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UTILIZING THE TEACHING/LEARNING CYCLE, ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING
AND TALK, READ, TALK, WRITE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE TEXT COHESION
AND NOUN PHRASE EXPANSION: A CASE STUDY OF A LONG-TERM
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER

by

Christine Dietz

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, MN

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In loving memory of Emily Gardner. Your encouragement and dedication to social justice will never be forgotten.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

“Miss! I’m done!”, one of my students calls out as he holds up a paper with two sentence fragments written on it. The assignment the class is currently working on asks for at least a paragraph written in response to the prompt. I am working with another student who is struggling to see the connection between the mentor text on the SMARTBoard and his own response. Across the room, I can see that another student has yet to put anything on her paper, not even the sentence starter that is on the board. Even the students who appear to be successfully working on the writing assignment have a certain chopiness to their writing as they try to fit their ideas into the sentence stems that have been provided. Despite the careful scaffolding of the writing assignment, which includes using a rubric to deconstruct an example of an exemplar paragraph, engaging in collective pre-writing strategies, and providing sentence stems to help students formulate their own ideas, the quality of work that the class is producing is drastically lower than what grade-level standards require. On paper, the supports that have been provided match the description of appropriate support for English language learners, however, there is a major disconnect between theoretically good teaching and what is currently unfolding in my classroom. Simply put, the students have a limited concept of how to wield the English language to communicate their ideas in a given context. As I survey the room, I am left to wonder:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

The rest of this chapter will explore the current practices and reality of my daily experiences in both providing direct instruction to English language learners, and working as our district-wide EL coordinator. The unique needs of long-term English language learners will be addressed as well, particularly with regards to their writing development. A preview of the existing literature regarding writing instruction in second language classrooms will also be provided, as will a preview of the upcoming chapters that will dive deeper into the literature and develop a methodology that will be used to answer the research questions.

Current Context and Reality

As a teacher of English language learners in a sheltered English language arts classroom, the challenges that students experience with writing are at the forefront of my mind, and the challenges that the students face in my classroom are not unique. The classes I teach are designed to provide English language learners with both the grade-level content standards and the English language development they need to be successful across content areas, with an added emphasis on supporting the development of writing skills. English language learners’ writing is influenced by a wide range of factors, including native language proficiency, attitudes towards the English language and the circumstances in which their English writing skills have developed (Matsuda, Ortomeier-Hooper & Mastuda, 2009). The school’s English

language learner population has grown significantly over the past decade, with approximately 12% of the student population across the district classified as current English language learners. Over sixty languages are represented districtwide. Some students are newer to the country, and of that subsection, some students were academically successful in their previous country's school system, while others faced academic challenges in their previous school or were not able to attend school regularly. The large majority of the students in the district were born in the United States or immigrated before they started their formal education. The students in this group may or may not have print literacy in their first language. While many of the students in my class have high levels of oral language proficiency, their written language skills are not typically as developed. Both writing and speaking require students to produce language, but the skills from the speaking domain do not always transfer to their writing, nor is it appropriate for all patterns of speech to be transferred to writing (Herrera, Perez & Escamilia, 2015). Some students may be able to make connections between writing in their first language and writing in English, but many students enter the American school system without print literacy in their first language, or they may come from a cultural and linguistic background where oral literacy is valued over print literacy. Additionally, students who are classified as long-term English language learners, meaning that they have been classified as an English language learner for more than seven years, are more likely to struggle with writing than their native-speaking peers, oftentimes due to a lack of print literacy in their first language (Olsen, 2014). Since the students who are long-term ELLs typically have only attended school in English, the majority of the students in this

category do not have a background in academic language in their first language. Therefore, when they are introduced to new academic language in English, they do not have a reference for this concept in their first language (Olsen, 2014). When students are unable to make these connections to their first language, it is challenging for students to fully understand the rules and exceptions that govern the English language. Students may have an epilinguistic, or unconscious understanding of how language works, but as the complexity of the expected language output grows, the subtleties and nuances of the English language become more challenging to implicitly understand (Myhill & Watson, 2014). In order for students to fully understand how the English language works, they must be able to discuss it metalinguistically (Myhill & Watson, 2014). With regards to writing, when students don't possess a metalinguistic understanding of the English language, they are unable to make corrections to their writing, or even identify if they made an error in their writing. This is particularly relevant in my language arts classroom where students tend to finish their writing assignments quickly and are unable to identify the missing components of their writing from a rubric alone. Unless a teacher provides individualized verbal feedback on the writing in the moment, students frequently are unable to make improvements to their writing that increase the complexity of the sentences or the organization of information. Surface level errors, such as run-on sentences or word choice errors frequently are left uncorrected as well as the lack of metalinguistic knowledge leaves students unable to identify many of these errors on their own.

I divide my teaching days between teaching a middle school language arts class for English language learners and serving as the coordinator for English language services for the district. My interest in answering the questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

crosses between my two roles in the district. As a teacher, I want my students to be successful writers, meaning that I want them to be able to successfully engage in the different genres of writing that are expected of any middle school student. With that said, I know that the students in my room require additional support in order to meet the writing standards, but the methods of support that have already been implemented have provided mixed results. I also know that when students leave middle school, their teachers at the high school expect a high level of writing, yet students will most likely not receive explicit writing instruction in their content classes. Secondary teachers have a tendency to believe that students enter their classroom possessing the skills and knowledge they need to meet the grade-specific writing demands of their class (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007). For English language learners, this attitude is detrimental to their writing success. Students for whom English is not their first language need explicit instruction about the language demands of all of their content areas in order to access the material, and, they need explicit writing instruction that

emphasizes all of the stages of the writing cycle (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007). For example, the 11th grade social studies class at my district's high school requires students to read primary documents and then respond, in essay format, answering whether or not the primary document supports a claim that the teacher has provided. This assessment has no graphic organizer, no mentor text and requires students to synthesize information from a primary document, which is written at a high reading level, with the information that has been covered in class. Through attending professional learning communities at the high school I learned that English language learners struggle with these assessments, causing them to fail the class and to receive no credit towards graduation. When the topic of providing linguistic support for ELs has been discussed, the common attitude throughout many departments at the high school is that students should be able to engage in these higher-level thinking assessments without support. To provide support is seen as making the assessment easier. While that is a misconception that could be addressed in its own paper, what I have gathered from these interactions is that EL teachers cannot shelter or provide support for every class. Students need to have some metalinguistic skills to apply to writing prompts, such as the one mentioned above, so that they can build their own capacity with writing in content areas. The end goal for all English language learners is that they will develop the academic and social language that is necessary to be academically successful in content classes. A significant component of preparing students to exit the EL program includes fostering a metalinguistic understanding of the English language so that they are able to identify and process the language challenges that are commonly found in different academic contexts.

As a coordinator, I am acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the district's EL program. The increasing percentage of students identified as long-term English language learners deeply concerns me, and I want our district to engage in writing best-practices supported by research in order to reduce the number of long-term ELs. My concern with the percentage of English language learners who become long-term ELs is not unfounded. As of the 2017-2018 school year, the percentage of English language learners making adequate growth with their English language skills is a contributing factor to a school's score on the North Star Accountability system, which has been enacted through ESSA (*Implementing ESSA*, n.d.). This added level of scrutiny from all stakeholders has forced administrators to reevaluate their instructional frameworks for English language learners to ensure that they are doing everything they can to facilitate the language growth of students. Alongside the measure of yearly growth that EL students in a given building, the Minnesota Department of Education also publicly shares the graduation rates for English language learners in each district. The graduation gaps between native English speakers and students who have exited EL and those who were still identified as English language learners at the time of graduation are wide, and ELs who do attend college fail to complete college at a higher rate than their native English speaking peers (Olsen, 2014).

Finally, I am aware that my own experiences with English language arts classes and the writing process have influenced the way I teach writing. I am a native-English speaker who was academically successful in both reading and writing. Although I am aware of the challenges that the English language learners in my class face when it

comes to writing, their experiences in the classroom are significantly different from my own. While I work to address these concerns and provide quality instruction to support their development as writers, I can never fully understand my students' experiences as they navigate a school system in a language that is not their first. In my own schooling experience, I read and wrote in response to texts that represented my identity as a caucasian female throughout the entirety of my educational career, whereas many of my students do not have their linguistic or cultural backgrounds represented in the middle school curriculum from which I teach. I studied French in college, but my decision to learn another language was voluntary and a byproduct of the privilege I had to pursue a liberal arts degree. I have worked in office settings where French was the primary language of communication, but even when I was overwhelmed by the need to communicate in a language that was not my strongest, I always had the freedom to leave work and engage in a world where English was the language of power. Cultivating an awareness of my own cultural and linguistic history is an important factor as I develop the framework for this study and as I analyze the results of the research conducted for this thesis so that I can be aware of my own cultural bias towards the study design and results.

Literature Preview

Over the course of the 2018-2019 school year, I facilitated a professional development session that worked with small groups of teachers to look at the academic language demands in their content areas. Through my discussions with teachers, I discovered that the term "academic language" has become a catch-all phrase for whatever makes a lesson challenging for students. On the topic of

academic language, Jeff Zwiers, an expert in the field of academic language, provides the explanation that:

students need to learn not only key words, but also how to explain and link these terms together with more subtle expressions and grammar. Academic language serves several broad and overlapping functions: to describe complexity, higher-order thinking, and abstraction. To carry out these functions, authors and speakers use a variety of features that work together to clarify a message. (2014, pp 42)

With that said, many teachers tend to focus on the vocabulary as there are lots of vocabulary strategies that are provided in teacher training programs. While vocabulary is important, students need to understand how words work together in order to create meaning, particularly when they are engaging in writing assignments. Teachers also benefit from providing direct instruction on identifying language demands in their content areas, as they too struggle with identifying why a piece of writing meets or fails to meet, grade level standards (Fang & Wang, 2011). Providing teachers with the tools to discuss language demands of different types of writing benefits students, especially since students who are struggling to write frequently do not understand the differences between different communicative processes. English language learners, particularly long-term English language learners, will write the way they speak, even if the assignment calls for a more formal tone and register (Olsen, 2014). Systemic Functional Linguistics (commonly abbreviated as SFL) demystifies the way language works by making these differences in purposes explicit. Beyond analyzing genres, or styles, of texts that commonly appear in classrooms, SFL provides a framework for examining how meaning

is conveyed by using three different measures: experiential meaning (what the text is about), interpersonal meaning (the opinions and judgements that are embedded in a text), and the textual meaning (how the text is organized in order to convey meaning) (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). This more precise framework bridges the gap between the awareness that students lack a grammatical foundation, which in turn impedes the comprehensibility and complexity of their writing, while still moving away from diagramming sentences and engaging in isolated grammar activities. Systemic Functional Linguistics emphasizes the importance of how language is used; it does not require students to memorize rules absent of context. Additionally, SFL addresses the fact that different genres of writing require students to use different linguistic functions and text organization structures. For many districts, including my own, there are existing frameworks and strategies which are used to teach writing. Addressing the metalinguistic needs of learners involves balancing new ideas with district-wide norms and expectations, and there can be power in combining the strongest elements of multiple frameworks or strategies to create a new approach. No studies have been conducted in which Systemic Functional Linguistics is integrated alongside the *Assessment for Learning* strategies (Chapuis, 2014) and Motley's (2016) *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework.

Current instructional practices are failing English language learners, particularly with regard to their ability to read and write academically dense texts. The research questions:

1. "What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?"

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

will explore how to meet the needs of this ever-growing population. Through addressing the writing needs of ELs by providing a strong basis of metalinguistic skills, students are successfully prepared for the educational and vocational pursuits.

Conclusion

Chapter one introduced the research questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

This chapter also provided insight into the current context and reality in which I teach. My roles as a middle school EL teacher and district-wide EL coordinator were outlined, as was my personal identity and how it relates to my own educational experiences with writing. A preview of the available literature in this field of study was provided, with an emphasis on Systemic Functional Linguistics and the unique needs of long-term English language learners. Gaps in the existing research around implementing quality writing instruction for middle school English language learners were identified, as were gaps in current instructional practices and current attitudes that are detrimental to the writing

success of ELLs. Finally, the educational and social-economical implications of failing to address the need for building a metalinguistic understanding of the English language in order to foster the production of grade-level writing was also identified and serve as the impetus for answering the research question.

Chapter two will explore the existing research around instructional strategies for long-term English languages and writing. An overview of how writing is commonly taught at the elementary and secondary level will be provided. Since this study is primarily concerned with meeting the writing needs of English language learners, a further exploration of second language writing development will be provided, and the characteristics and challenges of Long-Term English language learners will be identified. Systemic Functional Linguistics, which was identified in this chapter as one solution for building metalinguistic understanding, will be more thoroughly explained and its practical applications in the classroom will also be discussed. Finally, the shift in instructional practices must also be accompanied by a shift in how writing is assessed. Current research surrounding how to best assess student writing growth will also be presented. Chapter three will dive into further detail about research methodology that will be used to answer the question. A mixed methods research approach will be utilized to measure linguistic understanding through the use of a quantifiable rubric and qualitative text analysis. Chapter four will provide further detail about the linguistic characteristics of student writing before students engage in direct writing instruction and after they have completed the unit. Sample lesson plans that specifically address the target language features will also be provided. Both the quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed to look for patterns and to test for student language growth. Finally, Chapter five will

discuss the results of the study, address limitations of the study and make recommendations for areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two Overview

The research questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

do not have easy answers. The process of acquiring a second language is complex, and there are many factors that contribute to a student’s ability to successfully engage in writing. A review of the existing literature that addresses current writing instruction, the development of writing skills in second language learners and the unique needs of long-term English language learners will build the rationale for the need to look beyond current writing practices in the classroom to meet the needs of English language learners. Additionally, the existing literature related to Systemic Functional Linguistics and its application to the classroom, peer review process and evaluation of student writing will also be discussed. Within this literature review, the terms *metalanguage* and *metalinguistic understanding* will be used as terms to identify the language skills students acquire via direct writing instruction.

Frequently used methods of writing instruction, such as the 6+1 Traits of Writing program and the writing process, will be discussed and their failure to meet the specific needs of long-term English language learners will be identified. Additionally, many

secondary classrooms do not provide students with explicit writing instruction, and the detriment of this approach will also be discussed. An overview of how second language learners acquire writing skills and the definition, characteristics and challenges of long-term English language learners will be addressed.

While the current style of writing instruction frequently falls short of providing the explicit language instruction that English language learners need to be successful, Systemic Functional Linguistics provides an excellent framework for explicitly teaching the language demands of different genres of writing. Systemic Functional Linguistics can be a dense theoretical approach, but the application of the teaching/learning cycle provides both teachers and students a way to develop a metalinguistic understanding of what makes for strong writing. Special attention will be paid to the revision portion of the writing cycle and how to address the challenges English language learners face. Finally, the importance of evaluating student writing through language analysis will be addressed. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will outline the research methods that will be used to apply the best practices identified in this chapter to a 7th grade sheltered language arts classroom.

