Portraits of Writing Instruction: Using Systemic Functional Linguistics to Inform Teaching of Bilingual and Monolingual Elementary Students

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**Portraits of Writing Instruction:
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Teaching
of Bilingual and Monolingual Elementary
Students**

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ABSTRACT

Portraits of Writing Instruction: Using Systemic Functional Linguistics to Inform

Teaching of Bilingual and Monolingual Elementary Students

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This descriptive case study examines the role that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory of language can play in making academic language more transparent and accessible to linguistically diverse students. In an urban fourth grade classroom composed of both bilingual and monolingual students, I incorporated key concepts of SFL into writing instruction on personal narrative and scientific explanation texts. Specifically, instruction explored the context, purpose, and tenor of each genre and scaffolded students' development of appropriate structure and useful language tools. Classroom instruction and student writing were examined using selective coding, constant comparison, and triangulation to make meaning from the data. Analysis of student writing in relation to SFL-influenced instruction revealed significant growth in areas of structure and language. In this case, SFL provided the researcher and classroom teacher with a useful theory of language and purposeful meta-language to identify and describe the functional elements of two genres to students from diverse literacy backgrounds.

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Chapter 1
Systemic Functional Linguistics –
A Promising Theory for Academic Literacy Instruction

Our nation's student population is becoming increasingly diverse, linguistically and culturally. Schools are struggling to meet the needs of an ever-diversifying student population. Many schools are striving to close a widening achievement gap for children who lack the linguistic skills privileged in schools. Since the 1990's the gap between African American and Hispanic students and their monolingual, white peers has grown or remained stagnant according to every academic indicator (Haycock, 2001). NAEP results show that despite a small upturn in overall reading scores, the wide gap between white students and their black or Hispanic counterparts remains unchanged (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). Schools must start examining their practices to determine which maintain or increase the achievement gap and what new practices are available to help teachers provide students with opportunities to close the gap.

One possible explanation for the increasing achievement gap is that culturally diverse students have not been invited into the academic language club prized in schools. Many linguistically diverse students lack access to the language of power in an academic setting. When explaining the poor performance of particular groups of students, Gee writes, "The real issue is failing, for whatever reason, to be a member of a particular 'in group' the 'school club.'(2004, p.7)." Gee (2004) went on to explain that there are different varieties of social languages.

School has its own languages around each of the content areas. It stands to reason that children, who speak a language other than academic English at home, or whose families do not use academic languages, may not have sufficient access to the school variety of language. Gee calls this type of language "academic language." Schleppegrell (2004) calls it the language of schooling. She writes, "The challenge is to value the language children bring to school from their homes and communities at the same time they are provided with an understanding of how new ways of using language will help them accomplish new kinds of tasks" (p.17). If teachers could simultaneously unveil academic language for students while honoring the rich languages they bring to school then, students could utilize the language of schooling to participate meaningfully in the academic discourses of school and thereby gain access to the culture of power.

Children who do not come to school with a command of academic discourse require apprenticeship into the language of schooling as early as possible. Teachers need tools to enable them to interpret academic language so they can make it more visible to language minority learners. Menyuk and Brisk (2005) write, "Thus, we are advocating that students be made aware of the structures of English and we have suggested some effective ways to do it. If second-language learners do not receive this explicit instruction in English, either they do not progress quickly or they learn from one another resulting in an English that deviates from Standard English" (p. 147).

There is a growing movement in education to apply Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of language to curriculum and instruction. Systemic Functional Linguistics theory makes the linguistic and structural demands of text transparent to teachers, and consequently students. Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language that holds promise in uncovering the hidden workings of academic language for students.

This study explores the following question:

> What happens when teachers incorporate Systemic Functional
>
> Linguistics theory of language into writing instruction:
>> o   of Personal Narratives in a testing context?
>>
>> o   of Scientific Explanations?

Systemic Functional Linguistics as a Bridge To Academic Discourses

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers a lens and specific tools for examining language and communication that is grounded in the cultural and situational context (Butts et. al.,1998). Instead of a series of rules to memorize and follow, SFL suggests that language is a series of choices influenced by the cultural and situational contexts, purpose, and audience of the intended message (Halliday, 2004; Thompson, 2004). The tools of SFL could allow teachers to make the unconscious, unnoticed choices of academic language visible.

SFL demonstrates the power of language. Schleppegrell (2004) writes, "Systemic Functional Linguistics enables us to see the ways that language, as a semiotic tool, interacts with social contexts in making meaning. It is a theory of

language that shows the power of language and the role it plays in the demands and challenges of school" (p. 18). Bernhardt (1986) writes, "We need to show kids how it is that language systems convey socio-semantics" (p. 186). SFL provides a theory of understanding and a meta-language to describe to students exactly how it is that a language system works to transmit meaning in a context.

There is no learning without acquiring the language of the subject. In other words, learning the language of a subject is learning to mean in that subject. Therefore, learning Science is the same thing as learning the language of Science (Halliday, 1993). SFL theory enables teachers to analyze, identify, and explain the language characteristics of school subjects to their students so that the learners can better understand the subjects themselves (Fang et. al., 2006). If learning the language of the subject is the basis of learning a subject, then teachers are in dire need of a language system that connects the language with its function. Teachers need SFL theory to equip them to understand the relationship between form and function and the meta-language of SFL to describe the language to their students.

Children with consistent access to the academic register used in schools come to school with knowledge of academic language, they can build upon when in school. They already have had access to the languages of science, social studies, literacy, and mathematics through interactions with more skilled adults in their homes or communities. It may be an unconscious and rudimentary understanding, but when these students hear subject languages it is familiar to

them. There are, however, many children who do not have access at home or in their community outside of school to academic language. (Gee, 2004; Heath, 1983) Language instruction then becomes a social justice issue.

Language instruction allows students who have less opportunity to acquire academic language on their own to learn and use more prestigious academic language with the help of their teachers (Christie, 1986; Hyland, 2002). Christie (1986) writes, "Where children fail in schools, they actually fail to interpret, respond to, and manipulate the patterns of spoken and written discourse which successful school participation really requires "(p. 221). It is crucial that all students are given access to language instruction or ways of using English in school (Schleppegrell, 2004). Teachers must connect the patterns of discourse with the ways of learning in their teaching (Christie, 1986). SFL provides the tools for teachers to begin to do this. Hyland (2002) writes, "Without the resources to understand these genres, students will continue to find their own writing practices regarded as failed attempts to approximate prestigious forms" (p. 125). If teachers actively and consciously taught language in schools they could open a portal to power-laden academic discourses to children who do not otherwise have access.

