 1990, p.62). The better option is to integrate L1 strategies into students' writing. All students have to learn the difference between oral and written speech patterns as they learn to write. As students mature as writers, they start knowing when it is appropriate to integrate oral speech patterns. Oral speech patterns are usually used to set a certain tone or to connect with an audience. Several oral-based rhetorical structures are repetition, flowery language, storytelling, and a lack of written organizational clues. Rubin et al. suggest several "oral-based stylistic elements- metaphor and narrative as proof, direct second person address, certain uses of redundancy, oratorical cadences and so on" that teachers can help students integrate into their writing (1990, p.73).

### **Gaps in Information**

ELs are growing in number across the United States (Aud et al., 2012; McFarland et al. 2017). For example, in one large urban district in the upper Midwest, approximately 22% of the students are ELs. The achievement gap is a well-known phenomenon in education and ELs are

among those that tend to lag behind their peers. While many districts are hiring more ELL teachers who are trained to work with these students, most ELs spend most of their day with mainstream teachers. Therefore, it is crucial that all teachers know how to work with and educate ELs. However, not all mainstream teachers feel prepared to do so (Reeves, 2006). It is clear that many teachers would benefit from more training on serving ELs and many teachers are interested in receiving this training.

While any teacher could enroll in ELL teacher training classes at a university, most teachers do not have the time or money to pursue this option. It is most realistic to expect teachers to pursue professional development that is free, easily accessible, and not too time-consuming. ELL teachers are already experts in educating ELs, so it makes sense for ELL teachers to offer PD at their schools for their colleagues. This has the added benefit of making the PD tailored to the specific EL population served at that school and to their specific needs. This project presents a series of PD classes that can be given by ELL teachers to other teachers in their school. This type of plan aligns with the train-the-trainer model of PD (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013; Hanson-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015), with the ELL teachers as the already trained experts.

### **Summary**

The literature review provided above presented previous research that helps answer the question, *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?* First, research on types of PD, including university classes, train-the-trainer, district provided classes, and book clubs were reviewed. The characteristics of effective PD were also discussed. Effective PD was found to have research-based content and a longer-term duration. Effective PD also treats teachers like

professionals, is guided by a specific need, and includes strategies that teachers can easily apply in their classrooms (Andrei et al., 2015; Gleeson & Davison, 2016; Hanson-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015; He et al., 2011).

The research on PD format and characteristics was followed by research on best practices in teaching EL writing, including key ideas in second language acquisition along with specific strategies and special considerations for students from oral traditions. Chapter Three explains the professional development classes designed for this project. The classes are based on the train-the-trainer model and present the best-practice research explored here.

## Chapter Three

### Project Description

Chapter Two provided a review of research important to this project. Chapter Three will describe the project. The rationale behind the choice of format and framework will be explained. The context of the project will be given and the project will be described. Finally, a timeline will be given for the project's completion. As a whole, this chapter represents the answer to my research question *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?*

### Choice of Framework and Format

The format chosen for this professional development (PD) is based on the framework of the train-the-trainer model, which is when one group of teachers receives training, often at a university, and then they return to their building to share their knowledge with other teachers (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013; Hansen-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015). It is difficult for a single teacher to organize a professional development program where teachers to go to a university and take classes there to be trained. However, most schools already have English Language Learners (ELL) teachers, who are already university trained. So in that sense, the first part of the train the trainer program has already been completed. The goal of this project is to develop the next step of the process, where the trained teachers, in this case each school's ELL teachers, pass on their knowledge to other teachers.

Research shows that high-quality PD is specific to the needs of the site, which is why this project is designed so ELL teachers present to other teachers at their school (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014; Gleeson & Davison, 2016). Each PD session also includes strategies that teachers can apply in their classroom because research shows that teachers want PD that is easily applicable

to their work (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2013; He et al., 2011). The PD sessions also include work time to make it easier for teachers to immediately implement the new strategies without increasing their workload too much (Song, 2016). Each session is followed by an observation because research shows that teachers can benefit from sharing ideas with one another (Andrei et al., 2015; Hanson-Thomas & Grosso Richins, 2015).

The format of the project includes the materials needed to present the PD: a PowerPoint presentation, a presenters' guide, handouts, and observation tools (see appendices). These materials present research from the best practices for teaching EL writing section of the literature review. PowerPoint is a standard way to present a PD and handouts help teachers retain the information because they can take the handouts with them and use them as resources. The presenter's guide is included to make the PD easier for others to present the PD in their own setting. The guide includes notes on extra things to talk about for some slides and gives ideas on how the presentation can be customized for different schools. The observation tools help facilitate and focus the observations, which are designed to take place between the PD sessions. The observations can be done by the presenter or another teacher attending the PD, depending on the preference of the teacher being observed and the schedules of the teachers involved.

### **Context of Project**

The end result of this project was the materials needed to carry out a 4-session professional development class for middle school teachers. The target audience was middle school content teachers in a K-8 magnet school in an urban, upper Midwestern school district, but it could easily be adapted to fit any school with ELs. The target group of middle school teachers came from all content areas and had a range of backgrounds and experiences, which



helped make the project adaptable to other audiences. The audience did not consist of ELL teachers, as the PD is designed to be presented by ELL teachers.

### **Description of Project**

The project is made up of four PD sessions. The first session (see Appendix A) informs teachers about important background information they should find out about their students, including information about WIDA and the ACCESS test. The first session also includes information about pre-writing strategies, including vocabulary and visuals. The first observation tool focuses on the use of visuals and vocabulary.

The first session also includes an introduction activity that functions as a pre-assessment. This PD was designed to be given at a school by that school's ELL teachers. Because teachers at any given site would likely already know one another, it was not necessary to design a "getting to know you" activity. Instead, the session one introduction activity requires teachers to be a little bit vulnerable, because they might have to admit to not knowing something. This could make it a bad fit for an introductory activity, but since the teachers attending already know each other, this level of vulnerability should be appropriate, as long as there is careful introduction of the activity to acknowledge that it is ok to not know everything. The activity will give the presenter valuable information about the knowledge that participants already have, which makes it worth doing.

The second PD session (see Appendix B) focuses on pre-writing. The first focus area is on peer conversations and how they can support students in writing. The second focus area is grammar, especially identifying and teaching grammar features that are common in specific content areas. The accompanying second observation tool focuses on the integration of peer conversations and grammar instruction into the classroom.

There is a time for teachers to share reflections, successes, and struggles from their attempts at implementing what they have learned at the previous session at the beginning of the second, third, and fourth PD sessions. The goal of this part of the PD is to help teachers become more comfortable collaborating with their colleagues. It also provides a forum to provide help for teachers who are struggling, which will hopefully lead to better implementation of the strategies being taught.

The third PD session (see Appendix C) contains strategies to help students during writing. The two main topics are graphic organizers and sentence frames. Another topic covered in this PD session is the benefit of giving students the opportunity to do different types of writing on the same topic. The third observation tool focuses on graphic organizers and sentence frames. Multiple writing types are not included because the observation tool is designed for a one hour or less observation and that is not something that can be observed in one observation.

The fourth PD session (see Appendix D) includes strategies to help students after writing. There are three main topics including peer editing, run on sentences, and preserving student voice. The observation tool is focused on peer editing and run on sentences. The part about preserving student voice is more informational rather than a strategy.

### **Timeline and Assessment**

The timeline for implementing this PD is as follows. The project was completed over the summer of 2017. The four sessions will be presented throughout the 2017-2018 school year, with one being presented each quarter. The observations will take place between the sessions and will be scheduled by the participants. With this timeline, all PDs will be presented by the end of the school year.

The project will be assessed by multiple measures. One form of assessment will be exit slips from the participants. These exit slips will ask which part of the PD teachers found most helpful and what further questions they might have. The questions can be used to evaluate the success of the PD. If the questions are about extensions and applications of the material presented, it would indicate that the material was well-understood and teachers are ready to apply what they have learned. On the other hand, if teachers are asking clarifying questions about the material presented, then it would show that something was unclear in the presentation. The presenters can use this information to follow up with teachers before the next PD or revise the next PD to make sure any questions are answered. Some questions may also spark ideas for development of new PD, if the questions are not related to any topics in upcoming PD.