Current Instructional Practices and Shortfalls With Writing Instruction

The type of writing instruction that most English language learners receive fails to address their linguistic needs as evidenced by the achievement gap between English language learners and non-ELLs (Aguire-Munoz, Park, Amabisca & Boscardin, 2009). The emphasis on teaching the stages of writing, while ignoring the underlying linguistic choices that strong writers make causes English language learners to struggle with the construction of complex texts (Badger & White, 2000). Before stakeholders can make

changes to their writing instruction, they must understand how the current instructional strategies fail to provide adequate writing instruction for ELLs. Elementary students are often provided direct instruction on writing, whereas secondary students are treated with the assumption that they already possess the skills necessary to write in different content areas (Fang, 2008). Additionally, the feedback that teachers provide students does not provide enough detail to help students make meaningful revisions to their own work (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007). These instructional approaches, which will be explored in greater detail in this chapter, work together to create a system that falls short of providing English language learners with the instructional focus on academic language that is necessary for them to achieve grade-level standards (Aguirre-Munoz et al, 2009).

Writing Instruction at the Elementary Level

Explicit writing instruction typically happens at the younger grade levels when students are introduced to the writing process, which involves the steps of brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Badger and White, 2000). In the majority of classrooms, the steps of the writing cycle remain the same regardless of the type of writing students are producing, meaning that students are not taught the difference between writing a quick recount about their weekend and writing a report about a historical figure. The audience of an intended piece of writing is not addressed, and the different language features are not addressed. In a recount about their weekend, students can use first-person pronouns to describe what they did, they may also use more casual language and their intended audience for the assignment would be their peers and teacher. A historical report on the other hand should not include first person pronouns and should instead use third-person pronouns to create space between the author and the subject. The

choice of words would be more formal; slang would have no place in a description of a famous historical figure. While the audience of this paper is still the teacher, the purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts, whereas the personal recount is to demonstrate mastery of writing skills, but also to connect with their peers and teachers on a personal level. At the elementary level, reading and writing narrative texts is the primary focus of instruction, yet at the secondary level, students are expected to read and write a wider variety of texts (Fang, 2008). The lack of preparation for comprehending and creating these increasingly complex texts becomes evident as students move into middle and high school.

In the majority of American classrooms, writing instruction emphasizes the writing process, but does not explicitly address grammar, particularly the grammatical demands that are linked to a specific type of writing (Myhill & Watson, 2014). While some stakeholders remain strong proponents of explicit grammar instruction, the majority of classroom teachers do not feel prepared to teach the language demands specific to their content area (Myhill & Watson, 2014). The teacher's perceptions of their own grammatical knowledge impacts the instruction they provide in their classrooms and the level of feedback they provide students on their writing assignments. When teachers do not feel comfortable teaching or assessing the language usage of their students, the feedback that is provided does not address metalinguistic issues within student writing and does not help students move their writing closer to grade-level standards (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007). When teachers do not provide feedback on the metalinguistic knowledge that was demonstrated via a writing assessment, the feedback tends to highlight surface-level mistakes in student writing, such as punctuation and capitalization errors.

While correct punctuation is an important feature of academic writing, in order to help students avoid replicating the errors in future assignments, students must understand how the English language works. Diagramming sentences is not necessarily the best way to prepare students to become strong writers across content areas, but the lack of emphasis on explicit grammar instruction impedes students' abilities to craft meaningful sentences independently.

Secondary Grade Levels

Once students reach the secondary grade level, the expectation is that they will enter the classroom with the knowledge necessary to complete a variety of writing tasks with an appropriate command of mechanics, word choice and text organization (Christie & Dreysfus, 2007). The demands of writing assignments increase, and there is a wider variety of texts that students are expected to generate, but most students do not receive the support they need to meet the demands of the assignment. In place of using more specific grammatical terms, the phrase "academic language" has become a catch-all phrase for words and structures that students struggle with, yet analysis of the root of confusion does not happen (Fang, 2008). Zwiers (2014) puts forth the definition of academic language as "Academic language serves several broad and overlapping functions: to describe complexity, higher-order thinking and abstraction. To carry out these functions, authors and speakers use a variety of features that work together to clarify a message". Zwiers continues on to describe some of the language features that students need to be successful, such as text connectives and modals, but does not always provide practitioners with the metalanguage and strategies to make these concepts concrete. Even when teachers provide engaging instruction, most students do not

automatically acquire linguistic concepts. It takes explicit instruction to help students learn how to incorporate more advanced linguistic choices into their own writing (Spycher, 2017).

Limitations of Current Writing Instruction For English Language Learners

While the writing process that is commonly taught in American classrooms has some strengths, such as emphasizing the importance of brainstorming ideas before writing, it also has some weaknesses, especially for English language learners (Badger & White, 2000). Oftentimes students spend the same amount of time engaging in pre-writing, regardless of the type of text they are producing. Additionally, little attention is paid to the genre or style of writing that students are engaged in, and discussions about the intended audience of a piece of work are limited (Badger & White, 2000).

Realistically, drafting a casual email to a friend does not require as much time as brainstorming ideas for a persuasive paper, but many writing projects view these assignments as equal time commitments (Badger & White, 2000). However, strictly teaching adhering to genre-based pedagogy, where students read examples of text and notice how authors use language within a specific genre has its own faults. When implemented in its truest form, genre-based pedagogy does not provide enough support for students to move from noticing how language works to implementing more advanced linguistic choices in their own writing (Badger & White, 2000). In order for meaningful writing instruction to take place, students need to both understand the language and have a chance to write and rewrite their own work. The section of this literature reviewed titled *Applying a Systemic Functional Linguistics Framework to Instructional Practices* will explore strategies for combining different methods of writing instruction.

The Role of the Teacher in the Writing Process

The role of the teacher in traditional writing instruction is to facilitate the student's writing process. Teachers guide students through the brainstorming activities and ultimately use the rubric to give the student a grade. While peer-review is a common feature of the writing process, many students, particularly English language learners, are ill-prepared to engage in discussions about the revision process due to their limited metalinguistic understanding. Some classrooms have shifted to having students evaluate their own work using the same rubric that the teacher will ultimately use to assign the grade. The work of Chapuis (2014) and the Assessment for Learning strategies highlight the importance of students understanding how to use a rubric to revise their writing. While providing students with access to a rubric to make changes to their own writing is a useful, not all students are equipped with the knowledge necessary to make meaningful revisions to their writing based off of a rubric. They may not know that they have made mistakes with punctuation, nor are they always able to identify if they have organized their ideas in a logical way. Without this understanding, students check boxes and using the rubric becomes another hoop to jump through in order to get a grade.

Student work is typically assessed using rubrics that measure organization, word choice, fluency and presentation, yet the feedback that students receive is vague. An example from the 6+1 Traits rubric which is widely used in American classrooms assigns full points for the organization of a text by using the comments "I know where I'm going! My opening will hook you! The ending really works!" (Culham, 2003), yet students are left to wonder what constitutes an opening that hooks a reader and whether or not their ending works. Even teachers who assess student writing often lack a deep understanding

of what language features contribute to a strong piece of work (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007). When students are given vague comments about their work, such as “this paragraph needs more detail”, it becomes challenging for them to know what next steps they need to take in order to improve their writing.

Overall, the current writing programs most commonly used in the United States school system fail English language learners in several ways. The supports that are provided most frequently to English language learners may work temporarily for a single assignment, they are not always transferable to other assignments, and students become lost when supports are taken away. The writing process that is frequently taught in classrooms does not address issues like audience or genre, which are two components that strong writers understand. The shift from teaching grammar explicitly has led to an environment where both teachers and students lack the knowledge they need to specifically address issues that are commonly found in students’ writing. The feedback that students receive on their writing does not always provide students with enough information to make substantial changes to their writing. Teacher feedback can either be vague or focussed on surface-level comments about formatting, and rubrics may address deeper issues, such as word choice or organization, but they do not demystify the language that students need to achieve grade-level writing in those areas. Whereas this section of the literature review focused primarily on the writing instruction that is provided to all students, the next section will explore the existing research that focuses on how writing develops for English language learners specifically.

Second Language Writing Development

English language learners require personalized instruction to help them become successful writers across content areas (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007) . The majority of English language learners achieve oral language fluency long before becoming fluent writers (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2015), but the distinction between social language and academic language is an important consideration for educators. Students who are identified as ELLs often have social language fluency in both languages, but they may not have a strong basis of academic language either language. The concept of ‘linguistic capital’ (Zwiers, 2014) discussed how students enter the classroom with different linguistic backgrounds that can provide them a strong background with the linguistic expectations of the classroom. English language learners are more likely to enter the classroom without a wealth of “linguistic capital”, therefore, it becomes increasingly important for the teacher to provide high-quality instruction that will help ELLs increase their linguistic skills.

Perceptions and Challenges of Second Language Writing

Teachers are not the only stakeholders who are aware that writing is challenging for English language learners. Many ELLs are also aware of the struggles they face as they engage in writing activities. Lin (2015) studied the primary concerns that college-aged English language learners had about writing in English. While this specific study used a sample population considerably older than the participants of this study, the findings of Lin (2015) are corroborated by the work of Aguire Munoz et al (2015) and Olsen (2014). The findings of the study concluded that the top five concerns regarding writing were: choosing the correct words, adapting to American thought patterns, writing

fluently, dealing with anxiety around writing and correctly using idioms. As mentioned in the previous section of this literature review, many of these anxieties are not addressed through explicit instruction in classrooms. Without explicit instruction about text genres, students will struggle with adapting to American thought patterns because they will be left to figure out the structure of different texts on their own. Idioms and precise word choices are two other areas that need to be addressed. While content vocabulary words are often taught, text connectives, modals or other common, yet nuanced words are frequently left untaught in classrooms, causing English language learners to struggle to understand their usage in context. Anxiety around the writing process and a lack of writing fluency can both be rooted in the fear of making mistakes (Lin, 2015). When teacher feedback provides students with a laundry list of surface level mistakes but not enough detail to help students re-organize their writing, students feel as though they are stuck and will not be able to detect their own mistakes in future assignments.

Additionally, teachers may be aware of some of the self-identified challenges on this list, but some of these challenges, such as anxiety when writing or difficulty adapting to American thought patterns may not be as obvious to teachers. Understanding the concerns that students have about writing can help teachers make changes to both the support they provide during the writing process, as well as the feedback they provide on students' writing.

English language learners' direct writing instruction is often limited to the sentence or paragraph level, leaving them with limited exposure to composing the longer texts that are expected at higher grade levels and in college (Matsuda, Ortemeier-Hooper & Matsuda, 2009). Whereas their native English speaking peers are able to develop and

generalize grammatical and linguistic patterns through social interactions, English language learners need direct writing instruction to make these patterns salient (Lin, 2015). Since many English language learners read below grade level, they lack academic language skills and struggle in all aspects of school that require literacy (Olsen, 2014). When EL's writing is compared to native-speaking peers, their texts are shorter and include less complex sentence structure and less precise word choice. Additionally, their writing is frequently riddled with errors that they are unaware of, causing their writing to appear unpolished (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, Matsuda, 2009).

The writing of English language learners is influenced by a variety of factors, including proficiency in their native language, the type of English language programming they have been enrolled in, and their literacy levels in both their first language and English (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, Matsuda, 2009). Cultural differences also impact the trajectory of writing development for a student. Some students may have had formal education in their first language, therefore, they may have writing skills that transfer to English, whereas other students may have only attended school in English and may have limited or no print literacy skills in their first language. Not every cultural and linguistic background has a strong emphasis on written language (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2015). Even students who have a strong background in writing instruction in their first language are not necessarily at an advantage. Different cultures and languages utilize different rhetorical styles, organizational patterns and expression of ideas (Lin, 2015), thus causing a student's writing to sound different from what an American reader would expect from a particular genre of writing. Whereas American academic writing is

expected to include facts and citations, other cultures emphasize a more philosophical style of writing that emphasizes the student's personal opinion (Lin, 2015).

Oral Language Fluency and Writing

Many students who are currently enrolled in English language learner programming have strong oral fluency skills and possess knowledge of the cultural norms and trends in the United States (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, Matsuda, 2009). While having oral fluency in English is an asset, special attention should be paid to the type of oral language that an individual English language learner is capable of. Many students have strong social skills, meaning they are able to navigate peer interactions and some adult interactions, but they lack the academic language skills that are required to both speak and write about a variety of content areas. All writers, even accomplished adult writers, write in a way that is influenced by their speech patterns. Many English language learners who possess strong oral language skills but do not have a well-developed sense of academic language include overly colloquial language in inappropriate written contexts (Zwiers, 2014) and tend to write sentences that are shorter, overusing the word "like" to connect subordinate clauses (Myhill, 2009). While English language learners may be able to develop social oral language indirectly through interaction with classmates and teachers, the same cannot be said for the development of writing skills (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2015). ELLs need direct instruction in order to develop strong writing skills, but depending on the age in which they join an English speaking classroom, direct instruction may not be provided due to the misguided belief that students should have already developed foundational writing skills. Even ELLs who have received instruction in English since the start of their educational career continue to have

significant needs in the area of writing. Unfortunately, students who are still struggling with foundational writing skills at the secondary level are frequently placed in either beginning-level EL classes or remedial courses (Kim & Garcia, 2014). Neither of these course placements address the issues specific to students who have already mastered the social uses of English, but still need additional time to develop a command of academic language. ELLs in the secondary grade levels need instruction that utilizes direct instruction on the academic uses of English, while promoting high-levels of engagement and ensures access to a wide range of complex and relevant texts (Olson, 2014). While this approach to supporting secondary ELLs may not be commonplace yet, instructional approaches that utilize Systemic Functional Linguistics to meet the needs of long-term English language learners have produced promising results (Pavlak & Hodgson-Drysdale, 2017).

Secondary language arts classrooms do not meet the needs of English language learners. Since the majority of direct writing instruction takes place in elementary level classrooms, English language learners who are still struggling to write at the secondary level frequently do not receive the support that is specifically designed to meet their needs. Cultural differences between a students' first and second languages around writing impact success, as does the type of instruction that students receive. Some of the writing concerns that ELLs self-identified, such as difficulty choosing the correct words and challenges with adapting to American organizational patterns were also discussed.

Within the population of English language learners, there are distinctions between different sub-groups within those labeled as ELLs. Some students immigrate to the United States with little to no formal education, whereas other students come to the

United States at an older age with a complete educational background. Many other students were either born in the United States or immigrated to the United States at a young age and have received the majority of their education in the American school system. In a secondary classroom, students who have been labeled as an English language learner for seven or more years become long-term English language learners. The majority of the students in the study population are classified as long-term English language learners. The needs of this sub-group are unique and will be addressed more extensively in the next section of the literature review.