In today's high stakes testing world access to academic language is especially important. Academic language is not only the language of learning in schools; it is also the language of assessments. Students "must learn to control academic language registers in order to demonstrate what they have learned"

(Schleppegrell, 2007, p. 121). In order for students to be afforded the opportunities that come with performing well on high stakes tests, they must be taught how academic language works. Again, SFL provides teachers and students with a theoretical framework for understanding language and a meta-language for describing language that enables clear, explicit language instruction for all.

What is at stake here is much bigger than the students' success in school or on the state test. All students must have access to the language of power, what Delpit (1995) calls the "culture of power." She wrote, "If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier" (p. 24). Academic language is certainly a part of the culture of power. Every student has the right to be taught how to utilize the tools of academic language as a pathway toward entry into the culture of power.

It is important to note that SFL facilitates instruction of the academic language demands while honoring the students own language skills and strategies (Schleppegrell, 2007). The point is not to teach children a right and a wrong grammar but to show them how grammar changes based on the context of culture and situation. Because of its direct focus on context, SFL enables teachers to show children how to use academic language in an academic situation and to use other languages in other settings.

Writing offers a meaning-making venue in which to incorporate concepts of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The teaching of writing lends itself to a focused

study of language. Following study students would then have the opportunity to apply their learning to make their own meanings. Writing transcends every content area enabling teachers to infuse language instruction across the school day.

More than just a platform for language and content instruction, writing is crucial skill for success in school and in many careers. There is growing concern that schools are not preparing our students to write adequately for future careers. In 2005 the National Commission on Writing conducted a survey of a diverse array of Americans. While 72 percent of those surveyed felt a person must write well to secure and perform in a job, only 23 percent agree that their local schools are already doing a good job teaching writing. They found that "More than six in ten Americans (69 percent) believe writing should be taught across all subjects and grade levels and it should happen immediately . . . "(p. 1).   The public is growing impatient waiting for quality writing instruction.

The corporate world concurs that writing is a threshold skill for employment and promotion (National Commission on Writing, 2005). In a national survey of human resources personnel from large corporations in 2004 corporation leaders consistently stated that clear writing indicated clear thinking. Writing skills are often assessed within the hiring process. They say that less than one third of their employees posses adequate writing skills (National Commission on Writing, 2005). These poor writing skills are costing states millions of dollars in remedial writing instruction for their employees (Pope, 2005).

In 2003 the National Commission on Writing released a report titled "The Neglected "R" The Need for a Writing Revolution." As the title indicates the report reflects the Commission's findings that writing is often neglected in favor of mathematics and reading. Writing is more than just a separate skill. The report states, "Writing is how students connect the dots in their knowledge" (p. 3). Writing encourages students to engage in long thinking and integrate their learning in new ways. The Commission insists that educational leaders make writing instruction a high priority in the nation's education agenda.

There is a significant achievement gap in our nation's schools (Haycock, 2001, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010). Student writing achievement follows this trend. Using NAEP data, Applebee and Langer (2006) found that gaps in writing achievement between advantaged and less advantages students has remained unchanged since 1978. In a study of kindergarten and first graders, Chatterji (2006) found significant gaps between white affluent students and their peers who were African American or lived in a high poverty setting. This gap was already measurable in Kindergarten and that difference grew in first grade.

Writing is a content area that teachers can focus on to improve achievement in all content areas because it can support learning. A focus on the language and form within writing instruction could particularly benefit, language minority students. SFL offers tools for studying language and making the language of schooling more transparent for all students. What remains is how can teachers import SFL into their writing instruction?

There is a myriad of teacher resources regarding the teaching of writing in the elementary grades. A quick search on Amazon with the words teaching and writing will list hundreds of books. However, after surveying the books you will find texts on process writing, formulaic approaches to writing, and texts around Genre study. What are not readily available are teacher-friendly texts explaining how to make academic language explicit and meaningful for academic genres within writing instruction.

As a teacher and literacy coach, I have found that most teachers have not experienced a functional language approach to instruction. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to imagine a functional approach to language for their students. Furthermore, it is likely that most teachers are from the cultural and linguistic majority and have inherited an implicit knowledge of academic language themselves, making it difficult to uncover academic language for students. Often teachers are not even aware of the choices they are making to communicate successfully in an academic context. SFL theory links the cultural context, structure, tenor, and purpose in a way that enables teachers to make the structure and language of academic English more transparent.

Organization and Arguments of This Dissertation

SFL is a promising theory of language to help teachers make academic language more accessible to students. The meaning making involved in writing could be a viable venue for integrating SFL into instruction. The object of this study is to explore the utility of SFL theory of language, in writing instruction, with

linguistically diverse students. The study was conducted in an urban, fourth grade

classroom, with bilingual and monolingual participants. The classroom teacher and I

developed lessons of instruction based on our understanding of SFL theory,

specifically purpose, tenor, structure, and language features. The case study includes

rich descriptions of the instruction alongside student writings as well as an analysis of

un-coached student writings before and after instruction.

Through the analysis of student writing, in relation to the SFL-influenced

instruction, this dissertation seeks to answer the question: What happens when

teachers incorporate SFL theory of language into writing instruction of personal

narratives and scientific explanations.

This dissertation is organized into eight chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 provides a rationale for the study explaining the critical

  importance of making academic texts accessible to linguistically

  diverse students. The chapter explains why writing and writing

  instruction provide a productive avenue for exploring the utility of

  SFL inspired instruction.

- Chapter 2 situates the study in both a theoretical and a research

  framework outlining how I conceive of language, learning, and writing

  instruction and what a review of the literature reveals about writing

  instruction. This chapter ends with a brief glossary of SFL terms used

  throughout the text.

- Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology of the study. The intervention, data collection, and analyses are explained in detail.

- Chapter 4 describes the personal narrative unit with the corresponding student writing illustrating how SFL was incorporated into instruction and revealing how students responded with teacher supports.

- Chapter 5 analyzes the students' un-coached personal narrative texts written before and after instruction based on the SFL-influenced mini-lessons taught through the unit.

- Chapter 6 describes the scientific explanation unit with the corresponding student writing illustrating how SFL was incorporated into instruction and revealing how students responded with teacher supports.