Another assessment will be the check-ins at the beginning of each session. The teachers' reports of how they have been able to implement strategies will give the presenters an idea of where they might need to provide some extra support. A third assessment tool is the observations. However, when using observations as an assessment, the presenters must be careful not to provide the impression that they are judging the teaching ability of the teacher they are observing. The observations should primarily be used as an assessment tool for the presenters, to note which skills teachers seem to be implementing easily and which skills are more challenging. The presenter doing the observation can celebrate successful integration of new strategies with the teacher being observed and can offer suggestions for areas where the teacher is struggling. The presenter can also note the areas of struggle as potential areas for further PD.

A fourth measure of success will be ACCESS scores, especially in writing. Unfortunately, because ACCESS testing is done in the middle of the year, assessments of the full

impact of the training on ACCESS scores will not be available until spring of 2019 at the earliest. Ideally, ACCESS scores would keep climbing, as teachers continue to implement new strategies. If the PD is successful, the ACCESS scores may show that writing is no longer the weakest area for most students, which may prompt the school to focus their PD on a new area.

### **Summary**

This project provides four PD sessions that will help teachers increase their abilities to teach ELL writing. The project can be presented and adapted by ELL teachers to fit their specific context. The sessions each deal with different strategies and were designed to be presented throughout the school year. The success of the project can be assessed by exit tickets, teacher reports and observations, and ACCESS scores. The next chapter will contain reflections on the process of developing this project and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusions

The goal of this project was to answer the question *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?* This question was answered through the literature review in Chapter Two and the research project, described in Chapter Three. The goal of this chapter is to provide reflections on the process of developing the project as well as ideas for future study.

This chapter begins by reviewing the research presented in the literature review in Chapter Two and emphasizing the most important pieces of information. The next section contains my reflections on the process of doing the research and creating the project. After that, the ways to communicate and share the project are described, followed by another section that discusses the implications of the project. The final two sections discuss the limitations of the project and ideas for further research.

#### Literature Review Revisited

As I started designing my professional development (PD), certain parts of my literature review became more influential to the process. Two research articles, one by Hansen-Thomas, Casey, and Grosso, (2013) and the other by Hansen-Thomas and Grosso Richins (2015) focused on the train-the-trainer model and gave me the information needed to select that model for this project. These articles also had information about peer coaching which led to the decision to include observations and coaching as part of the PD.

Other research sources had information about best practices in teaching English Language Learner (ELL) writing. While information was gathered from a large number of

sources, two had the most information. The research from Lucas et al. (2008) and Cruz (2015) each presented a wide range of strategies. Most articles focused on a small number of strategies, but these two sources had many. This was helpful for a project with the goal of presenting an overview of good strategies for ELL writing. There was not enough time to find an article specifically focusing on each strategy, so it was helpful to have two sources that provided many strategies in one source.

### **Reflection on Capstone as a Learning Process**

Throughout the process of creating this capstone project, I have learned a great deal about creating quality professional development. The research that I did before designing the project was the most in-depth research that I have done. Along with learning about professional development best practices and strategies for teaching English Learners (ELs), I also learned how to do research. One of the most important things that I learned is that there is always more to learn. No matter how much research I did on a subject, it was always possible to find more articles with new information. It was necessary to learn to make decisions about when I had enough information.

It was also necessary to decide which model of PD to use. All the models I researched had benefits and challenges, but I needed to pick the one that best fit my situation. If I chose a great model, but was unable to implement it, then it would lose all benefit. This was my primary reason for choosing the train-the-trainer model. It was most similar to what my ELL colleagues and I had done before and therefore I was most confident of my ability to implement it. I know I will need both administrative support and interest from my colleagues to implement this project and I think I will get that with this model.

I did modify the train-the-trainer model slightly from what was in the research by adding observations. The research in Hanson-Thomas and Grosso Richins (2015) showed that teachers really appreciated learning from other teachers, so I tried to include several opportunities for teachers to learn from other teacher participants, not just the presenters. I also wanted to integrate work time into the PD session for two reasons. One reason is that it can be easy for teachers to leave a PD and get overwhelmed quickly with everyday tasks and find time to implement the PD content in their classroom. By offering work time during the PD session, teachers would be able to develop an implementation plan right away. Another reason I chose to offer work time is that sometimes when teachers come back from PD, they can try to implement what they have learned and end up with questions that they did not think to ask at the PD. By giving work time at the PD, teachers will have a chance to ask questions as they plan. Work time also gives teachers an additional opportunity to learn from both the presenters and the other participants.

Once the model was chosen, the PD was put together. Again, this required many decisions. The first big decision was how to organize the content. I decided to organize it by pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing strategies in separate sessions. This method was chosen because it is an organizational framework that teachers are familiar with. It also gives teachers strategies in a logical order. Many ELs struggle to start writing, and the pre-writing strategies can help with that. Once they start writing, many ELs can get bogged down and not make good progress, which is where the during-writing strategies can help. Finally, once they are finished, post-writing strategies help polish the work. If post-writing strategies were taught first, teachers might struggle to implement them because they cannot get their students that far along the writing process.

Another important decision during the creation of this PD was how to create examples for the different strategies. It is easier to learn a strategy if teachers can see an example of how it works. However, I did not want to make the PD too specific to my site and context because examples are more impactful when they are relevant to the audience. I wanted to add sufficient examples to flesh out the presentation enough so that it was not confusing to use for other presenters, but also leave significant space for the presenters to add examples that come from their school and student population. For example, it can be time-consuming to teach students how to use graphic organizers. Therefore, if teachers in a school are already using some specific graphic organizers, it makes sense for the presenters to consider those before adding any new graphic organizers.

### **Ways to Communicate and Use Results**

The fact that I learned so much creating this project inspires me to want to share it with others. As the project portion of this capstone was to design four PD sessions, it is clear that the next step is to share the PD by presenting it to other teachers. I plan to work with my ELL colleagues and my principal to find a time to present this PD during the upcoming school year. I think it is best if I first share the information with my ELL colleagues and then we present as a team. That way there are more building experts. Having more presenters will also be helpful during the PD presentations so that there are more people available to help during the work time. Having more presenters also makes it possible to do more observations of the participants.

I designed this project so that it can be used by other ELL teachers as well. I plan to share it with other ELL teachers in the district through the network of lead teachers. I also plan to share it with anyone outside my district who might be interested. I hope that it can provide a framework that can be adapted to fit many different schools and situations.



### **Implications of Project**

Some of the conclusions of this project lead to further implications. One conclusion of this project is that classroom teachers need more training on how to best serve ELs. This implies that colleges and universities should include classes on teaching ELs in their courses of study for all teacher candidates. If teachers received more training on how to best teach ELs before entering the workforce, it would reduce the need for in-service PD.

However, even with more classes in teacher training programs, teachers will still need PD on teaching ELs to stay up to date on the most recent information. Therefore, another implication of this project is that teachers should be required to have ongoing professional development around teaching ELs. If teachers are going to be required to take this PD, it should be easily accessible to them. To make this possible, ELL teachers should receive training on how to give PD so that they can provide this PD for their colleagues. ELL teachers are presumably taking several hours of ELL PD every year. If they are trained to give PD, they can pass their learning along to their colleagues.

### **Limitations of Project**

While this project provides a useful tool to improve content teacher's ability to teach ELs, it is by no means comprehensive. The most obvious limitation is that this project only focuses on writing, but ELs need support in reading, listening, and speaking as well. Additionally, while the information presented in the project is applicable to multiple grade levels, it is less useful for lower elementary school teachers, whose students may be just beginning to learn to read and write. Certain strategies, like sentence frames and peer editing, may need significant revision or may not be useful at all at the lowest grade levels. This project might still form a base for developing a PD on teaching EL writing to lower elementary teachers, but it would need many

changes. Another population that is not specifically addressed in this PD is newcomers. Many of the strategies listed can be useful for teaching newcomers, but newcomers need support above what this PD offers.