Understanding the Needs of Long-Term ELLs

Long-Term English language learners (also referred to as LT-ELLs) are a distinct population that is growing across the United States (Menken & Kleyn, 2010), yet they often remain invisible in mainstream classrooms. Students in this category have attended school in the United States and have received ELL services for five or more years, but they have not yet demonstrated proficiency of the English language. Many of these students have strong social language skills, but they continue to struggle academically (Olsen, 2014). Their strong social language skills and familiarity with the American school system help them navigate the school system, yet they do not receive the support they need to be academically or linguistically successful.

Defining Long-Term English Language Learners

Before exploring strategies that are successful for this specific population of English language learners, it is important to understand how students become long-term English language learners. In the state of Minnesota, where this study is conducted, students are expected to master the English language within five to seven years of

receiving EL services. Proficiency is measured by a student's scores on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, which assesses proficiency in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and is given annually to all students who are identified as English language learners, regardless of whether or not the student is currently receiving EL services (Implementing ESSA, n.d.). While many students do achieve proficiency within this timeframe, some do not. One of the most common experiences of long-term ELs is that they have received inconsistent language programming. Some students move between the United States and another country, thus causing interruptions to their English language development, but other students either move between districts or schools within a district that utilize different program models. Some students even remain in the same school and receive drastically different services each year. Students may be moved from immersion to monolingual settings, or they may be moved into mainstream classes early on in their language development (Kim & Garcia, 2014). Due to the inconsistencies in programming, students miss both the academic content and the language development they need to meet grade-level standards. Many districts use test scores on an English proficiency exam to dictate course placement, so long-term ELs who perform poorly on the exams may end up in beginning level English language development courses alongside recently arrived students (Menken & Kleyn, 2010). While the students in the class may have similar test scores, their needs could not be more different.

Many students who end up becoming LT-ELLs are labeled as low-achieving students and are placed in remedial courses. However, many of the students in this category self-report that they wish to attend college and that they value education (Menken, Kleyn & Chaem 2012). This creates a dissonance because these students are

not being prepared for the rigors of college, nor do they have the academic language they need to be successful in higher level courses. However research has discovered strategies and supports that can be effective for this population and bridge the gap between their current linguistic and academic levels and grade-level standards (Olsen, 2014; Aguirre Munoz et al, 2009). The population of long-term English language learners is growing rapidly across the United States, therefore state and district level policies must shift to address the unique needs of this group of learners, and instructional practices must reflect strategies that support the linguistic and academic achievement for Long-Term English language learners.

Strategies to Address the Needs of Long-Term English Language Learners

Once districts understand that this group of English language learners has different needs than other groups, a plan can be created to address the needs of LT-ELLs. Olsen (2014), proposed seven principles for meeting the needs of long term English language learners: treating the needs of LT-ELLs with urgency, recognizing their distinct needs, providing programming that addresses both the language and literacy gaps that have accumulated, providing home language development whenever possible, providing students with relevant and rigorous curriculum, integrating English language learners into mainstream classrooms while still providing high levels of support and actively engaging LT-ELLs in taking a role in their own educational future. Olsen (2014) also identified the importance of emphasizing oral language and active engagement, as well as increasing the amount of time that students spend talking and limiting teacher talk. Since many long-term English language learners enter the classroom with strong social language skills, it is important to leverage these strengths in order to support their continued

academic language development. The *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* strategy proposed by Motley (2016), provides a teaching framework that helps all educators increase active engagement for learners. Students are engaged in a structured talk that piques their interest in the subject material for the day and activates prior knowledge through the use of images and open-ended questions. After students have had a chance to discuss the topic, they engage in an independent reading activity with support that allows them to apply the literacy skills they are working on to a reading in the content area. The reading lasts 15 minutes and is accompanied by guiding questions to help students identify the most important information of the text. Students then engage in another structured talk while being provided support to help them shift to using more academic language before engaging in a brief writing assignment.

The *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* strategy can be helpful for building academic language and increasing student participation, but as mentioned in an earlier section, many long-term English language learners are not given ample opportunities to engage in longer and more complex writing assignments. While the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* strategy provides strong support for long-term English language learners in daily instruction, it must be supplemented with other instructional strategies in order to truly build a metalinguistic understanding of the English language. One of the common critiques of ELL classes is that they reduce students' exposure to complex texts and higher-order thinking (Aguirre-Munoz et al, 2009), but the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* strategy provides support to help students be academically successful through the use of collaborative oral language activities partnered with opportunities to independently practice reading and writing skills. Aguirre Muonz et al also suggest that discrepancies in performance

between long-term English language learners and their native speaking peers is due to the lack of direct instruction on academic language. While this strategy provides some surface-level supports for how to address academic language through the use of guiding questions and sentence stems, additional ideas for how to merge language instruction into the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework will be provided in the literature review section titled *Applying A Systemic Functional Linguistics Framework to Instructional Practices*.

Long-Term English language learners have needs that are different from recently arrived ELs, yet most English language development programs are not designed to meet the needs of these students. Developing an awareness of how students become Long-Term English language learners is vital for all stakeholders, as is understanding the distinct needs and instructional strategies that will support these students to ensure they are able to meet grade-level standards. Many of the strategies that are currently proposed as ways to support English language learners build reading and speaking skills, but do not provide enough support to help students write longer and more complex texts across content areas. However, demystifying the linguistic choices that strong writers make as they create more complex sentences will aide ELLs in their ability to create similarly complex texts (Richards & Repken, 2014). In the next section, Systemic Functional Linguistics will be reviewed as one approach that can be used to provide direct instruction for creating complex texts.

Background and Benefits of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Common scaffolds in second language classrooms include providing students opportunities to verbally process new ideas prior to writing, using graphic organizers to structure ideas and providing sentence stems to incorporate the use of academic language

(Zwiers, 2014). While these supports are helpful for English language learners, they do not address the deeper needs of building a metalinguistic understanding of the English language (Fang, 2008). Systemic Functional Linguistics provides a framework for discussing language by examining how language choices affect meaning (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). This functional approach emphasizes how language is used in context and is not concerned with the memorization of rules in isolation. Additionally, Systemic Functional Linguistics recognizes that language usage is dependent on the context of usage. Even within an English language arts classroom, the use of language depends on the current assignment. The language that is needed to produce an argumentative essay differs from the language used to summarize a book. The language that is required for a summative essay differs from the language expected on a formative exit ticket. Demystifying the language equips students with the metalanguage required to discuss the conscious choices strong writers make as they craft their texts. Systemic Functional Linguistics addresses all components of language, ranging from word choice to the organization of lengthy texts. Since the scope of Systemic Functional Linguistics is far-reaching, the topics of Theme/Rheme and elaboration as defined by Halliday (1985) and his colleagues, will be explained as they pertain to the context of a novel study unit in a 7th grade sheltered language arts classroom.

How Systemic Functional Linguistics Addresses Gaps in Current Instructional Practices

In typical language arts classrooms, the emphasis is placed on teaching the five pillars of literacy identified by the National Reading Panel (Fang, 2008). The components of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension are certainly

important skills for all students to develop, but focusing on these five features alone does not prepare students to read and construct more challenging texts as the move into middle and high school. Fang (2008) argues that focusing only on the five pillars of literacy does not adequately prepare students to be successful at the secondary level. The texts that students need to comprehend at the secondary level denser than those in an elementary classroom. While reading instruction that emphasizes the five pillars of literacy might focus on teaching reading comprehension by asking students to answer questions about the text, Systemic Functional Linguistics provides students with strategies to break apart long noun phrases to understand how the words are working together to provide the reader with more information. Conversely, understanding how to create expanded noun phrases in their own writing helps students create texts that are aligned with grade-level standards and the expectations of a specific genre. While standard reading instruction does not emphasize the conscious choices that strong writers make as they construct their text, such as their use of technical vocabulary, declarative sentences and the use of the passive voice to create objectivity, Systemic Functional Linguistics calls students' attention to these choices so that in turn they can incorporate these academic features in their own writing.

Many language arts classrooms no longer explicitly teach grammar (Myhill & Watson, 2014), but Systemic Functional Linguistics is more than teaching grammar in isolation. This approach takes the guesswork out of the writing process and addresses some of the common concerns that English language learners have about writing, such as text organization and word choice (Lin, 2015). This is done by engaging students in activities where they identify how skilled writers make informed metalinguistic decisions

about their writing and then are provided with support as they work towards incorporating these features in their own writing. Teachers at the secondary level often assume that students will “pick up” the language skills that are required to write detailed and cohesive texts (Spycher, 2017). English language learners do not magically acquire written language skills through exposure to engaging activities, but instead require explicit language instruction (Olsen, 2014).

When English language learners are provided with support during the writing process, the support varies in effectiveness (Moore, Schleppegrell & Palincsar, 2008). Helpful scaffolds are designed to be temporary and tailored to learners’ needs to facilitate future independence (Spycher, 2017), but many scaffolds that are provided to English language learners may help students complete an assignment at the time, but do not foster future independence. Providing students with graphic organizers is one method that is used to help students gather their ideas prior to writing. This scaffold allows students an opportunity to brainstorm either collaboratively or independently to aide in the development of their topic and supporting details. While providing students a graphic organizer to use is helpful, it does not always provide them with the support they need to move from a list of ideas to a fully developed essay. The use of oral language activities is also promoted since many English language learners have stronger oral literacy skills than print literacy skills (Olsen, 2014). While providing students with oral language opportunities is a successful strategy insofar as it leverages student strengths and allows them to formulate their ideas in a modality in which they are more comfortable, it is crucial to remember that oftentimes the oral literacy skills that students possess do not include academic language skills, therefore explicitly teaching the speech and writing

patterns that are appropriate for a given genre becomes an important, yet often overlooked aspect of instruction.

Sentence stems and paragraph frames are another popular support to help students use academic language (Zwiers, 2014), but these sentence stems do not address the deeper issue of students lacking a metalinguistic understanding of the language. Instead of using the sentence stems as a model, the sentence stems become a scaffold that the student over relies on and they are unable to generalize the skills that the stem sought to teach once the stems are taken away. While providing sentence stems is not a practice that teachers should stop, it is important to not only teach the sentence stems, but how the sentence stems work within the larger context of the genre.

Some researchers advocate for helping students translate their writing from their first language into English, but this method is not without problems as well (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2015). As mentioned earlier, many students who are currently enrolled in the American school system do not have print literacy in their first language. Even if students have print literacy in their first language, the patterns of text organization can vary greatly from culture to culture, therefore relying on translations of their writing denies students the opportunity to master the text organization patterns that are most commonly expected in the United States. While translating writing may help in the early stages of language development, it is a practice that should not be relied on once students have started to develop a beginning level of proficiency.

Zwiers (2014) and Chapuis (2014) both advocate that students spend time looking at examples of strong and weak models of writing assignments to understand the expectations of the writing assignment. Zwiers (2014) suggests having students use

colors to pick out the different parts of the essay, such as the thesis, transitions and conclusion, and Chapuis (2014) suggests that students use the rubric for the assignment to grade both the strong and weak examples before starting their own writing. While both ideas provide some level of support for English language learners, both methods fall short of diving into the language at a deep enough level to help students make meaningful language choices in their own writing. We propose the need for explicit instruction on how to make meaningful language choices can only be addressed through teaching grammar in a functional manner. Systemic Functional Linguistics helps address these distinct linguistic needs of long-term English language learners.

Genre-Based Pedagogy

Systemic Functional Linguistics, as explained by Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) provides a more detailed framework for talking about language, particularly the features that impede a student's ability to understand or be understood. "SFL [Systemic Functional Linguistics] sees language as a resource for making meaning...we make different kinds of meaning for different purposes and contexts by drawing on the different options that language affords." (Fang & Shleppegrell, 2008). This emphasis on meaning and context segues into the work on text genres by Derewianka (1990). Text genres provide a framework for the types of language patterns that commonly appear in a certain style of writing. To understand a genre of text is to understand the word choice, organizational patterns, social context and intended audience for a piece of writing (Badger & White, 2000). Genres differ by their purposes, such as social interaction, informing others, explaining a concept and persuading, as well as their organization patterns and language features (Spycher, 2017). For example, texts written in the report

genre, such as a science report, may include technical vocabulary, abstraction to create taxonomies of scientific theories, lexical density and complex noun groups which are used to increase the efficiency of a text. This is different from language that is typically seen in narrative text, which may include more dialog between characters, sensing and speaking verbs, modals and attributes (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). Developing an understanding of the features of text genres is not something that all students implicitly understand. They need explicit instruction on the features commonly used in different genres. Secondary English language learners rely strongly on the recount genre to structure their writing. They try to use recounts in place of other more advanced text genres (Rose, 2009) because they have not yet mastered the features of other more appropriate genres. When students understand the differences between genres, they can make intentional metalinguistic choices to help them orient their writing towards the expectations of the genre and the grade-level standards (Spycher, 2017).

Functional Grammar

The work of Halliday (1985) furthered the research on functional grammar, which proposed “language has evolved to satisfy human needs--it is not arbitrary. A functional grammar is essentially a ‘natural’ grammar, in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used.” The emphasis on examining how language is used connects back to the seven principles of working with long-term English language learners that Olsen (2014) proposed by both addressing the needs of English language learners in an urgent fashion and by providing explicit language instruction. The gaps in literacy instruction that focuses solely on the five pillars of literacy can also be addressed through the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics by

helping students discover how language is used in different contexts (Fang, 2008). When students understand how language is used, the process of academic writing becomes accessible for students and provides students with the opportunity to successfully and equitably engage in rigorous coursework (Spycher, 2017).

Traditional grammar emphasizes the sentence level, but functional grammar looks at all aspects of language use, from the text level, sentence level, clause level, phrase level and word level (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012). This more holistic approach to analyzing language usage provides more insight into how language can be used to create meaning. The instructional practices can move away from labeling parts of a sentence and shift towards noticing how authors use certain text features to convey meaning. This approach also opens up the possibility of discussion about intended audience and different contexts for writing, both of which are important features to explicitly teach to English language learners. Since many English language learners use a written-down oral approach to their writing, which relies heavily on colloquial language and repetitive sentence structures, discussing the different ways to convey meaning depending on the context of an interaction is an important step in closing the writing gap between ELs and native-English speakers.

Grammar instruction may conjure up images of sentence diagrams and endless worksheets, which may account for many teachers' unwillingness to incorporate grammar instruction into their classroom (Myhill & Watson, 2014). The distinction between grammatical knowledge and grammatical ability is an important concept for educators to understand. Students who are able to identify correct grammatical structures at the sentence level after drills and isolated practice possess grammatical knowledge;

students who are able to “use grammar as a communicative resource in spoken and written discourse,” (Richards & Repken, 2014) possess grammatical ability and are able to translate their knowledge into practical applications across contexts. Truly effective grammar instruction does not teach grammar absent of context, but instead looks at how language is used in both spoken and written contexts. The achievement gap between English language learners and their native-English speaking peers is rooted in the lack of instructional emphasis on the linguistics structures that comprise academic language, as well as fewer opportunities to meaningfully engage in grade-level content (Aguirre-Munoz et al, 2009). Providing students with direct instruction about the academic language that is connected to each genre of text is a step forward in closing the achievement gap that is prevalent in the majority of American schools.