- Chapter 7 analyzes the students' un-coached scientific explanation texts written before and after instruction based on the SFL-influenced mini-lessons taught through the unit.

- Chapter 8 provides a discussion of the results, inferring themes from the data. Then, I suggest implications, for teachers and curriculum developers, related to key findings from the study. The study ends with conclusions for the broader context.

Through this study, I hope to contribute to a growing body of literature examining how academic language can be made accessible to language minority students through an SFL inspired writing instruction.

Chapter Two

Situating the Research in the Literature

Theories of language, learning, and instruction guided the research and analysis of this project. The first half of this chapter reviews the guiding theoretical frameworks. The second half of the chapter reviews literature in the areas of process writing instruction, writing instruction for bilingual learners, genre theory, and concludes with a summary of relevant instructional implications based on the review.

Guiding Theoretical Frameworks

Three overlapping and complimentary theories of language, learning, and composition provided the theoretical framework for this study. As shown in the chart below, the theories are tightly connected and interwoven. The chart illustrates how the three theories informed the study. The impact of the theories is represented by the size of the circle. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the theory of language, provided the overarching theoretical framework for every aspect of the study including the question, methodology, intervention, data collection, analysis, and discussion. Socio-cultural learning theory framed my thinking around teaching and learning. Socio-dialogical composition theory best describes my theory of action for writing instruction, as applied in this study.

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework
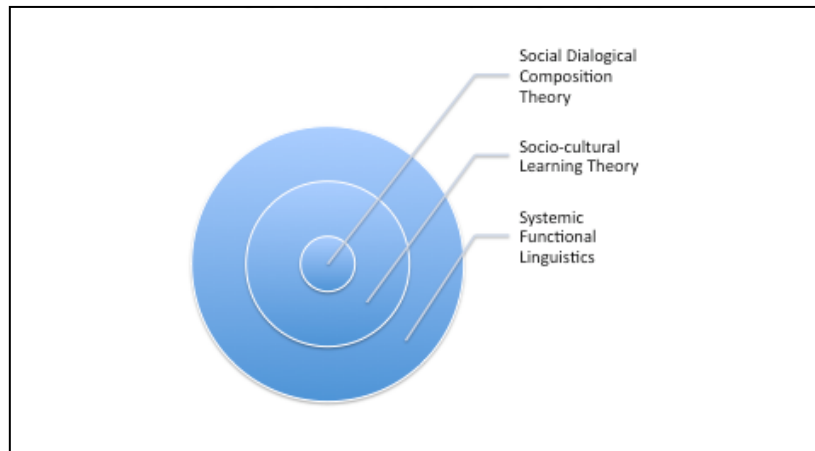
Each of the three theories is described separately below. However, the reader

will notice the inter-relatedness and redundancy of the three theories. The first

section explains Systemic Functional Linguistics in greater detail than the following

theories because it is the guiding theory for the study and likely to be unfamiliar to

many readers. Then, I will briefly review the more familiar socio-cultural learning

theory and the related socio-dialogical composition theory.

A Theory of Language: Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a functional approach to studying

and understanding language, meaning that it examines, "how language enables

us to **do** things" (Derewianka, 1990, p.1). SFL is based on the idea that all

language is created to accomplish specific purposes and meanings. SFL theory

inextricably links purpose and language: purpose determines the language and

the language can, in turn, be studied to glean its purpose.

The meaning of any given text is context specific (Couture, 1986). There is a systematic relationship between the text, the language system, and the cultural and situational circumstances of the utterance (Kress, 1976). Halliday (1976) refers to the context as the condition of entry. This interconnectedness of context and language means that functional grammar study always considers the situation while studying language. The cultural context is "the sum of all the meanings it is possible to mean in that particular culture" (Butt et al., 1998, p. 11). Cultural and situational context and language are totally interdependent based on the functional grammar perspective (Thompson, 2004).

Language evolves within a cultural context to accomplish specific purposes. Genre is a pattern of language or meaning choices the represent an effective way of accomplishing a purpose in a familiar context (Hyland, 2002). Genres within cultures are the systematic ways language has come together to mean within a cultural context. All text has a social purpose in the cultural context and that social function is central to language study with SFL. The form of the language can be explained by the functions of the language (Thompson, 2004). SFL theorists can study the language itself to understand the social functions it was meant to serve. Likewise, one can use SFL theory to predict what form of language will best accomplish a specific purpose within a cultural context. For example, if one wants to tell how to bake bread, a procedural form of language would be the most useful. Halliday (2004), a forefather of functional grammar, explains it this way, "The system of a language is instantiated in the form of a text" (p. 26). Genres, then, are the forms or

structures a culture has created over time to accomplish various purposes. The

community tacitly agrees to use the genre to convey its corresponding purpose.

Within a cultural context there are specific situational contexts that share the

same experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings. These situational contexts

share the same register: for example, biologists share the same register. Butt et al.

(1998) explain that field, tenor, and mode make up the context of situation or register.

The field is the topic and goal of the text, the tenor is the relationship the speaker or

writer has with the audience, and the mode is the type of text created. The three

together, the what, the who, and the how of the utterance, make up the situational

context. Each piece of the context of situation directly impacts the language

decisions in an instance of language. Figure 2 from Butt et al. (1995, p. 12) illustrates

this concept.

Figure 2:
Contextualized Language
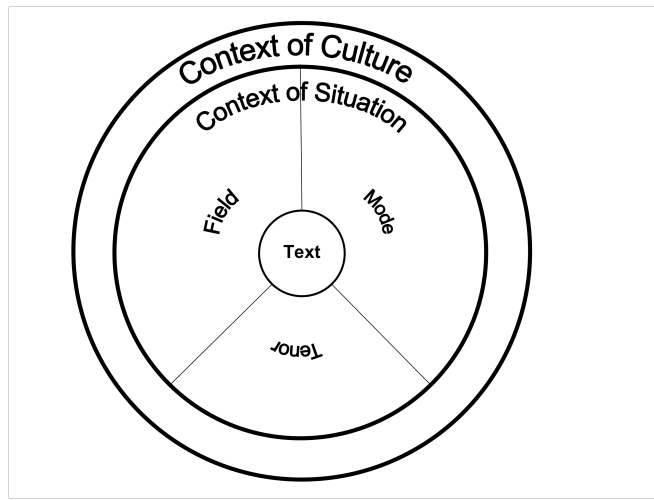
The three functions of language naturally align with the three elements of the

situational context. Halliday (1976) wrote, "The system of natural language can best

be explained in the light of the social functions which language has evolved to serve"

(p. 17). If the functions are the crux of language, it is then important to discuss the

basic functions of language. Many functional grammarians describe three basic

functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Couture, 1986; Butt et

al., 1998; Halliday, 2004 & 1976; Thompson, 2004).