Another limitation of the project is that it requires trained ELL teachers to present. This may not be a significant limitation in urban school districts where ELL teachers are common, but in rural school districts, it may be more challenging to find someone to present the PD. Even in urban school districts, some schools have such a low population of ELs that they may only have a part-time or itinerant ELL teacher. These teachers at these schools could benefit from this training, even though they have a smaller number of ELs, but it would be harder to provide without at least one full-time ELL teacher in the building.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Some of these limitations lead to ideas for further research. Research could be done to develop similar PD to help teachers support ELs in reading, listening, and speaking. PD could also be developed that is specifically tailored to lower elementary students or focused on teaching newcomers in mainstream content classes.

Other ideas for further research grew out of what is present in the PD rather than what is missing. More research could be done on any of the specific strategies featured in the PD. For example, there are many studies specifically on teaching vocabulary that go much more in depth than this project. Many of the strategies here could be featured in a separate PD focused only on that strategy. All of these research ideas would lead to greater understanding about and support for content teachers and EL instruction.

## **Conclusion**

Although there are many topics still to be researched, this project was successful in answering the question *what is the best format and content for a professional development class designed to help middle school content teachers improve their skill-set for teaching ELL writing?* Research was presented and a project was created to be a physical representation of that answer. The project should support ELL teachers in their desire to help their mainstream colleagues teach ELs. When teachers feel well trained and supported to teach, students are better able to learn and achieve, and that is a goal that all teachers can support.

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- TESOL (2017). Common Acronyms in the TESOL Profession [website]. Retrieved from <http://www.tesol.org/enhance-your-career/career-development/beginning-your-career/a-guide-to-common-acronyms-in-the-tesol-profession>
- The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. (2014). Scores and Reports. Retrieved from ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Summative Assessment website: <https://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS20.aspx#scoring>
- Vansant-Webb, E. and Polychronis, S. (2016). Supporting Teachers of English Language Learners at a Turnaround School. *TESOL Journal*, 7(4): 968–982. doi:10.1002/tesj.259
- WIDA (2014). The WIDA Standards Framework and its Theoretical Foundations. Retrieved from <https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx>

## Appendix A

### PD Session 1: Background Information

#### Session 1

Before the session, contact teachers to tell them to bring some lists of vocabulary that they will be teaching soon. You could also suggest they bring some examples of directions that they post on the board during work time for students.

You will need: presenter's guide, slides for session 1

(<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1UuAXLSV6zZzKp0oi3iMkHOdnsOqg7iJncvOMnPPQ2M0/edit?usp=sharing>), Yes/No signs posted on opposite sides of the room (for introductory activity), printed list of ACCESS scores (optional), observation tool 1 (see appendix 2), observation sign up

Display slide 1 as teachers enter.

#### 15 min intro (yes-no line)

Welcome class and introduce presenters.

Display slide 2.

Explain introductory activity:

"We are going to get to know each other a bit by finding out everyone's background knowledge and experience with ELs. I will read six different statements. For each one, I want you to pick a position along the yes-no continuum (an imaginary line between the yes and no signs posted in the room) based on how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. It's ok if you don't know these things! That's what the class is for. This activity will also help me know how much time to spend on certain activities so that I can focus our time on things people don't know.

After each sentence, I'll have you talk to the people near you and then I'll offer a chance for a few people to share something about your conversation with the whole class. As you're talking to the people around you, make sure you introduce yourself to anyone you don't know. Any questions?"

I know how to find out which of my students are ELs.

I know how to find out the language level of my ELs.

I know how to interpret the language levels to tell me what instruction they need.

I have received training to teach ELs.

I feel confident in my ability to help ELs learn the content I'm teaching.

I feel confident in my ability to help ELs grow in their language ability.

Go over agenda.

Display slide 3.

#### 10 mins WIDA and where to find info

Display slides 4-6.

While on slide 6, show how to get to the WIDA can-do descriptors. Go to <https://www.wida.us/> Click on "download library" on the right side of the screen. Can-do descriptors are on the bottom of the first column. Both original edition and key uses edition can be helpful.

Also, make sure to show how to find ACCESS scores for students at your school. This will vary widely by district. If you are in a K-5 school, consider printing and providing this information for teachers. For teachers who have multiple classes, it is usually easier to show them where to access the information. If your school had a drop in ACCESS scores from 2016 to 2017 due to the revamping of the scoring system, consider explaining that drop if you are showing how to find scores for multiple years.

#### 5 mins, other important background

Display slide 7.

Explain why the listed information can be helpful. Give examples from your experience.

Ask teachers if there is any other information they have gathered that has been helpful.

#### 5 min- brainstorm

Display slide 8.

Float around and contribute to conversations.

#### 5 mins SLA research

Display slide 9.

When discussing fluency, help teachers think about students they have known who have reached conversational fluency but not academic fluency. Maybe they were tricked at first into thinking the student was entirely fluent.

Point out similarities between Vygotsky (who might be familiar to teachers) and Krashen (who is more likely to be new).

#### 5 min Q & A

Display slide 10.

#### 5 min break

Display slide 11. Fill in time to return.

#### 5 min overview of remaining sessions

Display slide 12.

Give a brief preview of sessions. Include dates if you know when they will be held.

#### 10 min visuals and content vocab

Display slides 13-16.

Consider changing the examples to ones that are used already in your school.

Make the connection to writing- Students need to know the vocabulary if they are expected to use it in writing.

Display slides 17-18.

On slide 18, have teachers share a few content words from their subject area. Try to find words that seem simple, but have different meanings in different content areas to show how many words can be tricky for ELs. A basic example is the word bark (dog vs. tree). One more



complex example is the word charge. Students probably know this word in the context of charging their phones, but they may not know the scientific definition of a positive or negative charge. They also might not know the legal definition of charged with a crime, which may come up in social studies classes. Other examples are bolt (construction, lightning, run fast), draft (air, writing, military), and current (something happening now, moving water or air, and the fruit, which is spelled differently but sounds the same).

25 min work time on visuals

Display slide 19. Fill in ending time.

Circulate and offer help as needed.

10 min obs intro

Display slide 20.

Hand out observation tool, go over tool after going over slide.

10 min obs partner finding/planning

Display slide 21.

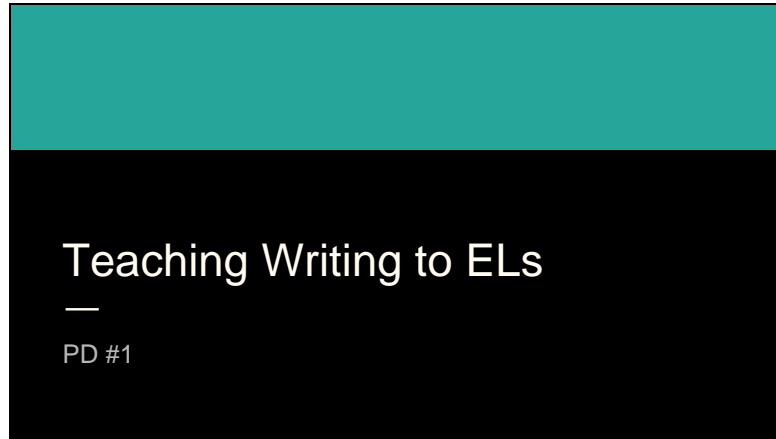
Make sure to have a sign-up available. I recommend including name and preferred hours.

If you only have certain hours open to observe, make sure to let teachers know that.

10 min Q&A, closing

Display slide 22 and fill in date of next session.

Slide 1

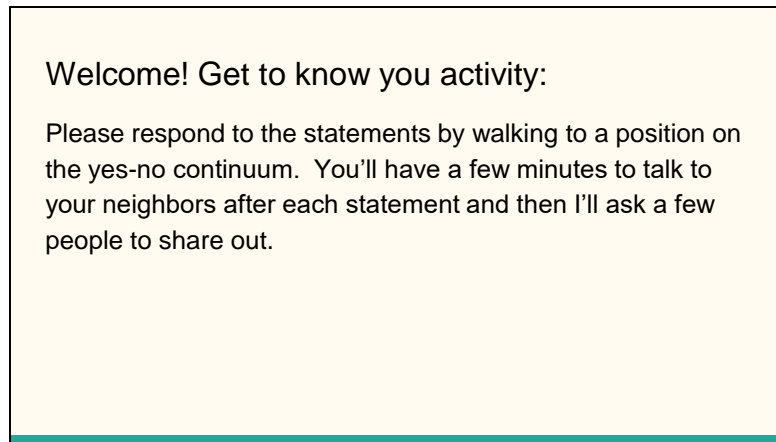
A presentation slide with a teal header bar at the top. The main content area has a black background with white text. The title 'Teaching Writing to ELs' is centered, followed by a horizontal line and the text 'PD #1' below it.