Systemic Functional Linguistics is an approach that examines all language choices, ranging from the word level to the organization of an entire text, but for this study, the concept of Theme/Rheme is the most relevant to the development of a deeper metalinguistic understanding. Theme/Rheme allows for exploration on how a clause is organized as a message (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). The Theme is the “element which serves as the point of departure for the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context” (Halliday, 1985). The Theme is typically a noun-group at the front of the sentence, although an elaboration on deviations from this identification will be addressed later on in the chapter. The Rheme is the rest of the clause and further develops the Theme (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008).

Clauses and Sentences

Before further explanations of Theme/Rheme and elaboration are provided, it is vital to develop a shared knowledge of linguistics terms used in this chapter. Language can be analyzed at the word, group, clause, sentence, paragraph and text level. Individual words can be combined to create groups, groups work together to create clauses, and clauses can be linked together to create sentences. An example of how words can be categorized into groups and clauses, as defined by Humphrey, Droga and Feez (2012) is illustrated below.

Figure 1

Words, Groups and Clauses

Clause	My youngest sister, Sally, studied to be a mining engineer									
Group	My youngest sister, Sally,			studied to be			a mining engineer			
Word	My	younge -st	sister,	Sally,	studied	to	be	a	mining	engine- er

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 5.

While the sentence in Table 1 has only one clause, sentences can also have multiple clauses. To elaborate on the first sentence, follow-up sentences with multiple clauses could be used. Writers use sentences of varying lengths and styles in order to make their writing more interesting. These longer sentences can either be compound, where each clause of the sentence is a complete idea, or they can be complex sentences, where one of the clauses does not represent a complete sentence. Compound-complex

sentences also exist, but given the current writing levels of the study population will not be explicitly addressed in this writing unit.

Figure 2

Sentences with Multiple Clauses

Sentence 1	Clause 1	She takes rock samples from various sites
	Clause 2	and tests them in a laboratory.
Sentence 2	Clause 1	The job is challenging
	Clause 2	but Sally enjoys working in the great outdoors.

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 5.

Figure 3

Complex Sentences

Sentence 1		
	Clause 1 (dependent)	When tobacco burns,
	Clause 2 (independent)	it produces soot, tar and nicotine
Sentence 2		
	Clause 1 (dependent)	Because Min had a sore foot,
	Clause 2 (independent)	she couldn't play soccer.

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 63.

Theme/Rheme

Sentences work together to create paragraphs or sections. In a traditional five-paragraph essay, it is expected that there will be a topic sentence and the following sentences will provide more details about the topic. Strong writers include transitions within the paragraph so that the text does not read as a list of unrelated facts. Cohesion within a paragraph can also be achieved by using synonyms to refer to the subject of the paragraph to achieve sentence variety or repetition of important words (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012). At the text level, cohesion is often developed by using words that are broadly labeled as text connectives. These are words that help readers make sense of what is happening in a text. Text connectives can be used to sequence events through the use of words like “previously”, “afterwards”, and “finally”, or text connectives can be used to elaborate on ideas through the use of words like “also” or “additionally”. Information can be contrasted, or cause and effect can be identified through the use of these words. Information can also be restated using the text connectives of “for example” or “in summary” (Humphrey, Droga & Feez, 2012). Strong writers are able to identify the correct text connectives to use depending on the genre of the text and the intended audience.

In addition to using text connectives, strong writers use the order of words in their clauses to convey the most important ideas (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008). Theme/Rheme is the primary way in which the development of ideas is traced through a text. The development of ideas is examined by looking at where information is placed within a clause. The Theme of a clause is who or what the clause is about, and the Rheme provides the reader with additional information (Halliday, 1985). In multi-clause texts,

there are different ways that Themes can be developed. One such way that Theme can be developed is by using the Rheme of the first clause to develop the Themes for following clauses (Derewianka, 2011). This “zig-zag” method is used when the writer wants to continue to include new information in a way that is logical and builds off of what was already said. In the table below, the information in the Rheme of the first clause becomes the Theme of the following clause. New information is added in each clause to move the explanation forward.

Figure 4

Zig-Zag Theme/Rheme

Theme	Rest of Clause (New Information)
A cold front	begins when cold air moves into an area which has warmer air.
The warmer air	rises over the heavier cold air.
As this	occurs,
The warm air	cools and condenses into water droplets.
These droplets	join to form large heavier droplets
and then the droplets	fall as rain.

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 137.

Other ways that Theme and Rheme can be traced through the development of a text is through synonyms and referential pronouns that relate back to the initial Theme. The repetition of Theme method can be used when the author wants to provide multiple ideas about the same topic. The use of synonyms or referential pronouns maintains

sentence variety. In the table below, *The Outsiders* is referred to as “it”, “the novel” and “the book” so that each sentence or clause does not have to start the same way.

Figure 5

Repetition of Theme

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Rest of Clause (New Information)</u>
The moon	is a natural satellite.
Our moon	orbits the planet Earth.
It	is a sphere and has lots of craters and mountains.

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 137.

Theme/Rheme can also show how clauses work together develop a timeline. This approach helps writers develop a sense of chronological order by using markers of time to provide the reader with information about when events happened. This type of Theme/Rheme is most helpful in summarizing texts or events.

Figure 6

Chronological Patterns

<u>Marked Theme</u>	<u>Participant</u>	<u>Rest of Clause (New Information)</u>
Last summer	Tinh	had also flown kites
(But) when he'd turned ten at the Lunar New Year	he	'd left that childhood behind.
Now, during the long days of summer vacation	it	was his job to help Ba with fishing.

Note: Reprinted from Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). Grammar and meaning. Newton, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, page 137.

Theme/Rheme patterns create cohesive texts that allow for a clearer progression of ideas. Students who struggle with writing frequently exhibit difficulty with organizing the ideas in their writing. By explicitly teaching Theme/Rheme, students are better equipped to craft subsequent sentences that build on the ideas of their topic sentence. Theme/Rheme works alongside elaboration as it provides students with a structure for expanding on their theses sentences to provide additional information. While strong writers may use cohesive patterns of Theme/Rheme without much thought, struggling writers and English language learners require direct instruction on how to make the linguistic choices necessary to create a cohesive text (Christie & Dreyfus, 2007).

Elaboration of Ideas

Elaboration occurs when one clause is expanded by the use of and subsequent clauses to provide additional information through “restating it, clarifying it, refining it, or adding a descriptive attribute or comment” (Halliday, 1985). With written responses that require students to analyze characterization or theme, strong writers need more than one clause to explain their opinions. This is a challenging request for many writers as they lack the ability to chain together clauses that dive deeper into an explanation. Contrary to what some students have been taught, elaboration is more than just increasing the length of a sentence. Subsequent clauses can further develop a Theme by restating the Theme and using synonyms or a different point of view to further explore the message, or by

providing an explanation to further clarify the argument (Halliday, 1985). Tables 4, 5 and 6 provide examples of the different ways that Theme/Rheme can be used to elaborate on ideas.

Elaboration also happens through the use of expanded noun phrases with non-finite verb clauses to illustrate alternative opinions and introduce arguments (Myhill, 2009). Expanded noun phrases provide explanatory information about the subject of the sentence and are used by strong writers to make precise claims or observations. In the clause “A seven-week CIA leak trail that focussed new attention on the Bush administration’s much-criticized handling of intelligence reports about weapons of mass destruction in the run-up of the Iraq war” both noun phrase expansion and embedded clauses are used to provide more information about the topic. While 7th grade writing typically does not produce clauses of this length and density, many of the content-area texts they read do contain dense clauses and there are features of this example clause that can be found in students’ writing. There are several different articles, noun phrases and embedded clauses working together to create this dense clause and to provide additional details to the reader.

Figure 7

Noun Phrase Deconstruction

<u>Component</u>	<u>Grammatical Category</u>	<u>Functional Category</u>	<u>Function</u>
a	Article	Premodifier	How many?
seven-week	Noun Phrase	Premodifier	How long?
CIA leak	Noun Phrase	Premodifier	Which one?

trial	Noun	Head	Thing
that focused new attention on the Bush administration's much criticized handling of intelligence reports about weapons of mass-destruction in the run-up of the Iraq war	Embedded Clause	Postmodifier	Additional Details

Note: Reprinted from Fang, Z. (2008). Going beyond the fab five: Helping students cope with the unique linguistic challenges of expository reading in intermediate grades. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 51(6), page 483.

Systemic Functional Linguistics may appear isolated from the application of a middle school language arts classroom. The approach is heavy on theory and terminology, but with careful planning, it can be brought to life in classroom settings to build the metalinguistic understanding that is necessary for English language learners to develop the skills they need to revise their own writing. The scaffolds that English language learners most commonly receive in classrooms, such as graphic organizers and sentence stems, address some of their writing needs, but the existing scaffolds do not build a deep metalinguistic understanding on their own. In order to help students move past writing simplistic recounts, text genres must be explicitly taught, as well as the language features that are commonly found within a genre. In this study, the topics of Theme/Rheme and elaboration will be addressed as these are features commonly used in literary analysis assignments. In the next section of this literature review, the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics will be applied to a practical teaching/learning cycle which can be applied to K-12 classrooms.

Application of a Systemic Functional Linguistics Framework

At first glance, Systemic Functional Linguistics appears to be a dense theory that seems above the comprehension of most secondary students. However, there are existing studies that address how to implement the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach in K-12 classrooms to build metalinguistic knowledge (Aguirre Munoz et al, 2009; Spycher, 2017; Brisk, 2015; Richards & Repken, 2014). Whereas typical grammar instruction conjures images of worksheets and sentence diagramming, applying Systemic Functional Linguistics to the classroom involves using authentic texts to guide instruction. Students are engaged in noticing and deconstructing mentor texts within a given genre, constructing a response within a given genre with the support of their peers and their teacher, and then given an opportunity to apply their learning to their own writing sample. Knowledge of how to engage in a specific type of writing is never assumed; it is explicitly taught and supported.

The Teaching/Learning Cycle

When faced with the directive to explicitly teach grammar, many teachers feel underprepared to do so. Systemic Functional Linguistics can further anxiety around teaching grammar due to the unfamiliar terms and seemingly dense theory behind the approach. However, teaching a more functional approach to grammar is very possible in a K-12 classroom setting, especially at the secondary level, and the need to explicitly address functional language usage is dire, especially the rising population of long-term English language learners. One way to structure explicit language instruction is to utilize the teaching/learning cycle, which provides different steps that scaffold students' understanding of the language demands that are typically found within a given genre of a

text. The stages of the teaching/learning cycle are: negotiating field, deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction (Pavlak & Hodgson-Drysdale, 2017). Spycher (2017) adds an additional step to the teaching/learning cycle that is designed to provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their own writing and the writing produced by their peers, as well as their own experiences with the writing process. These phases are used to build off of one another to create a deeper understanding of how language works. This is a cycle of teaching, meaning that the steps are revisited throughout the curriculum. Finally, this cycle provides both teachers and students with a metalanguage to discuss how to create and organize texts across genres. While this approach will be applied to a secondary language arts classroom, the methodology of the teaching/learning cycle can be applied to any content area and across grade levels.

Evaluating Student Language Growth

English language learners need clear and specific feedback on their writing and language use in order to grow in these areas. However, commonly used rubrics, such as the 6+1 traits rubric (Culham 2003) provide vaguely worded feedback about organization, fluency and word choice. While this style of feedback may be effective for students who are proficient in English, the lack of detail provided in these rubrics fails to help English language learners identify what steps they need to take to move their writing closer to grade-level standards. A shift in the feedback that is provided to students, including providing students with specific feedback on their linguistic choices is necessary to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Many rubrics that are used to evaluate student writing are too general. The 6+1 Traits rubrics that are used across classrooms assess students in seven areas: ideas,

sentence fluency, organization, word choice, voice, conventions and presentation (Culham, 2003). While these are all important components of writing, the feedback from the different rubrics remains vague and difficult to incorporate into the revision process. While teachers may know what it means if “punctuation smoothly guides the reader. The grammar contributes to clarity and style,” (Culham, 2003) English language learners most likely will not be able to identify whether or not their grammar usage contributes to clarity or not. The assumption that if students have made mistakes with grammar in their writing it is due to rushing through the editing process is another unhelpful attitude that this approach facilitates. Instead of relying on pre-made writing programs, teachers need to look at the needs of their students in their class to determine what the rubric should emphasize. While some researchers (Fang & Wang, 2011) advocate for not using rubrics to evaluate student writing and instead using functional language analysis to measure growth, realistically many school systems still require grades to be assigned to writing assignments and rubrics to be made available to stakeholders. Instead of abolishing rubrics, incorporating the quantifiable elements of a rubric with the emphasis on language usage is a middle ground that educators can take in their classrooms. Since language is most meaningful when it is taught in the context of content, the rubric will need to incorporate some aspect of assessing a student’s content knowledge, but the rubric must also address the language components that were taught during the teaching/learning cycle. Rubrics should also include student-friendly language so that students understand how they are being assessed and students must have a chance to use the rubric themselves to understand what the different scores look like in context (Chapuis, 2014). If students are asked to use elaboration and theme/rheme to synthesize information about a story,

then the rubric should address these areas. Since the students have engaged in the teaching/learning cycle, these terms and how they are applied in context should not be new concepts to the students at this stage, but guiding questions to help students understand how these linguistic features are being assessed should be provided to increase the clarity of the teacher feedback.

Since the shift towards assessing student writing based off of a functional language approach as opposed to a prescriptive approach may be new for many teachers, using guiding questions as part of the evaluation process can be helpful for both teachers and students. A common component on rubrics is to evaluate the text's organization. The guiding question of "is this text well organized?" can be answered by looking at the theme/rheme patterns, cohesion patterns and the types of clauses and how they are combined (Fang & Wang, 2011). In the context of this study, the main language features that will be addressed are organization, elaboration and the author's opinion, while the content that will be measured is the students' abilities to find theme, summarize a text and make inferences about the novel *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. Some guiding questions that may be used on the rubric for this assignment include "is my writing organized and easy to follow?" as measured by the use of Theme/Rheme, and "did I provide multiple reasons for my opinion?" as measured by the use of elaboration. Additional guiding questions and example rubrics will be provided in the methods section of this thesis. Analyzing student work this way is time-consuming, but for English language learners, particularly long-term English language learners, the value in this process is strong. Teachers are often able to identify when students are writing below grade level, but they cannot usually pinpoint why the student is failing to meet standards.

This process of using functional language analysis provides valuable insight into the types of errors that students are making and how those errors impact other parts of the writing process. By pinpointing the errors, teachers can make a plan with the student for next steps to address their personal writing needs.