The ideational function aligns with the field of the situational context.

Sometimes called the experiential or representational function, it determines the

content of the text. Ideational functions of language tell about the world, to

answer the who, what, and when. The Interpersonal or enacting function serves

to get things done. It is about relationship with others, the tenor of the situation.

This function recognizes that language is a social act involving others. Finally,

the textual function is the actual language itself, the internal function of putting it all together. It is the service function of language. The textual function relates to the mode of the text.

It is crucial to note that nearly every utterance serves many functions within the situational context. Bernhardt (1986) explains, "a written composition is the simultaneous realization of several sorts of meaning, meanings which thread their way through the text and together contribute to the text's largest sense" (p. 189). In virtually every utterance there is an experiential function (field), an interpersonal function (tenor), and a textual function (mode). Most language is ideational at the surface level but carries with it many other Interpersonal and textual meanings or purposes. SFL labels and describes language that conveys the experiential, interpersonal, and textual functions in an utterance.

As its name implies, Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language that asserts language is a system (Halliday, 1976 & 2004). The speaker or writer of the language makes choices within that system to best accomplish the purpose or function of the communication in the particular context. Thompson (2004) writes, "One of the fundamental assumptions of Hallidayan functional grammar is that the most useful and accurate way of picturing language is a system of choices" (p. 35). Each language choice contributes to the meaning and purpose.

The grammar then is the system or set of choices, an open network of options for communication. It is with this grammar that meanings are created. Halliday writes, "Grammar is the processing unit of language, the powerhouse where meanings are created; it is natural that the systems of sound and of writing through which these meanings are expressed should reflect the structural arrangement of the grammar (2004, p. 21)." In other words, the choices made become more than the sum of their parts; they serve as a vehicle to reach the speaker's intended goal.

Grammar is the way the different meanings from the functions of language integrate together into a text. The varied functions are accomplished through the text and structural decisions of the speaker. Building on the assumption that all language choices are functional, researchers can study the language to see how the speaker used the language choices to accomplish the intended purpose within the particular context. By studying language with an SFL lens we can "bring to light and separate closely interwoven decisions that we are not aware of making about how to word what we want to say" (Thompson, 2004, p. 32). Conversely, studying a corpus of text from a particular register and or genre allows for generalizations about what are useful language choices to accomplish the functions required in that register.

Speakers or writers have choices in the words they use but also in the way they string those words together to make meanings. The meanings of a text are expressed by the structure as well as the words of the text (Halliday, 1976).

The structure of a text is the ordered arrangement of the elements, different orders in a clause and between clauses lead to different meanings. It is the context of culture and situation, field, tenor, and mode that impact the structural decisions in a text. Due to the relationship between the structure of the text and its functions, one can find reflections of a text's functions in its structure.

Thompson (2004) adds a fourth function of language to the three already presented when he describes the logical function, which connects meanings between clauses. All of a text's functions are accomplished at the clause level (Halliday, 1976). The clause is made up of participants or noun group, the process or verb group, and the circumstances or adverbial phrases. The clause then is the level at which choices are made based on the purposes of an utterance. It is the gateway into the language network of options to make meaning (Halliday, 1976). The fourth function of language serves to connect bits of meaning together at the text level.

SFL offers meta-language to see and describe the grammatical choices of speakers/writers. The theory provides meta-language to discuss language as experiential, interpersonal, and textual. SFL meta-language is linked to the purpose of the language feature. For example, to discuss the experiential function of language, SFL uses "participant" to describe the noun group, "process" to talk about the verbal group, and "circumstance" to describe adverbial phrases. The terminology reflects the purposes of each of the terms. Halliday insists that grammar be thought of as a "meaning making resource

(2004, p.10)." so the specialized language SFL provides reflects the functional purpose of each thing it is labeling. Butt et al. (1998) puts it this way, "A specialized language allows us to explore texts by describing how different elements function to realize experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings" (p. 16).

Grammar is extremely complex; therefore, its descriptions are complex as well (Halliday, 2004). SFL's descriptors allow for very fine distinctions in describing and analyzing text (Bernhardt, 1986). Similarly, they allow for fairly accurate generalizations about text (Bernhardt, 1986). This type of text analysis has been helpful to linguists, composition theorists, and researchers who use the SFL terminology to describe language and analyze the speaker/writer's intent based on Halliday's descriptors of language (2004).

Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language that begins with function. All the language decisions are based on the intended purposes and those meanings are reflected in the text itself. "His [Halliday's] functional grammar explains how multifunctional meanings are generated in a communication event; it shows how those meanings are realized in the formal syntactic and lexical components of language's grammatical system; and it explains how linguistic features reflect choices from 'higher-level semiotic' systems of meaning above language, such as those designating textual genre" (Couture, 1986, p. 4). SFL theory provides the frame and meta-language to discuss text in meaningful ways that make the visible components of text visible

to leaners. For the purposes of this study, SFL allows teachers to explicitly explain how to use language choices within the academic register to effectively engage in the language of schools.

Systemic Functional Linguistics in Schools

Systemic Functional Linguists like Williams (1999d) argue that, "awareness of grammatical structure and use of it in practical literacy tasks can have a positive, significant place in early literacy development" (p.17). The goal is to help children discover, analyze, and interpret grammar in mentor or exemplary texts and their own writing so that they can better use the grammar tools to convey their own messages in the future. This becomes particularly meaningful for linguistically diverse children. They may not have an inherited understanding of English grammar rules. If teachers do not make them explicit in meaningful ways language minority students may never have access to these choices of written communication in academic texts.

Schleppegrell (2007) writes that functional linguistics ". . . can provide teachers with productive ways of talking about language" (p. 121).   SFL provides tools to allow children to analyze discourse with their teachers in a meaning-making environment. Talking about scientific discourse, Halliday (1993) wrote, "It is only when we analyze this discourse grammatically, using a functional grammar, that we can appreciate how the patterns relate to what the scientist were trying to achieve" (p. 82). Children deserve to be taught how language works to make meaning in the school context. SFL will provide teachers with the linguistic tools to describe language to their students.