# Teaching Writing to ELs

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PD #1

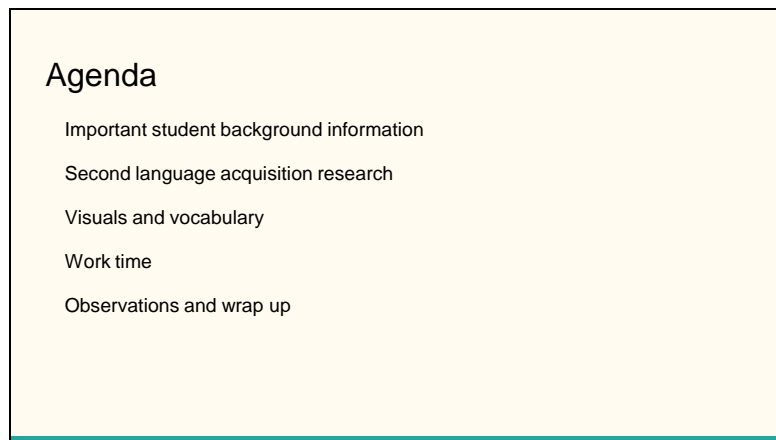
Slide 2

A presentation slide with a light yellow background and a thin teal border at the bottom. The text is centered and reads: 'Welcome! Get to know you activity: Please respond to the statements by walking to a position on the yes-no continuum. You'll have a few minutes to talk to your neighbors after each statement and then I'll ask a few people to share out.'

Welcome! Get to know you activity:

Please respond to the statements by walking to a position on the yes-no continuum. You'll have a few minutes to talk to your neighbors after each statement and then I'll ask a few people to share out.

Slide 3

A presentation slide with a light yellow background and a thin teal border at the bottom. The title 'Agenda' is at the top left, followed by a list of five items:

Agenda

- Important student background information
- Second language acquisition research
- Visuals and vocabulary
- Work time
- Observations and wrap up

## Slide 4

**WIDA ACCESS: What is it and why should I care?**

WIDA is an organization whose research, methods and resources have been adopted by 37 states in the US since 2008.

WIDA provides the ACCESS test, which is the test Minnesota uses to assess ELs.

WIDA supports and assesses students in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The WIDA ACCESS scores students' language ability into six levels. (See performance definitions handout)



## Slide 5

**WIDA ACCESS: What is it and why should I care?**

WIDA ACCESS scores tell you the language level of your students. Once you get familiar with the levels, you will be able to get a good idea of what language you can expect students to understand and produce just by their scores

Until then, WIDA has can-do descriptors, which describe what students can do at each proficiency level.

## Slide 6

**Where to find it demo**

I will show you where to find two things:

1. Your students' WIDA ACCESS scores
2. The WIDA can-do descriptors

Slide 7

## Other helpful background info

Country of origin

Other language(s)

Schooling in first language

This can be gathered through beginning of the year surveys or through conversations with students.

Slide 8

## 5 minute brainstorm

Talk to people around you.

How much of this information did you already know?

What would be an easy way for you to get more background information on your students?

How do you think knowing this information will impact your teaching?




Slide 9

## Second language acquisition research

1. Fluency in everyday conversation English ≠ fluency in academic English  
Students develop conversational fluency first
2. Vygotsky- zone of proximal development: instruction should be targeted just beyond what students can do on their own
3. Krashen- language instruction must be comprehensible, but at a grammatical level just beyond what students can do on their own

Slide 10

Question and Answer



The slide features a light yellow background. At the top left, the text "Question and Answer" is displayed in a black, sans-serif font. Below this text is a square graphic with a light blue background and a white border. Inside this graphic are four overlapping speech bubbles: a pink one at the top, a red one to the left, a green one to the right, and a blue one at the bottom. Each bubble contains a white question mark.

Slide 11

Break! Be back in 5 mins

Please return at

The slide has a light yellow background. The text "Break! Be back in 5 mins" is positioned at the top left in a black, sans-serif font. Below it, the text "Please return at" is also in a black, sans-serif font, followed by a blank space for a time or date.

Slide 12

Overview of remaining sessions

Prewriting- the rest of this session and session 2

During writing- session 3

After writing- session 4

The slide has a light yellow background. The text "Overview of remaining sessions" is at the top left in a black, sans-serif font. Below it are three lines of text, each starting with a different stage of the writing process: "Prewriting- the rest of this session and session 2", "During writing- session 3", and "After writing- session 4".

Slide 13

**Visuals!**


Used for

- New vocabulary
- Vocabulary review
- Directions
- Whenever possible!

Slide 14

**New vocabulary**

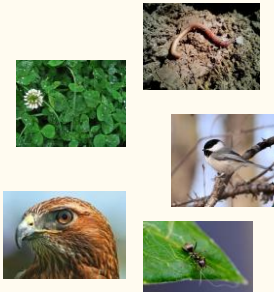
**Producer**



Slide 15

**Vocabulary review (matching)**

- Producer
- Primary consumer
- Secondary consumer
- Tertiary consumer
- Decomposer

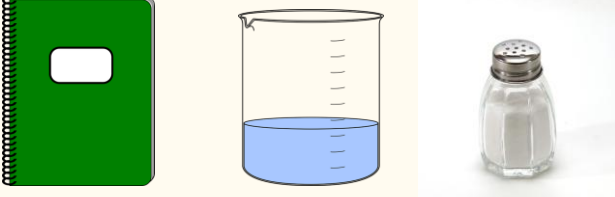


Slide 16

### Directions

You will need:

Your science notebook      A beaker with water      Salt



The slide contains three illustrations. On the left is a green spiral-bound notebook with a white rectangular cutout on the front cover. In the center is a glass beaker with blue liquid inside, representing water. On the right is a clear glass salt shaker with a silver metal top and a perforated lid.

Slide 17

### A note about dictionaries/translators

If students have significant schooling in their first language, it may be beneficial to provide them with a dual language dictionary or access to an online translator. These tools are significantly less beneficial if students have not had formal education in their first language.

Slide 18

### Content vocabulary

Each content has its own specific vocabulary.

For ELs, think beyond the words that are new to everyone. For example, in science, they may need to learn the word evidence.

Be careful when giving definitions for content words that you don't use unfamiliar words in the definition. This is where pictures can be very helpful!

## Slide 19

### Work time!

This is your chance to work on visuals and content vocab. Try to make some tools you can use in your teaching. Ask other teachers or me for help if you need it. We will come back together at:

## Slide 20

### Observations

Teachers can learn a lot from collaborating and sharing ideas! One great way to do this is observing other teachers.

Observation tool is provided.

Two options (you can do both!):

1. Observe each other- pick a partner (or more than one partner)
2. Set up an observation with me. I will observe you if you want and you are welcome to observe me as well!

## Slide 21

### Time to plan observations

1. Find a partner if you want to do peer observations. Try to plan a time to observe each other NOW, so you don't get too busy and forget. You could even do the pre-conference now.
2. Come sign up with me if you want me to observe you. Take a copy of my schedule if you want to come observe me.



Slide 22

## Final Q and A

Remember, next session we will continue discussion strategies to help students before they write. The session will be held (insert date/time)



Slide 23

## Images

<https://www.wida.us/>  
<https://pixabay.com/en/communicate-communication-conference-2028004/>  
<https://pixabay.com/en/question-speech-bubbles-speech-1828268/>  
<https://pixabay.com/en/clover-flower-white-clover-raindrop-1129403/>  
<https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=12825&picture=autumn-maple-tree>  
<https://pixabay.com/en/worm-worms-earth-vermiculture-1288092/>  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/uslwsmidwest/25764578771>  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern\\_Red-Tailed-Hawk.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern_Red-Tailed-Hawk.jpg)  
<https://pixabay.com/en/ant-leaf-insect-nature-close-771071/>  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salt\\_shaker\\_on\\_white\\_background.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salt_shaker_on_white_background.jpg)  
<https://pixabay.com/en/water-large-beaker-measured-307668/>  
<https://pixabay.com/en/notebook-office-writing-paper-151261/>

**Observation tool 1 (visuals and vocabulary)****Preconference:**

Is there anything specific I should know about your class or your students?