Teachers and students both need to know how writing is improving and what next steps need to be taken in order to continue to gain literacy skills in English. Evaluating student work using a rubric that is more focused on functional language usage as opposed to providing vague feedback that is not specific to a genre is one way to ensure that everyone is clear on the growth that has been made and the next steps that need to be taken.

Areas for Further Study

This literature review synthesized information from different fields, including writing pedagogy, second language acquisition and Systemic Functional Linguistics to better understand how the gaps in English language learners' metalinguistic understanding have come to be. The teaching/learning cycle marks a significant shift from the current methods of writing instruction for many classrooms (Spycher, 2017) as does the increased emphasis on explicitly teaching writing at the secondary level (Fang, 2008). While the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics and the teaching/learning cycle has been studied in a variety of educational contexts (Aguirre-Munoz et al, 2009; Brisk, 2015; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Humphrey & Macnaught, 2016), the approach has not been studied when it is used in conjunction with other instructional strategies, such as Motley's (2016) *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* and the Assessment for Learning strategies designed by Chapuis (2014). Analyzing the efficacy

of the teaching/learning cycle as other strategies that are successful with long-term English language learners has the potential to create curricular guidelines that can close the pervasive achievement gap between English language learners and non-English language learners. The research methodology based off of the above research will address the questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

Conclusion

Meeting the writing needs of English language learners requires a wide range of factors to be taken into account. Understanding the current approaches that are used to teach writing, particularly at the secondary level identified the areas that need to be improved upon. Many classrooms do provide some support for struggling writers, but these supports often act as band-aids to help students through an assignment without addressing the deeper gaps in understanding. Understanding how English language learners feel about writing and how they acquire the language, particularly the interplay between speaking and writing skills, is important for identifying some of the unique challenges that students face. Within the larger context of English language learners, Long-Term English language learners are an often unnoticed population that has needs that differ from more recently arrived English language learners. Systemic Functional

Linguistics is the approach that provides the most structure for talking about how language is used in context and can be a powerful tool in building metalinguistic understanding for students. Systemic Functional Linguistics can address any aspect of language, but for the purposes of this study, Theme/Rheme was highlighted as the areas of focus for this study. The application of the teaching/learning cycle brings to life the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics by providing students and teachers a chance to delve into the inner workings of a genre of writing.

This chapter provided both the rationale for changing writing instructional practices to meet the needs of English language learners. In chapter three the methodology that will be used to examine the efficacy of the metalinguistic building teaching/learning cycle in a 7th grade sheltered language arts classroom will be discussed. A mixed-methods approach will be used to both quantitatively and qualitatively assess the effects of direct instruction on Theme/Rheme. A baseline of student writing will be determined through the use of an uncoached writing sample, which will then be analyzed for the use of Theme/Rheme and elaboration. A teacher-created rubric will also be used to assign a grade to the writing sample. Then, the teaching/learning cycle will begin as the class focuses on literary analysis writing in response to the book *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. At the conclusion of the unit, students will be given a post-test that will also be analyzed for the usage of Theme/Rheme and elaboration and growth between the two samples will be measured. The same rubric will be used to assign a grade to the student writing samples. Chapter three will also provide more context around the students and school district in which this study will take place.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Chapter Three Overview

Chapter two outlined many ideas about how to improve writing outcomes for English language learners, but assessing the quality of a given approach is a crucial step in ensuring that the research questions

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

are fully explored. No single teaching strategy has all of the solutions for helping students develop a deep metalinguistic understanding, but the teaching/learning cycle, *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* and *Assessment for Learning* all have strong ideas that support English language learners.

Setting and Participants

The study took place within a suburban school district with 6,000 students enrolled district-wide. The district has one high school, one combined intermediate and middle school and four elementary schools. One of the elementary schools is a Spanish Immersion school where some students who are heritage Spanish speakers are enrolled. At the secondary level, there is an option for heritage Spanish speakers without print literacy in Spanish to enroll in a heritage Spanish course, and there is an option for students who have print literacy in Spanish to take a select number of science and

language arts credits in Spanish. At this time, bilingual instruction is not available in any other language. English language learners currently make up 12% of the overall district population. The current English language learner program model utilizes English as the primary language of instruction. At the elementary level, the majority of EL instruction is provided in either a pull-out or co-taught model, and at the secondary level, the primary support is either sheltered instruction or English language development courses that are offered for elective credit.

The middle school in which this study is taking place has a free and reduced lunch rate of 34.6%. Schoolwide, 60.4% of students are meeting state reading standards, as measured by the MCA-III. The EL student population is 10.1% of the total student population. Additionally, 30.9% of English language learners are meeting their annual expected growth, as measured by the North Star Report Card (2018).

The participant pool for this study included 7 students who are 7th graders who are enrolled in a sheltered English language arts class. The class is designed to both teach 7th grade language arts standards while also developing students' English language skills in the four modalities of speaking, listening, reading and writing. All of the students in the participant pool are considered Long-Term English language learners as they have received EL services for seven or more years.

After the recruiting process, one student's family granted consent to participate in the research. The participant for this case study is a 7th grade male with a home language of Spanish. He has received EL services for six years and has not yet demonstrated English proficiency. He has received inconsistent EL instruction over the course of his schooling, including years where he received no direct EL instruction and other years

where he received pull-out instruction. He also participates in a Spanish language arts class.

Human Subject Research

This study was conducted in a normal educational setting and therefore falls under the “exempt” category of International Review Board standards. Consent forms were sent home to the participant pool as required by the International Review Board. Since the participants in this study are under 18, protection of the identities of students through the use of pseudonyms and the omission of any personally identifying information will be used to ensure the privacy of the participants. The methodology of this curriculum addressed the core standards associated with the novel study of *The Outsiders*, therefore students did not miss any content instruction as a result of participating in this study. The writing samples that gathered for analysis were completed as assignments for the course and did not require participants to take on a workload that was greater than that of an average language arts class in the school.

Research Design

Since writing is a complex task, a convergent mixed-methods approach was used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data for this case study. Participants engaged in an uncoached writing prompt, which was analyzed using a rubric to quantify the quality of writing. Then, the same writing sample was qualitatively analyzed by breaking down the noun groups and tracing the Theme/Rheme pattern throughout the paragraph. Then, students engaged in the teaching/learning cycle, to develop a better understanding of the use of elaboration and Theme/Rheme in literary analysis. At the conclusion of the unit, students completed another writing sample. The final writing samples were assessed

using the same rubric and was also assessed to determine if students made significant language growth in the areas of Theme/Rheme and elaboration. Additional discussion in subsequent chapters will reflect more deeply on the connections between both sets of data and how the results either confirm or contradict one another.

The urgency surrounding the research question has led this study to adapt a pragmatic worldview through the design of the curriculum and data analysis process. Studies with pragmatic views seek to find answers to problems through analyzing practical approaches and utilizing mixed methods research to find answers. Pragmatism allows for this study to have more flexibility in its approaches of data analysis by analyzing the same samples with different methods. Additionally, pragmatism aligns with the reality that this study will be completed in a classroom where students are impacted by broader social, historical and political contexts that may influence the results of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The ultimate goal of this study is to take the relevant issue of English language learners not receiving writing instruction that meets their needs and finding a viable solution to this issue.

An equity lens was applied to the construction of the research question and methods of this study. In an increasingly global society, the importance of students developing strong communication skills cannot be overemphasized. When English language learners fail to receive explicit writing instruction that is designed for their needs, they do not just fail a course. They leave school lacking the skills they need to be college and career ready. The ultimate goal of this study is to identify methodology that can be widely implemented in secondary classrooms to provide the support that English language learners need to be successful not only in their educational pursuits, but in their

career and social lives as well. Oftentimes, EL instruction or remedial courses that Long-Term English language learners are often placed in do not provide the rigorous instruction necessary to close the achievement gap between English language learners and their English proficient peers (Kim & Garcia, 2014), therefore, in order to maintain equitable instruction for English language learners, an added emphasis on ensuring that the curriculum assessed in this study was rigorous, linked to grade-level standards and scaffolded to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners.

Research Procedure

The instructional design of this research is rooted in the teaching/learning cycle, as described by Brisk (2015) and Spycher (2017). Additionally, features of the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework (Motley, 2016) will be interspersed in the instructional cycle to allow students a chance to leverage their stronger oracy skills to improve their academic reading and writing outcomes. The *Assessment for Learning* strategies (Chapuis, 2014) will also be incorporated as students are asked to grade examples of strong work, set goals based on formative assessments and use rubrics to score their own work.

Negotiating Field

The first step of the teaching/learning cycle is “negotiating field”. In this step, students are formatively assessed on their prior knowledge of a given genre. After identifying the genre of focus, the teacher brainstorms a list of grammatical features that are commonly found in the genre. This list is not designed as a list of skills that will be taught in isolation, but instead serves as a list of features the teacher will want to pay attention to in the next step (Richards & Repken, 2014). Students may already have a

command of some of the grammatical functions on the list, but there may be concepts that students are not using correctly. Background knowledge is also built through exposure to high quality texts that exemplify the genre (Pavlak & Hodgson-Drysdale2017).

In this first step of this teaching/learning cycle, the research participant's understanding of the argumentative genre was assessed by asking the student to complete an un-coached writing sample to see the prior knowledge the student had with the writing of argumentative texts. The pre-test writing prompt was completed after students read the first 15 pages of the novel. The participant answered the question: "Ponyboy likes to watch movies to escape the reality of his own life. Why do you think he wants to escape his life? What specific events from the book can you use to support your claim?". The prompt was designed to elicit a response that would encourage the use of the claim, evidence and reasoning paragraph model that students used as 6th graders and on a previous assignment earlier in the year. However, their previous claim, evidence and reasoning paragraphs were heavily scaffolded through the use of paragraph frames and word banks that provided appropriate transition words to move between the components of the paragraph. In order to truly gauge the baseline understanding of this response style, students were not given a graphic organizer, sentence stems or any word banks to support their writing. The paragraph was assessed using the rubric designed for the study, and the use of Theme/Rheme to organize ideas and the prevalence of expanded noun phrases was qualitatively assessed.

The Assessment for Learning strategies designed by Chapuis (2015) discuss the importance of students understanding their current level of understanding and developing

a plan for the next steps. After the researcher graded the paragraphs using the rubric, students examined the areas of the rubric where they did well and areas where they did not do as well. Their next step was to set a goal that they would focus on for the remainder of The Outsiders unit. The participant in this study set a goal around incorporating evidence from the text in his responses.

Following the initial assessment, the purpose of the genre was set. Oracy has been shown to improve writing outcomes for Long-Term English Language Learners (Olson, 2014), therefore the first step to building a deeper understanding of the field of argumentative texts was to engage the students in a discussion where they were asked to defend their opinions. Students were asked a series of open-ended questions related to the text, such as “Do you think criminals can be heroes?”, and were asked to either agree or disagree with the statement. Students moved to opposite sides of the room depending on their response and were given a chance to formulate their opinions with the classmates who answered the question the same way. Students were given speaking frames such as “I agree with that statement because _____” or “I disagree with that statement because _____”. Then, the groups chose one student to be their spokesperson to share their opinion with the group that had the opposite opinion. For this particular exercise, students did not need to practice adding textual evidence to their response as some of the questions were related to parts of the book they had not yet read.

Teachers must also help students understand the intended audience for the writing they will be exploring as that will lead into discussions about tone and register. Reading and writing are skills that work together and are also typically underdeveloped in English language learners (Menken & Kleyn, 2010), therefore, during this initial stage of the

teaching/learning cycle where students are required to engage in reading of texts that exemplify a genre, some students may feel as though they lack the academic skills necessary to tackle the assignment. Olsen's (2014) tenants of teaching Long-term English language learners demands that LT-ELLs have access to rigorous and relevant curriculum. In order to provide students meaningful access to grade-level curriculum while still maintaining comprehensibility, the Talk, Read, Talk, Write strategy, as designed by Motley (2016) was included as a scaffold for the teaching/learning cycle. The Talk, Read, Talk, Write approach was first used during the negotiating the field portion of the teaching/learning cycle as the students formulated their opinions on a topic that was highly relevant to their lives but was not related to the book. Additionally, the concept of tone and register was discussed as students were to design their writing piece to persuade the principal of the school that the school should either keep the same start time or start later based off of their personal opinion and textual evidence from an article.

The class was first asked to talk to a classmate about whether or not they thought school started too early. This first portion of the Talk, Read, Talk, Write lesson was designed specifically to allow for all students to be able to provide an opinion as it only relied on their personal experiences to fully participate. Then, students read a brief article that discussed the pros and cons of a later start-time. Students engaged in independent reading for about 10 minutes. As they read, they were asked to highlight ideas that aligned with their thinking. Following the reading, students created groups of three and discussed the evidence that aligned with their original opinion. Then, as a group, students chose a point of view and decided which piece of evidence would be most persuasive to

the principal of the school. As a group, they completed an exit ticket where they shared their stance and their convincing piece of evidence. As the researcher circulated through the room during the student discussion piece, students identified that the principal would not be persuaded by simple complaints about the early start time, but might be more likely to pay attention to the evidence from the article that related to test score improvements or saving the school money.

Joint Deconstruction

The joint deconstruction stage allowed students to use the background knowledge they developed during the negotiating field process to delve into deeper discussions about linguistic choices and text organization (Spycher, 2017). This phase of the cycle also allowed students to start to use the graphic organizer that was provided for the remainder of the unit. The major anchor activity for the joint deconstruction portion of the teaching/learning cycle involved students examining a teacher created text and using the graphic organizer to find the claim, textual evidence and supporting reasons. Students also used the rubric for the unit to score the example and to provide feedback on how parts of the paragraph could be edited to improve the clarity and level of detail in the writing. Additionally, the students practiced their ability to locate and discuss the merits or shortcomings of claims, textual evidence or reasoning through the use of warmups and exit tickets.

Joint Construction

In this study, students answered the prompt “Do you think the Greasers and the Socs should still have the rumble or should they solve their problems another way?”. The class was given a chance to first brainstorm their ideas before joining a group of seven

students to jointly construct a prompt. The researcher asked prompting questions, such as “How should we start this paragraph?” or “What part comes next?”, but otherwise the teacher did not rephrase the student responses and wrote down the responses that the group provided. If another student wanted to elaborate on what was already said, the researcher rewrote the response or edited the response if the group felt it was an appropriate revision.

After the students jointly created their response, they used a rubric to grade the collaborative response. Based off of the feedback from the rubric, the students reconvened to revise their paragraph. Major changes included rephrasing the claim sentence to add more specific detail to the claim sentence (switching out the word “they” for “The Greasers from the book “The Outsiders”) and adding specific page numbers and events to support the reasoning. The decision to add more detail to the first clause of the response was decided after students identified the clauses of their jointly constructed text and identified the Theme the paragraph referred back to most frequently.