The idea of SFL-influenced instruction may well provide access into the academic world for students, but is the theory of language with its complicated language descriptors accessible to young learners? Children naturally attend to language (Williams, 1999b). They are ripe for the opportunity to explore language using purposeful meta-linguistic tools. Teachers can expose young learners to language study.

SFL-informed instruction allows teachers and students to stay focused on the purpose for the language experience. Too often language instruction is a set of rules to follow. SFL provides students with a set of tools to utilize in accomplishing authentic academic pursuits. Teachers can teach students to select language tools that are most useful in regards to a particular setting, audience, and purpose. Meanwhile, SFL's contextualized theory of language allows teachers to avoid overgeneralizations about language that do not always work with new contexts, audiences, or purposes (Bernhardt, 1986). No longer is grammar about avoiding errors; rather, "grammar is enlisted in the service of rhetoric in the creation of meaning" (Bernhardt, 1986, p. 195).

SFL-inspired instruction allows for more explicit instruction because it enables teachers to discover what language skills are required to be successful with a given task (Christie, 1986; Schleppegrell, 2007). No longer will teachers ignore the language skills required, or use their intuition to decide which language skills might be helpful. With SFL theory and meta-language, teachers will be able to study a corpus of texts in a focus genre to determine which language skills must be taught

(Thompson, 2004). Following their own study, they will have a clear list of skills for instruction. With teachers clear on the language demands of content objectives, there will be a more "visible pedagogy" of academic language (Fang et. al., 2006). SFL theory and meta-language can build teachers' content knowledge around language, making the invisible grammar demands of a text visible.

It is not enough for the teacher to be clear on the language expectations of an academic experience to accomplish a "visible pedagogy". The teacher must explicitly and consciously teach academic language tools or skills to the students. Halliday writes that this type of linguistic understanding only comes from "explicit, long-term instruction" (Williams, 2005, p. 282). Explicit instruction is made possible when the teacher uses SFL to study the genre to become clear herself on exactly what linguistic choices best serve in the situation (Bernhardt, 1986, Martin, 2009).

SFL provides writing teachers and students with the meta-language to talk about language. This meta-language of SFL enables teachers to describe linguistic tools, in context, to their students with meaningful labels (Bernhardt, 1986, Martin, 2009). It is more than just parts of speech and verb agreement. Teachers can make grammar meaningful to their students by studying language with children in the context of using grammar to help us accomplish the meaning we want to make. Bernhardt (1986) says that if educators understand specific linguistic choices writers make they can then better explain them to children. SFL allows teachers to describe language in very fine, discrete terms based on

the function of the text (Martin, 2009). This level of specificity when shared with students provides them with effective language choices given a context, purpose, and audience.

In essence SFL enables teachers to turn traditional grammar on its head. Without SFL, teachers taught adjectives as a separate entity to identify in writing but somehow separate from the intended meaning of their piece of writing. With SFL writing teachers can teach how writers can add details to their writing with adjectives to describe their subjects. Grammar then stops being a set of rules about right and wrong and becomes a set of tools writers use to accomplish different tasks based on audience, purpose, and context. The meaning focus and meta-language of SFL combine with SFL's focus on context to create a purpose driven, learning environment, in which students are actively using the language tools to accomplish their academic tasks with increasing success (Bernhardt, 1986).

Just as SFL provides teachers with a language and theory that allows for more explicit instruction, SFL-inspired instruction supports teachers in providing more specific and accurate feedback following instruction (Schleppegrell, 2007). Once teachers have made themselves conscious of the language demands, they are more able to see whether students have utilized the appropriate tools in their speaking or writing. Teachers are then able to use the metalangauge of SFL to explain to their students how they might improve their language in highly specified ways. This also implies that following instruction,

the meta-language of SFL will enable teachers to better and more specifically

evaluate the students.

Educators can use the SFL descriptors to study the language

requirements of texts we offer children so that teachers can better prepare their

students to read and understand the text (Gebhard & Martin, 2010;

Schleppelgrell, 2007). Likewise, writing teachers can utilize SFL to describe the

language requirements of genres in specific ways based on the purposes,

audiences, and contexts of the writing their children are attempting. It is this

application of SFL that I wish to focus on in this study.

Theory of Learning: Socio-Cultural

A key tenet of socio-cultural learning theory is that learning is socially

mediated, that learning happens through interactions with others. Knowledge in this

theory is co-constructed (Wells, 1999). Learning does not take place in isolation but

in a community of practice (Englert et. al., 2006). Participation in the community of

practice allows one to assimilate or come to share in the communities' conventions,

standards, genres and values (Englert et al., 2006).   Each generation reworks its

cultural inheritance to meet the current purposes and needs of the community

(Lantolf, 2000).

Communities of practice engage in situated semiotic activities that are locally

created. An activity is a human behavior resulting from the "integration of socially

and culturally constructed forms of mediation" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 8). Any way that a

community makes meaning to accomplish a purpose is an activity. Semiotic tools

such as language and genres as well as other tools and practices such as objects and

machines mediate activities. People are assimilated or socialized into a community of

practice by participating in the activities of that community. In his review of socio-

cultural theory of writing, Prior (2006) explains, "In activity people are not only

socialized (brought into alignment with others) as they *appropriate* cultural resources

but also individuated as their particular appropriations historically accumulate to form

a particular individual" (p. 55). According to activity theory, acquiring the cultural

resources of communities over time leads to the development of the individual.

Apprenticeship, another key component of socio-cultural theory, is how

people attain the cultural resources of a community. A more skilled other participates

in the activity with the learner and then as the student internalizes the skills and

understandings required, he or she participates independently. The zone of proximal

development is the space between, "what a person can achieve when acting alone and

what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else

and/or cultural artifacts" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17). Vygotsky described the zone of

proximal development as an intersection between peers and teachers in a "site where

social forms of mediation develop" (Lantolf, 2000, p. 16). Learning occurs during

the interaction between the more skilled teacher and the learner. According to socio-

cultural learning theory, what is learned is also social.

Teachers can use cognitive tools and strategies to scaffold the students in their

assimilation into a culture (Englert et. al, 2006). Examples of cognitive tools in

writing are graphic organizers, spell checkers, and diagrams. The tools make the

functions and thinking behind an activity more visible to the learner. The purpose of cognitive tools is to help students access the cultural practices of a community. Over time, the learners eventually internalize the tools and participate in the community independently. Using the cognitive tools, teachers provide the opportunity to co-participate in a community of practice with support from a more skilled other before participating independently.