Is there anything specific you want me to look for?

**During observation:**

Note when visuals are used and if you notice any evidence of students using them.

Note specific words that are taught and if students are practicing them.

Uses of visuals	Teaching content words	Other:

Did you notice any words that were not taught that you think students might not know?

**Post conference:**

What did you think went well?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to add what you thought they did well)

What did you struggle with or want to do differently?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to share an idea or two)

## Appendix B

### PD Session 2: Pre-writing Strategies

#### Session 2

Before session, contact teachers and ask them to bring some student writing samples. If possible, they should bring both an exemplar level piece and an EL written piece.

You will need: presenter's guide, session 2 slides

(<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1B7LuVZhYqJdIfOx21bvJdLipR1GQigTO0zABdYwqQ8Y/edit?usp=sharing>), some examples for slide 8, some student work for after slide 13 (optional, can use work that teachers bring to session), observation tool 2 (see appendix 2), observation sign up

Display slide 1 as teachers enter.

#### 10 min welcome

Display slide 2.

#### 5 min overview

Display slide 3.

#### 15 min talking with partners

Display slide 4.

Before going to slide 5, do a turn and talk to ask people to guess why L1 conversations might be helpful.

Display slide 5.

Before going on, do another turn and talk asking why English conversations are helpful.

Display slides 6, 7, 8.

On slide 8, talk about the different structures and give examples:

- Questions: (think of some appropriate to the topics of teachers attending the PD)
- List of Vocabulary: (think of some appropriate to the topics of teachers attending the PD)
- Sentence stems: One idea is... My opinion is... I predict that... (Also point out that sentence stems and frames will be discussed later during the grammar part of the PD and during the following PD)
- Talking chips: Talking chips are any sort of token. Give a certain number (maybe two) to each person in the discussion. Students may talk in any order, but each time they talk, they must put a chip in the center. Once they are out of chips, they cannot talk any more until everyone has had a chance to share. Once all the chips are back, the group can redistribute and start again. Chips can be plain, or they can include sentence stems.
- Pair share: It forces partners to talk and listen to each other if partners are required to share their partner's idea, rather than their own, following the conversation.

Display slide 9.

25 min work time

Fill in time on slide 10. Include break.

5 min break

15 min grammar and content grammar

Display slides 11-13.

After slide 13, ask a volunteer to give you student work. Put the work on the screen using a doc cam and demonstrate how to find possible grammar points in student work. If you do not feel comfortable doing this on the spot, you can pre-select some work and insert it into the slides.

Display slides 14 and 15.

30 min work time

Display slide 16.

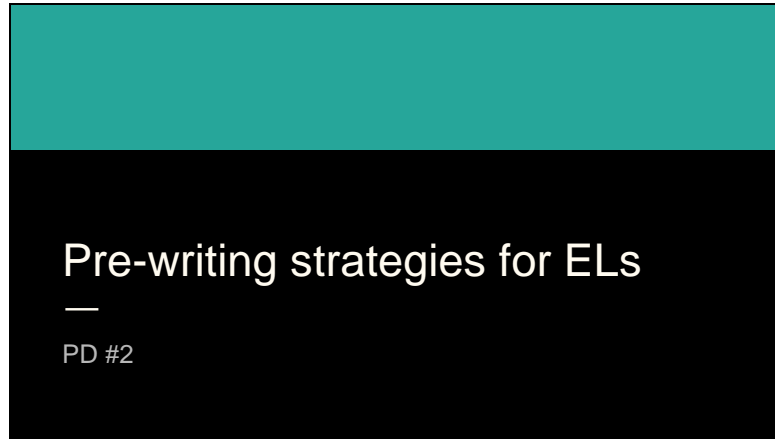
10 min wrap up and questions

Display slide 17.

5 min set up obs

Display slide 18 and hand out observation tool 2.

Slide 1

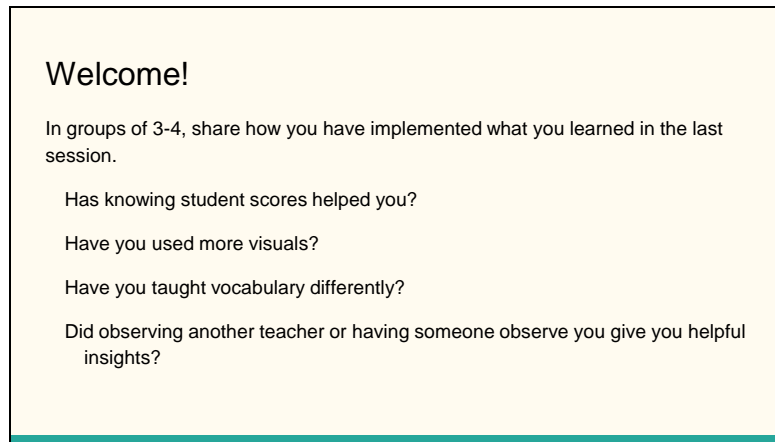
A presentation slide with a teal header bar at the top. The main content area has a black background with white text. The title 'Pre-writing strategies for ELs' is centered, followed by a horizontal line and the text 'PD #2' below it.

Pre-writing strategies for ELs

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PD #2

Slide 2

A presentation slide with a light yellow background and a thin teal border at the bottom. The text is black and includes a heading, an instruction, and four questions.

Welcome!

In groups of 3-4, share how you have implemented what you learned in the last session.

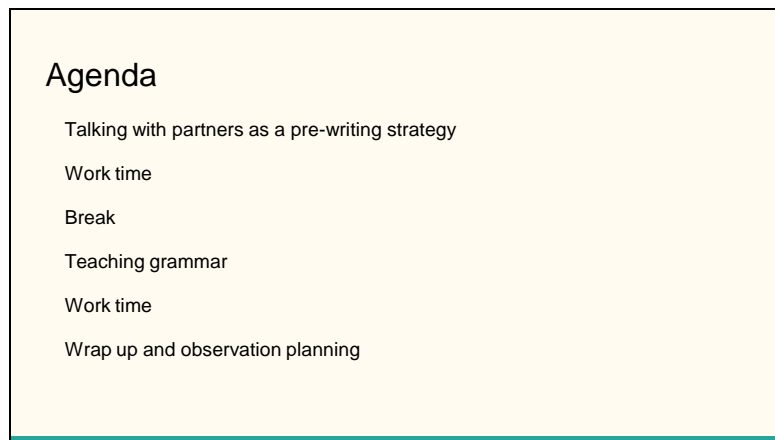
Has knowing student scores helped you?

Have you used more visuals?

Have you taught vocabulary differently?

Did observing another teacher or having someone observe you give you helpful insights?

Slide 3

A presentation slide with a light yellow background and a thin teal border at the bottom. The text is black and lists the agenda items.

Agenda

Talking with partners as a pre-writing strategy

Work time

Break

Teaching grammar

Work time


Wrap up and observation planning

## Slide 4

## Talking before writing

Two types of talking:

1. L1 (first language) conversations
2. English conversations

An icon showing three stylized human figures in black. Above them are three speech bubbles: a blue one on the left, a light blue one in the middle, and a purple one on the right. The entire icon is set against a white background within a light yellow slide frame.

## Slide 5

## L1 conversations

Why?

Because students can develop deeper ideas when they can use a language they are comfortable with.

Because a student with higher English comprehension skills can explain a concept to a student with lower comprehension skills.

## Slide 6

## English conversations

Why?

To practice new vocabulary with peer support before having to use the words on their own in writing

To practice explaining ideas with peer support before having to write on their own

## Slide 7

### Possible organization structures

Partner students with the same L1 for L1 conversations

For English conversations, partner ELs with native English speakers

If there are beginners in the class, make triads with one beginner, one EL who shares the beginner's L1 but is comfortable in English, and one native English speaker.