Independent Practice

Once students have had opportunities to construct a text with the support of their teacher and peers, it is time for them to apply their learning by independently constructing their own text. The final prompt for this unit was “What did you learn from the book *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton? Be sure to include evidence from the text in your response”. Students were allowed to use the mentor texts and collaboratively created texts as a guide for their own work, and were given a full explanation and access to the rubric the teacher used to assess the writing (Chapuis, 2014). To keep students focused on the text organization and language features that are being assessed, the teacher can

provide guiding questions for the students to use as they re-read their own writing (Spycher, 2017).

Research Materials

In this study, a rubric of 15 possible points was used to assess the pre-test, the mentor texts that are created throughout the teaching/learning cycle and the post-test writing sample. The rubric was constructed specifically for this unit, but was influenced by Brisk's (2015) rubric for assessing persuasive writing. The writing rubric for this assignment assesses five separate focus areas of student work and assigns a score from zero to three. Students will be assessed on their usage of a topic sentence, which will set the Theme for the Theme/Rheme analysis. They will also be assessed on their ability to provide textual evidence and explain their choice of evidence, which is a chance to assess both Theme/Rheme and potentially the use of expanded noun phrases. The area of providing multiple reasons to support a claim will be used for the analysis of Theme/Rheme progression and noun phrase expansion. Cohesive paragraph structure will also address students' use of Theme/Rheme, and the final category of word choice will assess the use of expanded noun phrases, as well as Theme/Rheme by analyzing how students use synonyms of referential pronouns to refer to the Theme. Fang and Wang (2011) argued against the use of rubrics as a sole factor for assessing student writing and suggested the addition of guiding questions to help students self-assess whether or not their work met the standards on the rubric. Guiding questions that are phrased in student-friendly language have also been added to this rubric to better facilitate the peer-revision conversations and self-assessment.

Table 1

Claim, Evidence, Reasoning Paragraph Rubric

<u>Score</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>“Did I tell my reader my opinion right away?”</p>	I did not include a topic sentence.	My topic sentence is not related to the rest of my paragraph.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim but does not provide lots of details.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim and provides relevant details.
<p>Giving Multiple Reasons for my Claim</p> <p>“Did I explain how my evidence supports my claim?”</p> <p>“Did I make connections between my own opinion and the text?”</p>	I did not provide multiple reasons for my claim. There was no connection between my reasoning and my claim.	I provided one reason that supported my evidence, but my other pieces of evidence were not related. My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.	I provided multiple reasons that supported my evidence. My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.	I provided multiple reasons that support both my claim and my evidence. My reasons helped the reader understand my opinion.
<p>Cohesive Paragraph Structure</p> <p>“Did I use connecting words to move between ideas?”</p> <p>“Did I refer back to my claim to help my reader see connections between my ideas?”</p>	My paragraph did not have a main idea. There were no transitions between ideas, which made it difficult to understand. The connections between my claim, evidence and reasoning were not clear.	My paragraph had a main idea, but it was not clear. My paragraph switched between ideas without transitions, making it difficult to understand. The connections between the claims, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.	My paragraph has a clear main idea. My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea. The connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.	My paragraph had a clear main idea. My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea. I clearly showed created connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning of my paragraph.
<p>Word Choice</p> <p>“Did I use words that precisely describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use a variety of words to start my sentences and to describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use words to provide additional details about my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I write my response the way that a scholar would write?”</p>	I have made more than 5 word choice mistakes, which makes my paragraph hard to understand. I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas. I used lots of slang, emojis or other things that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.	I have made 3-5 word choice mistakes that make my paragraph harder to read. I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas. I included some slang or other words that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.	I mostly use words that clearly communicate my ideas, but I made one or two word choice mistakes. I used some words to provide additional details about my ideas. My word choices are mostly appropriate for academic writing.	I use words that clearly communicate my ideas. I use words to provide additional details about my ideas. My word choices are appropriate for academic writing.

Evidence from the Text	I did not include any evidence for my claim.	I included evidence that is related to my claim, but it is not from the text.	I included evidence from the text, but for one or more pieces of evidence, I did not give credit to the author or give the page number.	I included multiple pieces of evidence from the text. I cited my sources by giving credit to the author and giving the page number.
“How did I back up my opinion with information from the Book?”				
“Did I give credit to the author by saying where my information came from?”				
“Does my evidence support my claim?”				

While rubrics can provide insight into the growth students make, they do not always provide insight into the specific linguistic choices that students make. This study is concerned with not just improving a student’s grade on a writing assignment, but measuring the different linguistic choices students make before and after engaging in the teaching/learning cycle. Elaboration and Theme/Rheme are two areas of focus for this study and will be based off of methodology designed by Fang and Schleppegrell (2008).

Theme/Rheme will be analyzed by tracing the development of the main theme of the paragraph to see how ideas are expanded or connected. The number of different Themes used in a writing sample will be counted to see if students are building on a single idea or introducing many different ideas without much detail. The noun phrases will also be examined to see if the student uses any description beyond the head noun to create a more detailed argument in their paragraph.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis will take place in this study. The scores from the writing rubrics for the pre and post-test writing samples will be analyzed to look for changes in scores. Additionally, the student sample will be analyzed to look for the use of expanded noun phrases in both the pre and post-test samples.

Theme/Rheme patterns will also be analyzed by tracing the use of Theme/Rheme throughout the text to look at text cohesion. In order to accomplish this, the researcher will locate the Theme that is stated in the first clause and look for how the Theme is referred to and expanded on throughout the text.

Triangulation will be used to answer the research questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

Multiple sources of data will be used to check for the effectiveness of the proposed combination of the teaching/learning cycle, *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* and *Assessment for Learning* strategies. The use of qualitative data will quantify the growth, or lack of growth the student shows in the different domains of the rubric, whereas the qualitative data from the Theme/Rheme and Noun Phrase Expansion analysis will provide a different approach to looking at growth and continued areas of need.

Table 2

Triangulation of Data

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Data Source 1:</u>	<u>Data Source 2:</u>
	12 Point Rubric	Theme/Rheme Identification
Baseline measure of Theme/Rheme usage	Researcher assessment of student writing using rubric	Identification and analysis of Theme/Rheme development
Post-Test measure of Theme/Rheme usage	Researcher assessment of student writing using rubric	Identification and analysis of Theme/Rheme development

Conclusion

Analyzing student writing both requires quantifiable data that can be tracked over time, and qualitative analysis that examines the nuances of the linguistic choices that students make. A convergent mixed methods approach will be used to answer the research questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”
 - 1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with

Assessment for Learning Strategies?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

This study aims to assess how effective the teaching/learning cycle can be when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning* strategies as well as the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework. Chapter 4 will examine the pre and post-test writing samples created by students in response to the writing prompts provided. Their samples will be analyzed using the rubric created for this unit to assess how their writing was impacted by engaging in the teaching/learning cycle. Additionally, student writing samples will be analyzed for Theme/Rheme organization patterns. Key lessons from the teaching/learning cycle will also be provided to show how the topics of Theme/Rheme and elaboration were explicitly taught throughout the unit.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The participant in this case study is a long-term English language learner enrolled in a 7th grade sheltered language arts class. Through the implementation of the teaching/learning cycle, as well as strategies from Assessment for Learning and Talk, Read, Talk, Write, an answer to the following research questions will be sought:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

The participant was given pre and post-test writing prompts to measure his development of metalinguistic understanding as they engage in a teaching/learning cycle that highlights the development of Theme/Rheme and noun-phrase expansion.

Pre-Test for Grammatical-Feature Identification (Negotiating Field)

A formative assessment on the student’s existing knowledge about writing within the argumentative genre was given. Based off of the results from the formative assessment, the student showed a need for additional support in the following areas:

1. Incorporation of textual evidence into the paragraph (see Figure 8)
2. Organization of ideas through the use of Theme/Rheme (see Figure 9)
3. Elaboration of ideas through the use of noun phrase expansion (see Figure 10).

Data from Pre-Test Writing Sample

The study participant's response to the pre-test question is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Participant's Pre-Test Writing Sample

1. "I think that ponyboy wants to escape from life
2. because his parents died
3. his parents got killed in an auto wreck.
4. And because the Socs want to jump him
5. "We get jumped by the socs"

As per the *Assessment for Learning Strategies* from Chapuis (2016), the student's response was graded with a rubric and the results were shared with the student through an informal conference to help the student assess their current level of understanding of the genre and to help them identify areas of focus for the rest of the unit.

Incorporation of Evidence from the Text

The writing sample was scored with the rubric (see Table 3 below). The highlighted boxes denote the score given in each area of the rubric. Based off of the criteria and guiding questions for each component of the rubric, the student scored a 7 out of 15. His response showed an understanding of the content required to answer the question, but his writing response did not provide the level of detail expected. He made an attempt to include evidence from the text, but did not properly cite the quote or expand on his reason for choosing the quote. Since the researcher has worked with the student previously, inter-rater reliability was used to ensure that the scores on the rubric were a fair assessment of the student's present level of understanding. The additional rater was a

licensed English as a second language teacher who has a strong background in Systemic Functional Linguistics. The researcher and the additional rater agreed on all areas of the rubric prior to the meeting to discuss the scoring.

Table 3

Pre-Test Writing Score

Scores	0	1	2	3
Topic Sentence “Did I tell my reader my opinion right away?”	I did not include a topic sentence.	My topic sentence is not related to the rest of my paragraph.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim but does not provide lots of details.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim and provides relevant details.
Giving Multiple Reasons for my Claim “Did I explain how my evidence supports my claim?” “Did I make connections between my own opinion and the text?”	I did not provide multiple reasons for my claim. There was no connection between my reasoning and my claim.	I provided one reason that supported my evidence, but my other pieces of evidence were not related. My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.	I provided multiple reasons that supported my evidence. My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.	I provided multiple reasons that support both my claim and my evidence. My reasons helped the reader understand my opinion.
Cohesive Paragraph Structure “Did I use connecting words to move between ideas?” “Did I refer back to my claim to help my reader see connections between my ideas?”	My paragraph did not have a main idea. There were no transitions between ideas, which made it difficult to understand. The connections between my claim, evidence and reasoning were not clear.	My paragraph had a main idea, but it was not clear. My paragraph switched between ideas without transitions, making it difficult to understand. The connections between the claims, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.	My paragraph has a clear main idea. My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea. The connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.	My paragraph had a clear main idea. My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea. I clearly showed created connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning of my paragraph.
Word Choice “Did I use words that precisely describe my topic?” “Did I use a variety of words to start my sentences and to describe my topic?” “Did I use words to provide additional details about my topic?”	I have made more than 5 word choice mistakes, which makes my paragraph hard to understand. I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas. I used lots of slang, emojis or other things that aren't appropriate	I have made 3-5 word choice mistakes that make my paragraph harder to read. I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas. I included some slang or other words that aren't appropriate for academic writing.	I mostly use words that clearly communicate my ideas, but I made one or two word choice mistakes. I used some words to provide additional details about my ideas. My word choices are mostly appropriate for academic writing.	I use words that clearly communicate my ideas. I use words to provide additional details about my ideas. My word choices are appropriate for academic writing.

topic?"	for academic writing.			
"Did I write my response the way that a scholar would write?"				
Evidence from the Text	I did not include any evidence for my claim.	I included evidence that is related to my claim, but it is not from the text.	I included evidence from the text, but for one or more pieces of evidence, I did not give credit to the author or give the page number.	I included multiple pieces of evidence from the text. I cited my sources by giving credit to the author and giving the page number.
"How did I back up my opinion with information from the Book?"				
"Did I give credit to the author by saying where my information came from?"				
"Does my evidence support my claim?"				

Textual Organization using Theme/Rheme

In this writing sample, two types of Theme/Rheme progression were used to connect clauses (see Figure 9). Initially, the student used the zig-zag progression as Ponyboy, the Rheme of clause one (see Figure 9) becomes the Theme of the second clause. Then, he uses a repetition of Theme to continue the discussion about Ponyboy. A new Theme is introduced in the fourth clause as "The Socs" are introduced in the paragraph. The final clause is a form of repetition of Theme since the "We" in the final clause refers to the group, the Greasers.

Figure 9

Theme/Rheme Progression in Pre-Test Writing Sample

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Rheme</u>
I	think that ponyboy wants to escape from life
(because) his	parents died
his	parents got killed in an auto wreck
(and because) the socs	want to jump him.
“We	get jumped by the socs”

The researcher’s initial assessment of the Theme/Rheme analysis indicates that there is potential for a great deal of growth within this area. The student has content understanding of why the main character wants to escape from his life, but lacks the language to coherently piece together ideas and supporting evidence. The last two clauses of the writing sample exemplify how the student is able to identify that a reason why the main characters wants to escape is because he is worried about being jumped by rival gang members. The participant also provided evidence from the text where the main character talks about being jumped, but while the evidence is off-set by quotation marks, there are no other linguistic clues, such as citing a page number or using transitional

phrases such as “In the book it says”, that lets the reader know that this is textual evidence. The student would benefit from explicit instruction in how to use Theme/Rheme to connect his ideas together.

Pre-Test Use of Noun Phrase Expansion

The noun phrases in this initial writing sample are not complex (see Figure 10). Ponyboy, the most commonly used noun in this paragraph was not given an extra description. “The parents”, another commonly used noun phrase in this paragraph did have some additional information provided in the clause “his parents got killed in an auto wreck”. The Socs, the final prominent noun in the writing sample, has an article attached to the noun, but no further information is provided. At the conclusion of this analysis, it is clear that the student would benefit from additional instruction in the area of using expanded noun phrases to provide more detail about his ideas.

Figure 10

Noun Phrase Expansion in Pre-Test Writing Sample

<u>Frequently Occurring Nouns</u>	<u>Expansion</u>
Parents	His parents
Socs	The Socs

Through the analysis of the pre-test writing sample produced by the case study participant, three areas of focus were identified for the teaching intervention:

1. Incorporation of textual evidence into the paragraph (see Figure 8)

2. Organization of ideas through the use of Theme/Rheme (see Figure 9)
3. Elaboration of ideas through the use of noun phrase expansion (see Figure 10)

Student Goal Setting

After the researcher finished grading the writing sample, the student examined the areas of the rubric where he did well and areas where he did not do well. The participant in this study self-identified and set two goals for the remainder of *The Outsiders* unit:

1. To incorporate two pieces of evidence into his responses
2. Provide page numbers for the evidence

Teacher Intervention: Negotiating Field

The participant was asked a series of open-ended questions related to the text, such as “Do you think criminals can be heroes?”, and either agreed or disagreed with the statement. Students moved to opposite sides of the room depending on their response and were given a chance to formulate their opinions with the classmates who answered the question the same way. The participant was given speaking frames such as “I agree with that statement because _____” or “I disagree with that statement because _____”. Then, the groups chose one student to be their spokesperson to share their opinion with the group that had the opposite opinion. For this particular exercise, it was not expected that textual evidence would be provided for the responses as some of the questions were related to parts of the book they had not yet read. The participant in this study was highly engaged as illustrated by responding to all of the questions and providing responses and counter-arguments to the prompts. He utilized the provided sentence frames for his

responses and also expanded on ideas by using his own background knowledge to answer questions.