Personal agency is a significant component of socio-cultural learning theory. As mentioned earlier, learners do not just receive meaning from others in a community of practice but change and grow as result of interactions with other (Donalto, 2000). Donalto (2000) goes on to write, "sociocultural theory maintains that no amount of experimental or instructional manipulation can deflect the overpowering and transformative agency embodied in the learner" (p. 47). The learner is not a passive recipient of a community's standards, conventions, or genres but an active participant. Learners transform their world by their participation in it as they themselves are being transformed (Donalto, 2000).

Finally, socio-cultural theory offers a developmental stance to learning. Socially mediated activities such as writing develop historically for the human species, culturally for different communities of practice, individually over a lifetime, and moment-to-moment (Englert et. al., 2006). This developmental stance allows one to view writing as a developmental process where learners gradually acquire the skills and knowledge to participate meaningfully.

Socio-cultural theory affirms SFL theory in regards to socially mediated learning, the role of cultural context, and communication as personal agency. In this study, socio-cultural learning theory informed the pedagogy of the intervention and the developmental stance of the teachers in analyzing the student writing.

Composition Theory: Social Dialogical

This research is grounded in the social dialogical, post process composition theory (Couture, 1999; Horan, 2007; Kent, 1999; Matsuda, 2003; & Petraglia, 1999). I do not reject the idea that writing is the result of a process but agree with Matsuda (2003) that writing is more than just the culmination of a static process. Petraglia (1999) considers "the mantra, 'writing is a process' as the right answer to a really boring question (p. 58)." Post process theorists posit three beliefs about writing. First, like the personal agency from socio-cultural theory, writing is a public expression that integrates a person's will and action (Couture, 1999; Kent, 1999). Second, writing is an interpretive act predicated on the relationship, or "tenor" in SFL, between the author and the audience (Kent, 1999; Petraglia, 1999). And third, as in SFL and socio-cultural learning theory, writing is situated in social context.

SFL and socio-cultural theory allow me to view writing as a situated and socially mediated activity. The post process, social dialogical composition theory looks beyond the student centered habits of a good writer and considers the larger social context (Horan, 2007).   In social dialogical composition theory, it is the interaction between the writer, the audience, and the context, that is significant (Horan, 2007; Hyland, 2003; Matsuda, 2003).

The focus then shifts to academic discourse communities where values, language, and purposes for text are shared. Genre, as the socially recognized way of using language in a community, becomes the focus of study (Horan, 2007) in a social dialogical framework. Petraglia writes, "the ways in which writing gets produced are characterized by an almost impenetrable web of cultural practices, social interactions, power differentials, and discursive conventions governing the production of text, making writing more a phenomenon than a behavior (1999, p. 53-54)." Writing becomes a lens to study a discourse community as well as a vehicle to assimilate another into a community.

Horan (2007) lists classroom practices that emerge from a social dialogical stance. These practices include developing meta-linguistic awareness, focusing on purpose, defining the audience, examining academic language functions, and focusing on grammar and conventions. I employed each of these practices during the instructional units of the intervention.

SFL, socio-cultural learning theory, and socio-dialogical composition theory jointly provide the theoretical framework for this study. The theories initially framed the question, "What happens when teachers incorporate SFL theory of language into writing instruction?" The theories then guided all the methodology and analysis decisions. Likewise, these theories impacted the discussion, conclusion, and implications.

Literature Review

Process Writing Instruction

Process writing has been around for decades as a form of writing instruction. It has meant many things to many people, but the major proponents of process writing such as Graves (1994), Calkins (1986), and Fletcher (2001) agree on its core components. The basic principle behind process writing is that writers learn by writing within a student-centered writer's workshop complete with mini-lessons and conferencing. Children need to experience what it means to be a writer in order to learn how to write.

Process writing advocates believe that writers tend to have particular behaviors that teachers can model for young children in order to improve their writing (Graves, 1994, Calkins, 1986, and Fletcher. 2001). The idea is that if children can begin to behave like a writer and understand the process of writing, they will be able to independently write when necessary. The categories of writing behaviors discussed in process literature are pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Fletcher (2001) makes it clear that writing is not a linear process and he warns teachers to avoid expecting children to move neatly through the stages of the process. The process is more web-like than linear, as writers can enter the process at various points, skips steps at will, and back track as often as needed.

In most process writing classrooms, teachers institute a writer's workshop (Graves, 1994). The writer's workshop includes a mini-lesson, time for children to write and a share time at the end where children share their pieces of writing with

their audience.   While children are writing, the teacher takes time to conference with individual students to learn what they are doing as a writer, compliment the work they are doing, and teach a new skill or strategy for that writer at that moment.

In writer's workshop there is an emphasis on teaching to the writer and not the writing. There is a focus on honoring children's voices on paper and providing students with opportunities for free expression. In the early years of writer's workshop teachers who espoused the process writing approach focused primarily on personal narrative or recount genres (Horan, 2007).

As the process writing movement matures there is increasing emphasis on specific strategy instruction. Calkins (2007) created a year-long curriculum for elementary children that incorporates specific writing strategy instruction into a traditional writer's workshop. Many other authors have begun to publish resources for teachers on specific skill and strategy instruction to be incorporated into a writer's workshop instructional model. Pritchard and Honeycutt (2006) write, "Today, most researchers of the process model recognize that it involves both procedural knowledge and many other kinds of strategies that can be nurtured and directly taught" (p. 276).

A key element in process writing is the use of authors as mentors (Ray, 1999, & Calkins, 1986). Teachers use published literature as a resource for writing instruction. Together, teachers and students study a text to learn how a professional writer works, with the goal of emulating those skills in their own writing.   Students eventually learn that when they do not know how to accomplish something in their

own writing, they can go to the bookshelves to see how another writer accomplished a similar task.

As with all instruction, prompt and accurate feedback is crucial for writing development. Black and William (1998) tell us that formative assessment can substantially increase student achievement. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), in their text highlighting instructional practices that work, tell us that student feedback must be corrective, timely, and specific for students to reap the rewards of effective formative assessments. In writing instruction, that means that teachers must find ample opportunities to provide feedback to individuals, small groups, and whole groups where appropriate. Teachers use conferences, whole group shares, and written feedback to provide students with information on how well students are progressing in writing and what specifically they can do to improve their work.