## Slide 8

### Language structures

Open conversations provide less support than structures

Structures can help students feel safe to participate

#### Possible structures

Questions

List of vocabulary

Sentence stems

Talking chips to encourage participation

Pair share and then share their partner's idea to the class

## Slide 9

### Won't this slow down the higher level students?

No, because it gives them the opportunity to teach!

Also, all students can use the extra practice before it is time to write.

## Slide 10

## Work time!

Work on your own or with other teachers to brainstorm situations where you can incorporate more student conversations. You can even spend time designing instruction slides with visuals or making sentence frames!

Make sure to take a break if you need one. We'll start at

If you didn't bring student work, try to find some during the break.

## Slide 11

## Grammar!

Don't be afraid of grammar!

ELs do need specific grammar instruction

However, grammar should not be the main focus

Teachers should not try to teach everything at once

Students need multiple exposures over many weeks to master a skill

So this means you only need to pick a few key grammar points. Choose skills that are necessary to write successfully in your subject.

## Slide 12

## How to pick what grammar to teach

Look at examples of what you want students to produce

Ideally, look at a student sample. You don't necessarily need your very top students, but you want a quality example.

If you don't have a student sample, you could write your own

Look for specific grammar features that students use to create complex sentences. It can help to compare an ideal example with an EL example and see what is missing in the EL example.

That's what you want to teach!



## Slide 13

## Examples

Cause and effect: because, as a result of, due to,

Other conjunctions: If (and if.. then...), although, but, unless, after, before,

Appositives: George Washington, the first president of the United States,

Transition words: First, next, One reason, In my opinion, According to \_\_\_\_\_,

Passive voice: The problem was solved.

## Slide 14

## How to teach

**Teach:** show multiple examples. You can tell students the grammatical term if you want, but it's not necessary. Continue to point out the grammar feature as you see it in your normal daily work.

### Practice

First, have students practice finding the grammar feature. You can make warm-ups, give sample writing, or have students look in a reading you're doing for class

Then, have students practice writing. Start with additional scaffolds, such as sentence frames, if possible. Warm-ups and short answers are the best practice at first. Later students can integrate the skill into longer writing

## Slide 15

## Sentences are ok!

It is ok (even good) to have many writing assignments that are only a sentence long.

When students master writing complex sentences, it makes writing longer assignments much easier.

Sentences also seem much less overwhelming for struggling writers, therefore they are more likely to put forth effort. Once they experience success, they are more likely to willingly tackle longer assignments.

Slide 16

## Work time

Look through your student work and find some grammar features you might want to teach.

Plan out some ways to teach and model the feature as well as some ways for students to practice. Use other teachers and the presenters as resources!

We will come back together at

Slide 17

## Reflection and questions

How did the work time go? Was it challenging? Do you need more clarification on anything?



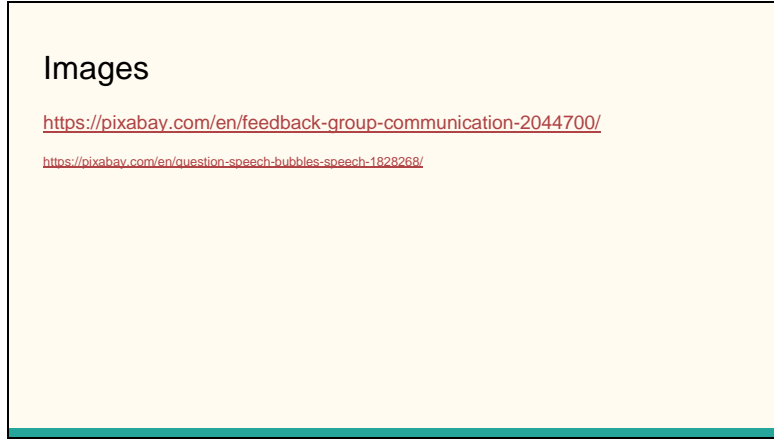
Slide 18

## Observations round 2!

You will receive a new observation form.

Feel free to continue with the same partner or partners or switch it up! If you would like to observe any of the presenters or have them observe you, please talk to us.

Slide 19



**Observation tool 2 (student talk and grammar)****Preconference:**

Is there anything specific I should know about your class or your students?

Is there anything specific you want me to look for?

**During observation:**

Note instances of student talk and any evidence that the conversation was helpful for the student. Note any explicit grammar instruction or practice. Also look for students using that grammar skill on their own.

Student talk	Grammar points	Other:

**Post conference:**

What did you think went well?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to add what you thought they did well)

What did you struggle with or want to do differently?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to share an idea or two)

## Appendix C

### PD Session 3: During-writing Strategies

#### Session 3

Before the session, contact teachers and have them bring graphic organizers and writing assignments. For the writing assignments, it would be helpful to have student work as well as the directions. The writing assignment can be the same one they brought to session 2, but it does not need to be.

You will need: presenter's guide, session 3 slides

(<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1twfX9k7SsCbJzuAmIC6BvaUZ2xYjYMzw7RT3pIx5NRA/edit?usp=sharing>), graphic organizers used in your building, observation tool 3 (see appendix 2), observation sign up

Display slide 1 as teachers enter.

#### 10 min Welcome

Display slide 2.

#### 5 min Overview

Display slide 3.

#### 10 min writing for a purpose

Display slide 4 and 5.

While the brainstorming is happening, write ideas on the board if possible for easy reference during work time.

#### 15 min work time

Display slide 6. Make sure to write a return time. Include the break time.

#### 5 min break

#### 10 min graphic organizers

Display slides 7 and 8. While on slide 8, show an example of a T chart. After slide 8, show some examples of other graphic organizers teachers brought with them. As time allows, brainstorm how to teach each graphic organizer and how it could support writing.

#### 10 min sentence frames

Display slides 9 and 10. On slide 10, explain that you would move gradually to each less supportive sentence frame as students seemed ready. It could happen over a period of a week to a month, depending on how often you use the frame. You would generally stick to one version of the frame per assignment, unless the assignment was quite long and there were maybe three or four of the first type, then a few of the second type, and ending with one of the last type. Also, point out that while the first example might seem too easy, it has a high cognitive demand because students really have to understand the sentence in order to choose the correct word.

Display slide 11. This is similar to slide 10 except that it is only the first part of a paragraph. Slides 11, 12, and 13 go together to show how to scaffold a paragraph.

Display slide 12. Slide 12 is where the graphic organizer comes in. The sentence starters on this slide are not progressive in any way. They are just examples that you could give students to let them pick from.

Display slide 13. These frames are progressive like slides 10 and 11.

45 min work time

Display slide 14.

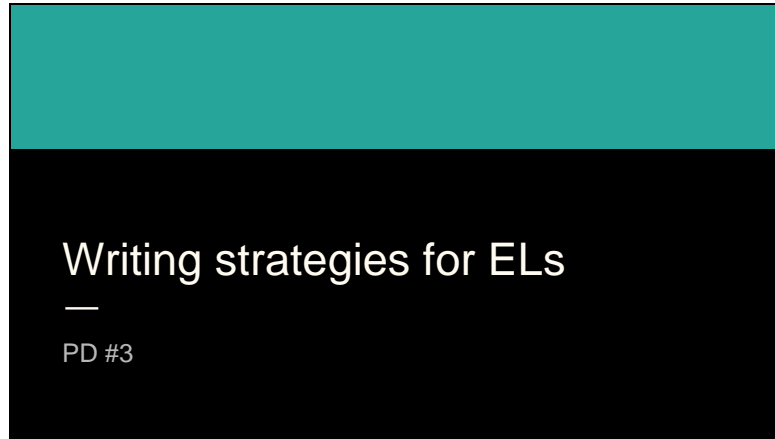
10 min wrap up and questions

Display slide 15.

5 min plan observation 3

Display slide 16 and hand out observation tool 3.