Joint Deconstruction of Texts

Once the participant was exposed to strong examples within the genre of persuasive writing, the emphasis moved towards joint deconstruction of model texts. This stage of the teaching/learning cycle provided the participant an opportunity to examine the components included in a model of a strong claim, evidence and reasoning paragraph, and served as an introduction to the graphic organizer that the student utilized for the remaining writing assignments in this unit. The teacher-researcher created an example response and participant, was asked to fill in the graphic organizer with the claim, evidence and reasoning that was provided in the model text. The participant was able to identify the key components of the response with minimal prompting from the researcher.

An informal formative assessment was administered to measure the student's prior knowledge of verbs, clauses and coordinating conjunctions. The participant in this study had prior knowledge about verbs that have the functional purpose of actions, thinking, and saying, but did not remember that verbs can fall into the functional categories of relating or sensing. The idea of clauses was new information for him. Mini-lessons around these categories of verbs were given in order to build the participant's capacity to identify the use of these verbs within the contexts of *The Outsiders* and in his own writing samples. Following the mini-lessons, he was able to identify the key verbs in his writing with 85% accuracy and identify the clauses in his own writing with 75% accuracy.

Joint Construction of Texts

The joint construction portion of the teaching/learning cycle allowed the student to implement some of his learning around giving opinions, utilizing a graphic organizer, as well as responding in complete sentences while still having access to the support of a teacher. The teacher-researcher in this portion of the cycle acted as a facilitator to help the student move from oral to written language, and to ask guiding questions about language choice and organization (Pavlak & Hodgson-Drysdale, 2017). The response was constructed solely by the student in this class and the teacher acted as the scribe for their ideas. The case-study participant came to the joint construction session prepared with ideas of how he would answer the question “Do you think the Greasers and the Socs should have the rumble, or, should they settle their differences another way?”, but he did not actively share his ideas with the group. While the researcher was not able to identify why the student did not share his ideas with the group, it was not uncommon for the case study participant to sit back and allow other students to direct the conversation.

Afterwards, when the class was asked to give their collaborative response a score, *he did provide feedback using the provided rubric and was able to identify things that worked well in the collaborative response* (“there was textual evidence with page numbers”, “the paragraph flowed well”) *as well as areas of weakness* (“the topic sentence was vague and somewhat unrelated to the rest of the text”). With minimal prompting, the student shared with the class that *the collaborative topic sentence needed to more clearly identify the participants* as “The Greasers and the Socs” instead of starting the topic sentence with the word “they”.

Independent Practice

As the study participant moved towards independently writing his final paragraph, informal exit tickets were collected at the end of most classes to assess growth in the areas of Theme/Rheme progression, noun phrase expansion and content understanding of the text. The exit tickets from the earlier parts of the unit were sentence fragments or simple sentences without much detail. For example, one exit ticket response that was written before the joint construction portion of the teaching/learning cycle read “I think it meant that stay stay gold for a be careful and safe”, which included some of the vague wording that was found in the jointly constructed text. However, the student’s exit ticket response after the joint construction portion of the teaching/learning cycle read “I think that dally was sad and kind of depressed that Johnny died. He was heartbroken. I think people will remember him by his kindness and the way he was”. This response made use of a more clear topic sentence and a stronger Theme/Rheme pattern which referred back to the Rheme of the first sentence.

The post-test writing sample was “What did you learn from *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton? What evidence from the text supports your idea?”. The participant was given a graphic organizer to help him organize his thoughts. The participant created his rough draft and met in a group of three to share his work. With his group members, the participant discussed the following prompts: “What is your claim sentence? Who or what is your sentence about? What are your reasons? What is your evidence? Do you have a specific page number that backs up your reason?”. After the discussion, the participant was able to identify that *he had a claim sentence* with a topic of “the book” and that *his sentence was related to the rest of his response*. The participant in this study *was able to*

identify that he only had one piece of evidence and needed to find an additional quote from the book.

The next day, after engaging in a mini-lesson about increasing the level of detail in his sentences and editing model sentences as a class, he picked a sentence from his paragraph and looked at how to make it more descriptive and precise. The student highlighted the sentence from his draft that read “it’s like you apply for a job and you don’t get it and it’s too bad because you really needed the job”. He identified that the sentence was not closely related to his response and re-wrote the sentence to “It’s not fair because Darry has to take a job and not go to college.” While he was able to identify that the sentence was unclear, he did not expand any noun phrases, as he was able to do in the whole-group assignment.

On the last day of the writing assignment, the student graded a teacher-created example with the rubric before using the same rubric to give their own paragraph a grade. Guiding questions were provided to help him unpack the meaning of each component of the rubric. The student gave himself a score of 2 in all five of the areas. When asked if there was anything he would like to change, he said that he was done with the paragraph.

Post-Test Writing Sample

Incorporation of Evidence from the Text

At the end of the unit, the student responded to the prompt “What did you learn from *The Outsiders*? Be sure to give two examples from the book to support your opinion.” (see Figure 11):

Figure 11

Participant's Post-Test Writing Sample

1. In the book The Outsiders I learned
2. that life is not fair.
3. On page 3 we learn
4. Ponyboy's parents die in a car crash.
5. It's not fair
6. Darry has to take a job
7. and not go to college.
8. On page 11 we find out
9. that Johnny's parents hit him a lot.
10. I think
11. the book is not fair
12. because of what happened in the book like how ponyboy parents died.

The participant's final writing sample was graded using the same rubric (see Table 4). His final score improved from a 7 out of 15 points on the pre-test sample to a final score of 11 out of 15 possible points. Growth was seen in the areas of: providing multiple reasons to support a claim, word choice and creating a cohesive paragraph. Beyond the improvement in score, the student's writing stamina increased from the pretest to the post-test sample as evidenced by the amount of writing the student was able to produce.

Once again, in order to control for bias, the final writing sample was scored by the researcher and the same additional rater who scored the pre-test writing sample. Before discussion, the two raters agreed on two of the areas of the rubric and after discussion, the raters were able to reach 100% agreement on the score of the final writing sample.

Table 4

Post-Test Writing Score

<u>Scores</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
<p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>“Did I tell my reader my opinion right away?”</p>	<p>I did not include a topic sentence.</p>	<p>My topic sentence is not related to the rest of my paragraph.</p>	<p>My topic sentence clearly states my claim but does not provide lots of details.</p>	<p>My topic sentence clearly states my claim and provides relevant details.</p>
<p>Giving Multiple Reasons for my Claim</p> <p>“Did I explain how my evidence supports my claim?”</p> <p>“Did I make connections between my own opinion and the text?”</p>	<p>I did not provide multiple reasons for my claim.</p> <p>There was no connection between my reasoning and my claim.</p>	<p>I provided one reason that supported my evidence, but my other pieces of evidence were not related.</p> <p>My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.</p>	<p>I provided multiple reasons that supported my evidence.</p> <p>My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.</p>	<p>I provided multiple reasons that support both my claim and my evidence.</p> <p>My reasons helped the reader understand my opinion.</p>
<p>Cohesive Paragraph Structure</p> <p>“Did I use connecting words to move between ideas?”</p> <p>“Did I refer back to my claim to help my reader see connections between my ideas?”</p>	<p>My paragraph did not have a main idea.</p> <p>There were no transitions between ideas, which made it difficult to understand.</p> <p>The connections between my claim, evidence and reasoning were not clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph had a main idea, but it was not clear.</p> <p>My paragraph switched between ideas without transitions, making it difficult to understand.</p> <p>The connections between the claims, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph has a clear main idea.</p> <p>My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea.</p> <p>The connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph had a clear main idea.</p> <p>My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea.</p> <p>I clearly showed created connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning of my paragraph.</p>
<p>Word Choice</p> <p>“Did I use words that precisely describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use a variety of words to start my sentences and to describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use words to provide additional details about my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I write my response the way that a scholar would write?”</p>	<p>I have made more than 5 word choice mistakes, which makes my paragraph hard to understand.</p> <p>I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>I used lots of slang, emojis or other things that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I have made 3-5 word choice mistakes that make my paragraph harder to read.</p> <p>I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>I included some slang or other words that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I mostly use words that clearly communicate my ideas, but I made one or two word choice mistakes.</p> <p>I used some words to provide additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>My word choices are mostly appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I use words that clearly communicate my ideas.</p> <p>I use words to provide additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>My word choices are appropriate for academic writing.</p>

Evidence from the Text	I did not include any evidence for my claim.	I included evidence that is related to my claim, but it is not from the text.	I included evidence from the text, but for one or more pieces of evidence, I did not give credit to the author or give the page number.	I included multiple pieces of evidence from the text. I cited my sources by giving credit to the author and giving the page number.
“How did I back up my opinion with information from the Book?”				
“Did I give credit to the author by saying where my information came from?”				
“Does my evidence support my claim?”				

After engaging in the teaching/learning cycle, the student did not increase his score in the area of providing evidence from the text as he did not use direct quotes from the text as was modeled in the previous stages of the teaching/learning cycle. However, his level of sophistication in using textual evidence, including his use of page numbers to introduce the quote, was noted by the researcher.

Theme/Rheme Progression

In the final writing sample, the participant used seven unique Themes: the book, life, pages, Ponyboy, Darry, Johnny and I (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

Theme/Rheme Progression in Post-Test Writing Sample

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Rheme</u>
In the book The Outsiders I	learned
that life	is not fair.
On page 3 we	learn
Ponyboy's parents	die in a car crash.
It	's not fair
Darry	has to take a job
(Darry)	and not go to college.
On page 11 we	find out
that Johnny's parents	hit him a lot.
I	think
the book	is not fair
because of what happened in the book	like how ponyboy parents died.

The theme of the first clause identifies the text that the response is based off of and the Rheme restates the prompt the student is responding to. In the second clause, the Theme identifies the claim that the student is making and the Rheme provides the rest of his opinion. This zig-zag Theme/Rheme pattern builds the argument that is the basis for the rest of the paragraph. The Themes of “the book” and “pages are” closely related as they both refer back to the text the student is writing about. In the fourth clause, “it” is

introduced as the Theme to discuss the textual evidence of Darry having to take a job and not go to college as evidence that the book's lesson is that life is not fair. The zig-zag theme continues to introduce new information about the sacrifices that Darry made. The Theme of clause eight refers back to the first clause as it introduces the next piece of evidence. Clause 9 continues the zig-zag theme as it builds off of what the readers learn about the unfair life events that the character Johnny faced. The final three clauses summarize the major points of the paragraph by referring back to the book in the Theme and using the Rheme to remind the readers of an example of life not being fair for the characters.

The use of Theme/Rheme in this writing sample shows an improvement in text cohesion, particularly in the example of how the student uses similar Themes and Rhemes to start and end his writing sample. There are also attempts to use Theme/Rheme to build on the evidence from the text. While the level of detail may not be as sophisticated as the grade-level expectations require, there is a marked improvement in the connection between ideas.

Noun Phrase Expansion in the Post-Test Sample

There was no evidence of growth in the use of noun phrase expansion in the student's writing. In the first clause, the participant writes "In the book *The Outsiders*", which does include an article (the), a head noun (book) and an additional noun which answers the question of "which one?" (*The Outsiders*). He later uses the phrase "Ponyboy's parents", which includes an additional noun (Ponyboy's) to describe the head noun (parents).

Findings and Reflections

The participant produced a writing sample at the beginning of the unit where he scored a total of 47% as measured by the rubric for this study. He made some use of zig-zag and referential Theme/Rheme patterns, but his short text did not allow for many connections between ideas. Additionally, he did not utilize expanded noun phrases beyond the use of articles alongside the head nouns in a clause. At the end of the unit, the student scored 73% on the rubric and he was able to increase his writing stamina by producing a longer text. His use of Theme/Rheme was still a combination of zig-zag and referential Theme/Rheme patterns, but his use of patterns created a stronger sense of cohesion in the text, particularly between the first and final clauses.

The data from this study showed an improvement in the student's writing as measured on the rubric domains of providing multiple reasons to support a claim, cohesive paragraph structure and word choice, and a more intentional use of Theme/Rheme progressions in their final writing sample. The student did not demonstrate significant growth in the area of elaboration, the use of topic sentences or providing evidence from the text (see Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of Pre and Post-Test Rubric Scores

	<u>Pre-Test Score</u>	<u>Post-Test Score</u>
Giving Multiple Reasons for My Claim	1	3
Cohesive Paragraph Structure	1	2
Word Choice	1	2

Topic Sentence	2	2
Evidence from the Text	2	2

The rubric for this unit helped to identify some areas where the student made growth and areas where he did not show growth. The participant made significant growth with his ability to give multiple and related reasons to support his claim. While some of the supporting sentences in the post-test sample lacked the clarity of a more sophisticated writer, he was still able to produce multiple reasons. Throughout the unit's formative assessments, it became clear that the participant's writing stamina improved, which was evident in the final writing sample. The *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* (Motley, 2016) framework argues that students need to engage in short writing activities every day in order to increase their use of genre-specific linguistic features and to build the stamina required to undertake longer writing assignments. Outside of the writing specific portions of this unit plan, the case study participant was asked to respond to short exit ticket prompts that were related to the in-class reading from *The Outsiders* and the discussions he participated in with his classmates. As mentioned earlier in the chapter this daily writing practice helped the student increase *his writing stamina from sentence fragments to multiple related sentences in response to a prompt* over the course of the 6 week unit.

Another area where growth was made was within the domain of paragraph cohesion. Similar to the linguistic choices that the student made in his introduction sentence, his final writing piece showed a much deeper understanding of how to intentionally use Theme/Rheme to link together ideas. The definitions of Theme/Rheme from Humphrey, Droga and Feez (2012) were taught throughout the unit as ways to see how ideas can be linked together. Additionally, Chanquoy (2009) discussed how Theme/Rheme can be used to help students edit their own writing as it provides the students with a framework to see if their writing stays on-topic. At the end of the unit, the student was *able to identify the Theme of his topic sentence* and was also able to *identify a sentence that was weaker and in need of revision* through a Theme/Rheme analysis of his own writing.

There was growth in the word choice domain. The student more carefully edited his final writing sample, but both samples lacked the elaboration that the rubric targeted. The student used words correctly and used words appropriate for academic writing, but he did not make the next step towards expanding his ideas to create more compelling arguments. The research of Lin (2015) identified word choice as an area of writing that produces anxiety for those writing in their non-native language, and emphasized the importance of modeling the thought-process of choosing words and providing students an opportunity to practice this skill with the support of others. The student from this case study was able to practice revising a collaboratively written draft where *he identified parts of the paragraph that were vague* and was also able to *re-word one of the sentences in his draft to make it more clear*.