Slide 1

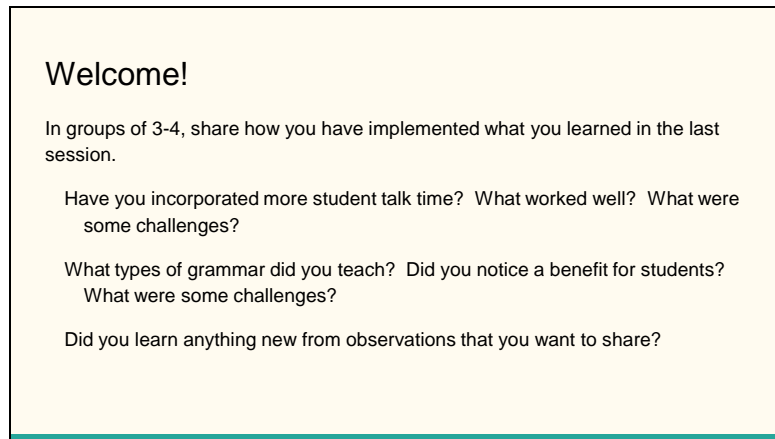


Writing strategies for ELs

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PD #3

Slide 2



Welcome!

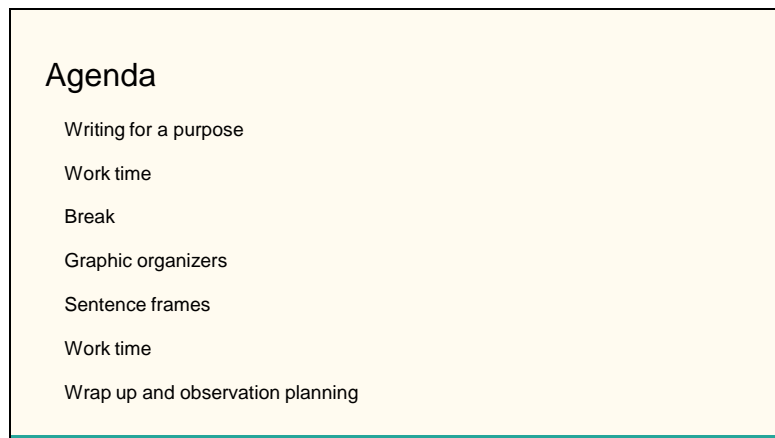
In groups of 3-4, share how you have implemented what you learned in the last session.

Have you incorporated more student talk time? What worked well? What were some challenges?

What types of grammar did you teach? Did you notice a benefit for students? What were some challenges?

Did you learn anything new from observations that you want to share?

Slide 3



Agenda

- Writing for a purpose
- Work time
- Break
- Graphic organizers
- Sentence frames
- Work time
- Wrap up and observation planning

## Slide 4

## Writing for a purpose

The best writing assignments for ELs have a purpose.

Just like with learning vocabulary, ELs also benefit from multiple opportunities to engage with the same material

One way to achieve this is by having students produce different types of writing on the same topic

Examples: personal narrative, opinion paper, research paper

## Slide 5

## Group brainstorm!

What are some different writing assignments you've assigned? (Remember, sentence-length assignments are ok!)



## Slide 6

## Work time!

We're going to have a shorter work time now and a longer one later in the session.

Think about a writing assignment you really like. Then think about if you have any other writing assignments on that topic. If not, think of some you could add. (Remember, short assignments are good, especially to start with!)

Take a break during work time if you need one. Be ready to start again at:



## Slide 7

## Graphic organizers

Graphic organizers help students organize their thoughts before writing.

Graphic organizers need to be modeled and taught before they can be helpful.

Once students get used to a graphic organizer, they can use it without much help.

Students also need to be taught how to turn information in a graphic organizer into writing. Make sure to model this process and write out directions if possible.

## Slide 8

## Example

Writing assignment: Opinion paragraph

Graphic organizer: T chart

How to teach organizer: Model filling it out by adding ideas to either side during a reading or brainstorming.

How to teach writing: First, give instructions on how to write a topic sentence/claim. Then model how to backup the claim by using evidence from the T chart. Sentence frames can help here! (That's the next part of the PD.)

## Slide 9

## Sentence frames

Sentence frames can help students organize writing and can also reinforce grammar concepts.

Sentence frames help students feel successful and can help them express more complex ideas.

You can gradually make the sentence frame less complex as students become more able to write on their own.

## Slide 10

**Example (sentence)**

One-sentence opinion writing (teaching the grammar skill “due to” and the vocabulary harmful and beneficial).

A \$15 minimum wage could be (beneficial/harmful) due to increased expenses for employers.

A \$15 minimum wage could be (beneficial/harmful) due to \_\_\_\_\_  
(noun phrase giving a reason).

\_\_\_\_\_ (topic) could be (beneficial/harmful) due to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (noun phrase giving a reason)

## Slide 11

**Example (paragraph part 1)**

For writing a claim (topic sentence for an opinion paragraph):

I strongly believe that a \$15 an hour minimum wage is (harmful/beneficial).

I \_\_\_\_\_ (opinion verb) that a \$15 an hour minimum wage is  
(harmful/beneficial).

I \_\_\_\_\_ (opinion verb) that \_\_\_\_\_ (topic) is  
(harmful/beneficial).

## Slide 12

**Example (paragraph part 2)**

Adding evidence to the claim:

This is where you would teach students to refer to their graphic organizer (T chart). You can give them some sentence starters to use:

For example,

According to \_\_\_\_\_,

In my experience,

The data shows

## Slide 13

**Example (paragraph part 3)**

Conclusion:

For these reasons, I maintain that a \$15 minimum wage is (harmful/beneficial).

For these reasons, I \_\_\_\_\_ (different opinion verb than claim) that a \$15 minimum wage is (harmful/beneficial).

For these reasons, I \_\_\_\_\_ (different opinion verb than claim) that \_\_\_\_\_ (topic) is (harmful/beneficial).

## Slide 14

**Work time**

Take a look at the writing assignments that you brought. See if you can develop some graphic organizers and sentence frames that can support students. Especially if this is a writing form that you repeat, think of ways to gradually reduce the scaffolding in the sentence frames. Remember, the other teachers and the presenters are great resources if you get stuck!

We will come back together at:

## Slide 15

**Reflection and questions**

How did the work time go? Was it challenging? Do you need more clarification on anything?



Slide 16

## Observations round 3!

You will receive a new observation form.

Feel free to continue with the same partner or partners or switch it up! If you would like to observe any of the presenters or have them observe you, please talk to us.

Slide 17

## Images

<https://pixabay.com/en/communicate-communication-conference-2028004/>

<https://pixabay.com/en/question-speech-bubbles-speech-1828268/>

**Observation tool 3 (graphic organizers and sentence frames)****Preconference:**

Is there anything specific I should know about your class or your students?

Is there anything specific you want me to look for?

**During observation:**

Note graphic organizers used and any evidence that the organizers were either helpful or confusing for the students.

Note any sentence stems taught or used by students. Are students using the frames correctly? If not, what is the problem?

Graphic organizers	Sentence frames	Other:

**Post conference:**

What did you think went well?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to add what you thought they did well)

What did you struggle with or want to do differently?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to share an idea or two)

## Appendix D

### PD Session 4: Post-writing Strategies

#### Session 4

Before the session, contact teachers and have them bring student work and writing assignment rubrics. If they have used peer-editing forms in the past, those might also be helpful.

You will need: presenter's guide, session 4 slides

(<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1F6USENepQmoJ0Nhr8Ugf0jMtclh6Y5FSGv6X3MHXxs/edit?usp=sharing>), example of structured peer editing (optional), observation tool 4 (see appendix 2), observation sign up

Display slide 1 as teachers enter.

#### 10 min Welcome

Display slide 2.

#### 5 min Overview

Display slide 3.

#### 10 min Warning about editing out voice

Display slide 4. Discuss if teachers have had this problem in the past and how they have dealt with it.

#### 10 min run-ons

Display slide 5. Ask who has noticed that students have a problem with run-ons. Go over slide, then discuss if teachers have experience with students who do not see run-ons as a problem.

Display slide 6. Go over slide 6 and explain the run-on example.

Display slide 7.

#### 20 min work time

5 min break.

Fill out the time to return on slide 8. Include the break time.

#### 15 min peer editing

Display slides 9-11. Ask for additional examples of structured peer editing that other teachers have used.

#### 30 min work time

Display slide 12.

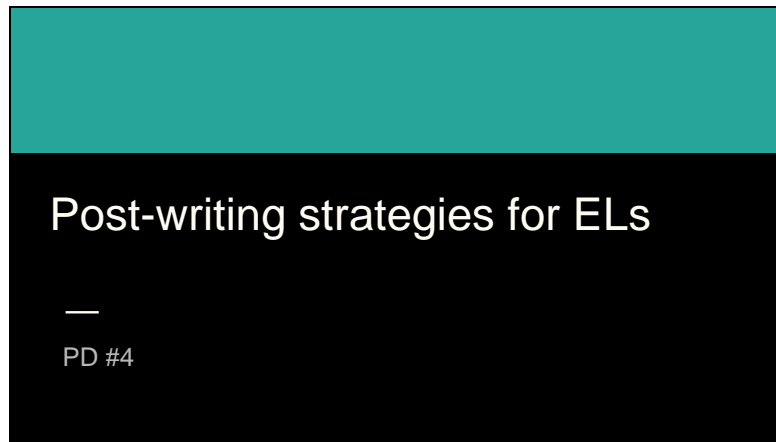
#### 10 min wrap up and questions

Display slide 13.

#### 5 min plan observation 4

Display slide 14 and hand out observation tool 4.

Slide 1

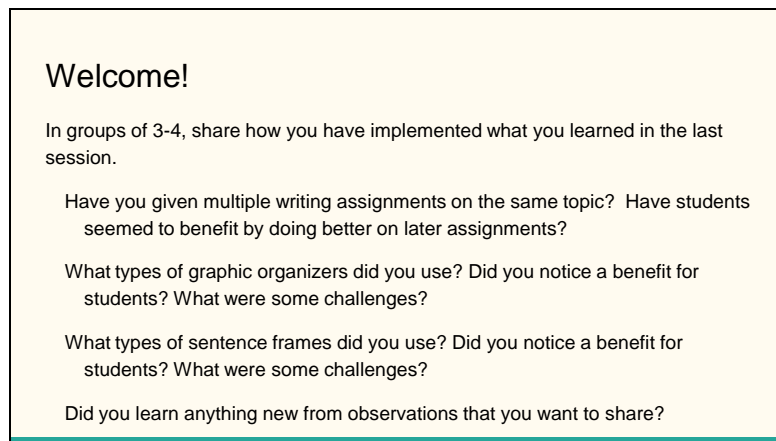
A slide with a teal header and a black body. The title "Post-writing strategies for ELs" is in white. Below it is a small white horizontal line and the text "PD #4".

Post-writing strategies for ELs

—

PD #4

Slide 2

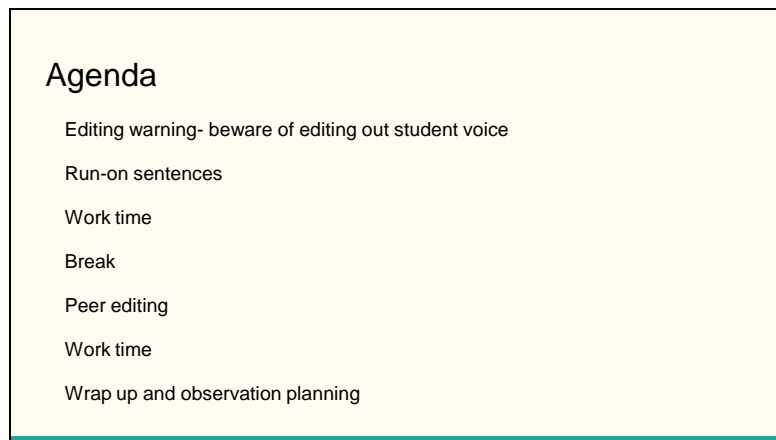
A slide with a light yellow background and a teal footer. The title "Welcome!" is in bold. Below it is a paragraph of instructions and four bullet points.

Welcome!

In groups of 3-4, share how you have implemented what you learned in the last session.

- Have you given multiple writing assignments on the same topic? Have students seemed to benefit by doing better on later assignments?
- What types of graphic organizers did you use? Did you notice a benefit for students? What were some challenges?
- What types of sentence frames did you use? Did you notice a benefit for students? What were some challenges?
- Did you learn anything new from observations that you want to share?

Slide 3

A slide with a light yellow background and a teal footer. The title "Agenda" is in bold. Below it is a list of items.

Agenda

- Editing warning- beware of editing out student voice
- Run-on sentences
- Work time
- Break
- Peer editing
- Work time
- Wrap up and observation planning

## Slide 4

**Editing warning- Be careful not to edit out student voice**

Students may incorporate rhetorical structures from their first language, such as repetition, flowery language, and storytelling, into their writing.

These structures may seem inappropriate for academic writing.

Two culturally sensitive solutions:

1. Help the student find an appropriate way to use that structures in their writing
2. Explain that while the structure is very appropriate for other types of writing, it doesn't fit in this type of writing. Explain why if possible and consider assigning a type of writing where the student can use that structure.

## Slide 5

**Run-on sentences**

Step one: Make sure students know what sentences are! It can help at first to remind them to look for the period to know where a sentence ends.

Step two: Explain to students why run-ons matter. Some students may not think they are a big deal because they usually do not compromise meaning. Point out that run-ons can be a distraction because the reading can notice that something is not right.

## Slide 6

**Teaching students to correct for run-ons**

Teach run-ons like grammar.

1. Explain run-ons to students. One way to do this is with the Glue method. Teach students to recognize subject-verb pairs (called SVs) and Glue words (see handout). Then explain that each sentences must have one more SV than Glue word. Students can fix the problem by breaking the run-on into two sentences or adding a Glue word.

"I didn't want to go out, I wanted to stay home because it was raining."

SV

Glue SV

SV



## Slide 7

### Teaching students to correct for run-ons can't

2. Have students use their own writing to look for SVs and Glue words. They should be able to use the rule to identify run-ons (or fragments).
3. Students will need practice to get good at this, so consider having students work together at first and including run-on correction in your warm-ups or other quick activities.

## Slide 8

### Work time!

Look over your student samples to see if your students have problems with run-on sentences.

Plan some mini-lessons to teach students to correct for run-ons.

Take a break during work time if you need one. Be ready to start again at:

## Slide 9

### Peer editing

Peer editing can be helpful for students because different students have different strengths and weaknesses.

All students, but especially ELs, need structure in order to be successful peer editors.

The best structure requires students to write something. Yes or no answers, multiple choice, or check the box lets students just check off the "correct" answer without taking the time to really look at the writing.

You can use a rubric to develop a peer editing sheet, just find a way for the peer editor to do more than just check a box.

## Slide 10

### Examples of structured peer editing

If your assignment has a length requirement, have the peer editor count periods. This is a good way to get students to self-check for run-ons because if their peer editor counts four sentences and the assignment requires five, the student writer often initially gets upset because they think they have written enough. However, if students are reminded to go back and check for run-ons, they can often go from four to five sentences just by adding a period!

## Slide 11

### Examples of structured peer editing

If you want students to include specific vocabulary, have the peer editor go through and write down every vocabulary word they see. They can circle any words they think are used incorrectly.

If you are teaching a specific grammar structure, such as cause and effect, you can have students look for that. It can help to give them key words, like because, since, so, and due to.

## Slide 12

### Work time

Look at the writing assignment rubrics you brought. Work to develop a peer editing form that students could use for that assignment. If your rubric does not include grammar structures, try to add at least one grammar structure to the rubric (and then to the peer editing form).

We will come back together at

Slide 13

## Reflection and questions

How did the work time go? Was it challenging? Do you need more clarification on anything?



Slide 14

## Observations round 4!

You will receive a new observation form.

Feel free to continue with the same partner or partners or switch it up! If you would like to observe any of the presenters or have them observe you, please talk to us.

Slide 15

## Images

<https://pixabay.com/en/question-speech-bubbles-speech-1828268/>

**Observation tool 4 (run-ons and peer editing)****Preconference:**

Is there anything specific I should know about your class or your students?

Is there anything specific you want me to look for?

**During observation:**

Note any instruction about run-ons as well as looking for run-ons in student work if possible.

Note peer editing structure. What evidence is there that students are successful?

Run-ons	Peer editing	Other:

**Post conference:**

What did you think went well?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to add what you thought they did well)

What did you struggle with or want to do differently?

(After the person you are observing shares, feel free to share an idea or two)