The student's understanding of how to use evidence from the text remained the same from the pre and post-test samples. He was able to include evidence from the text, but did not fully introduce where he found the quote or event in the story. Brisk (2015) indicated that students must have multiple opportunities to practice writing within a genre. Since the argumentative genre, particularly the claim, evidence and reasoning paragraphs students needed to write in this unit are challenging, the class was presented with multiple opportunities to deconstruct and jointly construct a paragraph that utilized the norms of incorporating textual evidence. Additionally, Chapuis (2014) argues that students need to have opportunities to use the rubric for the assignment to grade examples of strong and weak work. The case study participant engaged in the activities suggested by Chapuis and Brisk, and while the student did improve his ability to *introduce a quote using the page numbers*, he did not fully meet the expectation of using a direct quote from the text, as modeled in the teacher created and collaboratively created models.

While the participant's topic sentence score remained the same, there was still some growth in his ability to craft a topic sentence. The participant's use of clauses become more intentional in the post-test sample, especially since he included a concluding sentence in his post test sample that referred back to the clauses he used in his topic sentence. Christie and Dreyfus (2007) analyzed texts that were identified as being successful by classroom teachers and found that these successful texts made use of Macro-Themes that were overarching throughout the text and Hyper-Themes that connected supporting reasons together. In order to teach these Macro and Hyper-Themes, Christie and Dreyfus suggested the joint deconstruction and joint construction portions of the teaching/learning cycle as ways to show students how to create these Themes in their

own writing. The student in this study *was able to identify the lack of a Macro-Theme in the jointly constructed text and was able to mimic the creation of a Macro-Theme in his own writing.*

Overall, the case study participant showed a deeper understanding of how to create a cohesive text and he improved his writing stamina by expanding from an initial response that contained 35 total words to a final response that contained 72 words. The rubric did not detect the slight improvement in his ability to create a topic sentence that closely related to his conclusion sentence, but the analysis of the Theme/Rheme progression that was completed in chapter four was able to detect the changes the student made. Elaboration was the main area where there was little growth. The student used the correct words with their intended meaning, but did not show growth towards including more descriptive language to create a more compelling argument.

The examination of the language demands moved beyond just identifying the academic language demands of the unit as vocabulary challenges and also incorporated syntax and discourse level challenges in the writing prompts that students were expected to answer (Badger & White, 2000). Spycher (2017) also advocated for the importance of incorporating explicit linguistic instruction into secondary-level classrooms, and the grammatical instruction that was aligned with the content standards of this language arts unit indeed improve the student's ability to improve his text organization patterns. Chanquoy (2009) advocated for the use of Theme/Rheme analysis to help students edit their own writing, and through modeling, the student was able to make some revisions to his own writing after engaging in a basic Theme/Rheme analysis. The findings of this study support the existing research around the challenges that English language learners

face while writing in secondary classrooms and provides ideas on how to authentically incorporate functional grammar instruction into content classrooms. Lin (2015) identified that word choice is an area of anxiety for many second-language writers, and the intentional use of modeling and scaffolded activities addressed some of the needs the participant had, but did not help him expand his noun phrases. Additionally, the use of the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* throughout this unit provided the student with multiple opportunities to leverage his stronger speaking and writing skills to bolster his writing output both in terms of stamina and expansion of ideas.

This research also supported the findings of Olsen (2014), who argued that Long-Term English language learners need access to challenging content with plenty of linguistic support in order to close the achievement gap. While the long-term effects of the instruction the student received have yet to be determined, his immediate performance on the summative writing task, as well as the frequent formative checks given throughout the unit, show a great deal of progress towards writing at a 7th grade level. Additionally, *Assessment for Learning* strategies, as outlined by Chapuis (2014) were implemented throughout the study. The participant was given the opportunity to use rubrics to score and revise his own writing, as well as analyzing examples of strong and weak work within the genre, which allowed him to be better prepared to independently write within the genre. While the performance of one unit cannot be used to predict when the student will exit EL services or college readiness, the experiences of this study, as well as the existing research from Olsen (2014) and Aguire-Munoz et al (2009) suggest that continued implementation of the teaching/learning cycle, *Assessment for Learning*

strategies and the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework could bridge the gap between the current levels of performance of Long-Term ELs and grade-level standards.

A functional grammar approach was taken throughout this study, meaning that Theme/Rheme and noun-phrase expansion were taught within a context that coincided with the content. Additionally, the emphasis of the linguistic instruction was on students being able to correctly use the grammatical features in their own writing, as opposed to being able to identify features in isolation. The findings related to the student's development of cohesive and intentional Theme/Rheme progression supports the research of Humphrey, Droga and Feez (2008) in that students master the use of Theme/Rheme when they can discuss how Theme/Rheme is used to connect ideas, but this study cannot support the instructional strategy put forth by Fang (2008), in which he suggested that students deconstruct dense noun phrases to identify how the additional information enhances a written text.

This study also slightly supports the suggestion from Fang and Wang (2011) to rely on functional language analysis as opposed to rubric scores to analyze student writing. While the reality is that many schools, including the site in which this study occurred, require grades to be assigned to measure progress, the rubric created for this assignment was not necessarily the best measure of the growth the student made, particularly with regards to his use of topic sentences. Completing the linguistic analysis of the text provided far more insight into the growth the student made than the rubric did.

Overall, the findings of this study supported the existing research on the topic of improving writing outcomes for English language learners. This study combined research from several different areas, including functional linguistics, *Assessment for Learning*,

the teaching/learning cycle and the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework to support the needs of long-term English language learners, as identified by Aguire-Munoz et al (2009) and Olsen (2014).

Conclusion

The case study participant engaged in the teaching/learning cycle in order to improve in his three primary areas of need within the argumentative writing genre: 1. Organizing his writing using Theme/Rheme, 2. Providing and citing evidence from the text, and 3. Expanding noun phrases. In addition to engaging in a full teaching/learning cycle, the student also participated in lessons that utilized the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework to use his stronger domains of speaking and listening to prepare him to comprehend and produce academic text. *Assessment for Learning* strategies were also used to help the student set a goal (including textual evidence) and to help him self-assess his work. Overall, the student made growth in the areas of text organization and citing textual evidence, but did not grow in the area of noun phrase expansion. In the next chapter, a more detailed analysis of his growth, as well as limitations of the study will be addressed, as will ideas on next steps for the teacher-researcher to take with regards to sharing and expanding on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The research questions:

1. “What instructional strategies build the metalinguistic knowledge necessary for ELLs to successfully produce and revise their writing?”

1a. “How effective is the teaching learning cycle when it is paired with *Assessment for Learning Strategies*?”

2a. “How effective is the teaching/learning cycle when it is paired with the *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* framework?”

has no singular answer, but this study did shed some light on the effectiveness of implementing the teaching/learning cycle, Talk, Read, Talk, Write strategies and Assessment for Learning strategies to help long-term English language learners improve the organization and elaboration of their writing. As with any research that takes place in an authentic classroom setting, there were limitations to this study. After analyzing the data, plans for disseminating the findings of this study were created and ideas for future research opportunities were drafted.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the small sample size. While this student fits the classification of being a long-term English language learner with limited literacy in his first language, he does not represent all long-term English language learners, nor does he represent English language learners as an entire group.

This study took place in a sheltered language arts class that has some flexibility in how it approaches the instruction, there are still standards that are set by the state and

district expectations that must be met. *The Outsiders* is an interesting novel for many students, but it can be a challenging text. Additionally, the text does not model a lot of elaboration or academic writing, so it was challenging to point out the targeted language in the anchor text for the unit. Students worked on finding verbs, clauses and Theme/Rheme in passages from the novel, but otherwise the class used teacher-created models for the rest of the language lessons. It would have been nice to have a text that more closely exemplified the target language.

Similarly, the text used during this unit was long and had a lot of district required assessments that accompanied the unit. Balancing content and language instruction is challenging in most courses, but this particular unit had a lot of assignments outside of the teaching/learning cycle that also needed to be completed, thus cutting into the amount of time that could be dedicated to the language instruction. In the future, implementing instructional frameworks like the teaching/learning cycle would perhaps be a better fit in a unit with shorter texts and fewer outside expectations.

Finally, the case study participant was absent for three days during the teaching/learning cycle. He did not miss any of the major lessons, but he did miss opportunities to receive more feedback on his writing, particularly with regards to his elaboration of ideas. Elaboration was one of the areas in which he struggled, so it is difficult to determine if this lack of growth was due to missed class time, lack of detail in the instruction, or a combination of the two factors.

Future Research and Applications

Engaging students in the teaching/writing cycle did improve student writing insofar as it built their stamina, understanding of the genre and the organization of their

ideas, but it did not help students elaborate on their writing as much as was hoped. In this sheltered language arts class, it would be worthwhile to use a different text and re-start the teaching/learning cycle to see if students are more successful with increasing their use of elaboration when it is the only writing feature that is being emphasized.

Additionally, uses the more detailed analysis of other students' writing samples to determine the effectiveness of the instruction would also provide insight into the similarities and differences between the case study participant's experience and learning from the teaching/learning cycle and whether or not his experiences aligned with those of the rest of the class.

While this study took place in the context of a sheltered language arts class, the teaching/learning cycle could be applied to other content areas as well. Discussions in teacher professional learning communities have shown a need for students to understand how to appropriately write science reports, and this framework could be a strong starting point for how to teach students how to write within the genre.

Personal Reflections

On a personal level, there was a great deal of professional growth that took place during the six weeks of this study. The emphasis on closely analyzing student writing samples to look for subtle shifts in usage provided far more insight into the linguistic understanding of my students. Additionally, while I considered myself knowledgeable about the unique needs of Long-Term English language learners prior to the start of this capstone, the additional research that I read about the needs of this specific population of English language learners provided me with more information on how to make future adjustments to our district's EL services framework so that we can best meet the needs of

this growing population. Similarly, while sifting through the research on instructional strategies, I decided that engaging the EL teachers in our district in a professional learning experience centered around the implementation of *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* strategies would be beneficial, and the feedback from the training and the discussions about student growth and engagement since the implementation of this framework has been overwhelmingly positive.

Dissemination

This capstone will be published in Hamline's digital commons, which will allow the findings of this study to be shared with a larger audience. Additionally, the key learnings from this study will be shared with members of my school district's cabinet as we move forward with program reviews and curriculum design for English language learners.

The researcher hopes to present the findings of this study at a regional conference for teachers of multilingual students in order to encourage others to implement the teaching/learning cycle, *Talk, Read, Talk, Write* and *Assessment for Learning* strategies in their classrooms. Additionally, the researcher will submit the findings of this study to the regional professional journal for ESL educators.

Conclusion

After completing the teaching/learning cycle and analyzing the data, there were some areas where the student made growth, particularly in the area of text cohesion and writing stamina, but the teaching/learning cycle as it was implemented in this study did not allow for significant growth in the area of elaboration. Some of the potential limitations to this study include the length of the unit and the other reading

comprehension assessments that were required to be administered throughout the unit. Additionally, this case study had a sample size of one, so the generalizability of these results is completely limited. Despite the small sample size, the progress that this student made does provide some ideas on how this framework could be applied to different situations, including other content-area classrooms where writing within a particular genre is expected and restarting the teaching/learning cycle within the language arts classroom to focus specifically on elaboration.

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APPENDIX A: Pre and Post Test Questions

Pre-Test Question (Administered after the class has read pages 1-15 with no coaching): Ponyboy likes to watch movies to escape the reality of his own life. Why do you think he wants to escape his life? What specific events from the book can you use to support your claim?

Post-Test Question (Administered after the class has finished the book and completed the teaching/learning cycle): The book ends with Ponyboy writing his theme assignment for his teacher. What is the biggest lesson you learned from reading *The Outsiders*? What specific events from the book can you use to support your claim?

APPENDIX B: WRITING RUBRIC

Claim, Evidence, Reasoning Paragraph Rubric

Scores	0	1	2	3
<p>Topic Sentence</p> <p>“Did I tell my reader my opinion right away?”</p>	I did not include a topic sentence.	My topic sentence is not related to the rest of my paragraph.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim but does not provide lots of details.	My topic sentence clearly states my claim and provides relevant details.
<p>Giving Multiple Reasons for my Claim</p> <p>“Did I explain how my evidence supports my claim?”</p> <p>“Did I make connections between my own opinion and the text?”</p>	<p>I did not provide multiple reasons for my claim.</p> <p>There was no connection between my reasoning and my claim.</p>	<p>I provided one reason that supported my evidence, but my other pieces of evidence were not related.</p> <p>My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.</p>	<p>I provided multiple reasons that supported my evidence.</p> <p>My reasoning did not always connect my evidence to my claim.</p>	<p>I provided multiple reasons that support both my claim and my evidence.</p> <p>My reasons helped the reader understand my opinion.</p>
<p>Cohesive Paragraph Structure</p> <p>“Did I use connecting words to move between ideas?”</p> <p>“Did I refer back to my claim to help my reader see connections between my ideas?”</p>	<p>My paragraph did not have a main idea.</p> <p>There were no transitions between ideas, which made it difficult to understand.</p> <p>The connections between my claim, evidence and reasoning were not clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph had a main idea, but it was not clear.</p> <p>My paragraph switched between ideas without transitions, making it difficult to understand.</p> <p>The connections between the claims, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph has a clear main idea.</p> <p>My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea.</p> <p>The connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning were not always clear.</p>	<p>My paragraph had a clear main idea.</p> <p>My paragraph stayed focused on the main idea.</p> <p>I clearly showed created connections between the claim, evidence and reasoning of my paragraph.</p>
<p>Word Choice</p> <p>“Did I use words that precisely describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use a variety of words to start my sentences and to describe my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I use words to provide additional details about my topic?”</p> <p>“Did I write my response the way that a scholar would write?”</p>	<p>I have made more than 5 word choice mistakes, which makes my paragraph hard to understand.</p> <p>I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>I used lots of slang, emojis or other things that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I have made 3-5 word choice mistakes that make my paragraph harder to read.</p> <p>I did not include words that provided additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>I included some slang or other words that aren’t appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I mostly use words that clearly communicate my ideas, but I made one or two word choice mistakes.</p> <p>I used some words to provide additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>My word choices are mostly appropriate for academic writing.</p>	<p>I use words that clearly communicate my ideas.</p> <p>I use words to provide additional details about my ideas.</p> <p>My word choices are appropriate for academic writing.</p>
<p>Evidence from the Text</p>	I did not include any evidence for my claim.	I included evidence that is related to my claim, but it is not	I included evidence from the text, but for one or more pieces of evidence, I did not give	I included multiple pieces of evidence from the text. I cited my sources by

<p>“How did I back up my opinion with information from the Book?”</p> <p>“Did I give credit to the author by saying where my information came from?”</p> <p>“Does my evidence support my claim?”</p>		from the text.	credit to the author or give the page number.	giving credit to the author and giving the page number.
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