In a literature review of research studies examining the effectiveness of the process approach to writing instruction, Pritchard and Honeycutt (2006) found mainly positive effects on student achievement. They stipulated that there was uneven implementation of the process approach and that there are varied understandings of what the process approach entails.

Writing Instruction for Bilingual Students

Bilingual writers can attain high levels of writing achievement. Several studies found that if given the proper instruction, bilingual writers could make good progress as writers and write as proficiently as their monolingual peers (Hernandez, 2001; Carlisle & Beeman, 2000; Valdes, 1999). In a study of eight fifth-grade boys,

Hernandez (2001) found the strong bilingual writers' skills equaled that of the monolingual writers. Furthermore, the weak bilingual writers were not statistically weaker than the weak monolingual writers. Carlisle and Beeman (2000) reached similar conclusions. What is most significant to their study is that the English writing scores did not differ from their English instructed bilingual peers; however, their Spanish writing scores were much stronger.   This indicates that if bi-literacy is the object, instruction in the students' L1 may better support that goal.

Not only can bilingual children develop strong writing skills but evidence also exists to show that these children follow much the same developmental path as monolingual children. In a year-long study of a bilingual kindergarten classroom, Araujo (2002) stated that "their [ESL children] emergent literacy behaviors develop to resemble more conventional forms in much the same way this process evolves for native English speakers (p. 16)." In a study of three adolescent bilingual writers, Valdes (1999) found that students could progress with adequate instruction, although the progress may appear slow.

There is growing evidence that bilingual writers are able to transfer their understandings about writing from their L1 to their L2. Edelsky (1982, 1986) described the writing errors that bilingual children frequently make as evidence of hypothesis making. She encouraged teachers to view these errors as application of new learning instead of interference of the L1. "The children in this yearlong study seemed to be acquiring two separate systems, however, without confusions" (1985, p. 68). Edelsky (1985) explained that students tended to use the rules of their L1 until

the new rules of the L2 are learned. Astute teachers can monitor the transfer of skills from their L1 to their L2 and offer more guidance to students when needed.

Furthermore, Edelsky (1986) encouraged teachers not to require oral English skills before beginning writing instruction. In a study of 4th and 5th grade bilingual children, Lanauze and Snow (1989) describe evidence of children transferring their knowledge about writing from Spanish to English despite weak English aural skills. This would imply that teachers should not wait to begin writing instruction until English oral skills are strong.

The linguistic demands of bilingualism are an asset for literacy development. Flexibility and the ability to self-monitor language were two assets Ruan (2004) found in a study of a first grade Chinese and English program. Manyak (2002) discovered many bilingual students benefited from a blended English and Spanish program of literacy instruction, seemingly from bi-directional transfer. Some children, however, did not respond to the blended approach, suggesting the necessity for more precise instruction.

At first glance, the research on classroom writing instruction for bilingual learners appears mixed. Some studies seem to support a meaning and context-based whole language approach while others seem to demand a more structured explicit instructional strategy. On closer inspection, the two approaches appear to converge. Bilingual writers, and some might argue all writers, require direct and explicit yet contextualized and meaningful instruction in all areas of writing, including organization, revision, punctuation, and language.

Several authors point to the effectiveness of whole language instruction for bilingual writers (Kuball & Peck, 1997; Araujo, 2002; Edelsky, 1986). Whole language literacy instruction focuses on authentic, meaningful experiences with text. Meaning is at the heart of all instruction and text is looked at from a whole (Bowman-Kruhm, 2011). Whole language and process writing are compatible pedagogies and often overlap. These researchers suggest contextualized, holistic experiences with literacy lead to improved writing skills for bilingual writers. Kuball and Peck (1997) in a year-long study of kindergarten bilingual learners noted that the Spanish speakers writing skills progressed as much as the English speakers in a whole language setting. Using anecdotal evidence, Araujo (2002) explained that the children in her study were able to construct sophisticated understandings about the functions and features of written language through a balanced literacy approach to instruction.

Kucer and Silva (1999), conversely, found that 3rd grade bilingual children in a transitional whole language classroom did not demonstrate significant improvement in writing. Whole language writing instruction was defined as free writing with general conferencing. Some areas improved, such as story length, spelling, and capitalization. However, overall writing skills did not grow significantly. The authors called for specific instruction for bilingual writers.

Kucer and others point to the necessity for explicit instruction for bilingual learners. Kucer (1999) set out to examine the literacy experiences of two third grade bilingual learners. After studying their school literacy experiences, he concluded that explicit and tailored instruction was crucial for the writing success of the students.

Similarly, with fourth grade bilingual learners, Reyes and Laliberty (1992) found that gains were made in organization, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling with explicit instruction in conventions of print, revision and editing.

Whole language and explicit instruction are not mutually exclusive. In fact, some would argue they are complementary instructional strategies. Perez (1994) studied 20 low-SES Spanish dominant kindergarteners through fourth graders. He found that whole language instruction was useful for supporting students' meaning construction. However, the whole language approach was less useful for code learning. Zutell and Allen (1983) conclude, "All young children but especially nonnative speakers need the information and skills that come from reading and discussing, writing, and revising real natural language texts" (p. 339). These researchers combined suggest a blended approach in which students receive explicit instruction in decoding and encoding alongside meaningful authentic text-based discussions and writing experiences.

This precise balance between contextualized and meaningful experiences with direct and explicit instruction requires much more specific assessment strategies to enable instructors to match student needs. Teachers will need to be skilled in observing student behaviors and targeting specific skills that require more particular remediation. Hernandez (2001) suggested teachers use a multidimensional approach to writing assessment that would allow teachers to assess process, content, and mechanics.

Genre

The simple Webster's' definition of genre is "a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content." After examining students' understandings of genres, we know that genre is much more than categories. Chapman (1999), a leading researcher in the area of genre knowledge, states, "genres are now being thought of as cultural resources on which writers draw in the process of writing for particular purposes and in specific situations" (p. 469). Genres are no longer thought of as simply rules related to different types of writings. Chapman (1999) explains further that it is now understood that genres are flexible models that integrate content, form, function, and context. With this new definition the situation, the audience, and the meaning impact the writing.

Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993), oft-cited activity theorists, propose five principles for genre theory. Much like Chapman, they state that genres are dynamic, situated in communicative activities, and include content and form. They go on to explain, "Genres are the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed" (1993, p.501). According to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993) genres constitute and reproduce social structures. Similarly, Kress (1999) argues for a social theory of genre. Genre is more than content and form; it is connected with the context, the speaker or writer, and the audience. A text then is discursive and carries the values and practices of the discourse community. Conventional genres demarcate social discourse communities.

In order to accomplish the socially constructed goals of each social discourse community, genres utilize various grammatical patterns. Genre study includes

examining the ways different genres make meaning with different patterns of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Hyland, 2003; Fang, Schleppegrell, & Cox, 2007). Hyland (2003) calls for teachers to enable students to explore the language of the genres and eventually to consciously manipulate the language to accomplish their own purposes.

Given the importance of genre knowledge to literacy and learning, it is imperative that educators understand how youngsters come to understand the purpose, structure, and language of genres. Educators need to know which genres are accessible to young children. For decades well-meaning elementary educators shielded students from the "struggle" to write nonfiction, assuming it to be less accessible than narrative texts (Duke & Kays, 1998). There is growing evidence that even our youngest students can understand the nonfiction genre and enjoy working with nonfiction (Chapman, 2002; Duke & Kays, 1998; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Langer, 1985).

Duke and Kays (1998) examined the knowledge 20 preliterate kindergarteners possessed regarding informational texts. In September and December the researchers asked the students to pretend to read an informational book.   They found the youngsters' understandings of informational text genres grew quickly in three months. Not only did the students learn about the expository text structures, but they also demonstrated pleasure in working with the texts. This study suggests that even our youngest students are able to demonstrate a budding understanding of the structures of informational texts.

Chapman (1994) and Langer (1985) found similar results with first graders and third, fourth, and fifth graders, respectively. Langer (1985) found that the children were able to differentiate between narrative and report structures and could use these structures in their own writing. Chapman (1994) found the first graders were capable of recognizing and writing nonfiction pieces of increasing quality throughout the year.

The body of research suggests that students' genre knowledge is emergent (Chapman, 1994 & 2002; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Langer, 1985). Chapman (1994 & 2002) conducted longitudinal case studies with first graders. She found that the students' nonfiction writing grew in quantity and organization over the course of the year. The students' reading, writing, talking, and drawing were all involved in genre construction. The students demonstrated their new understandings of genre both within and outside of the writers' workshop.   Through interaction with and about nonfiction genres, these first graders developed an emerging understanding of informational texts. It is worth noting that Chapman (2002) also found that genre instruction did not hinder the students' ability to develop voice and a sense of audience in their writing.

When Kamberelis and Bovino (1999) examined what primary students knew about narrative and informational genres and the effects of scaffolding, they found further evidence that genre knowledge is emergent and complex. The students saw genre categories more like "family resemblances" than immutable rules. They indicated that the early years may be crucial for developing an understanding of

scientific genres. These findings seem to indicate that not only are these students able to develop an understanding of genres but that these understandings are flexible and complex.

Elementary students are capable of recognizing, understanding, writing, and even analyzing the abstract language patterns of various genres. The remaining question is, what impact does this genre knowledge have on student writing?   Taylor and Beach (1984) and Englert, Stewart, and Hiebert (1988) found evidence that students' understanding of nonfiction text structures supported their writing of nonfiction text. As a pathway for genre instruction, Martin (2009) suggests the deconstruction, joint construction, and finally, individual construction of a genre. If students have a strong understanding of the form, function, and context of a genre they are be better equipped to write within that genre.

Chambliss, Christenson, and Parker (2003) found that when fourth graders were taught to write scientific explanations, their understandings about science improved. Halliday and Martin (1993) studied science texts to discover what features of their linguistic structures made them so difficult for students. They found that it was not simply the content vocabulary, as the classroom teachers suspected, but there were seven features of the scientific texts that make them more difficult to unpack for students. They theorized that ". . . learning science is the same thing as learning the language of science" (p. 70). In order for students to participate in the discourse of science they must be taught how the discourse works. Could it be that by teaching students about the discourse structures of curricular areas we could be equipping them

to think within and better understand the content? The impact of genre study in content areas may supersede mere writing and reading goals, making quality genre instruction even more valuable.

Instructional Implications

Given these findings, it seems critical that educators work to determine best practices for genre instruction. Badger and White (2000) debunk the popularly held myth that process, product, and genre approaches to writing instruction are mutually exclusive. In fact, they encourage a synthesis of the three approaches. The integrated approach includes the workshop portion of the process approach, the explicit teaching from the product approach, and the content of the genre approach, using SFL theory. They encourage teachers to see these approaches as complementary.

With kindergarteners, Duke and Kays (1998) found that simply reading nonfiction literature aloud to students every day to had a marked impact on the students' nonfiction genre knowledge. After just three months of listening to narrative and informational read alouds, pre-readers were able to pretend to read informational and narrative texts using accurate genre elements based on the pictures in the books.

In a research study with kindergarten through fifth graders, Donovan and Smolkin (2002) found that genre and language scaffolding assisted children in understanding informational texts. They explored what the students knew about informational and narrative texts with a range of varying supports. The findings

indicate that teachers can and should offer students scaffolding support to develop specific genre knowledge.

The specific findings about best practices for genre instruction mirror what researchers report to be best practices in process writing instruction. One of Chambliss, Christenson, and Parker's (2003) key findings was that specific genre writing instruction was effective in raising the quality of the students' scientific explanations. The teacher in the fourth grade class used mentor texts, whole group modeling, and conferencing to teach the students about scientific explanations. The students then went and wrote their own scientific explanations. The results indicate that these strategies were effective. The shift from process writing instruction is in the content of the mini-lessons and the conferences. Where before the content of instruction would have been on helping the writer mover through the process or engage in a writing strategy, this teacher used that time to help push students towards a deeper understanding of the elements of the genre.

First Steps is a genre-based pedagogy that has been written into a curriculum document for much of Australia and parts of the United States. Much like Christenson and Parker's (2003) instructional methods, First Steps encourages teachers to decide on a genre, model it, write an exemplar of the genre together, and then ask students to write a sample of the genre themselves. Thwaite (2006) conducted a case study of one teacher utilizing the First Steps curriculum in her classroom of eight year olds. She found that the teacher used the First Steps curriculum to primarily teach the structural elements of the genre. Her students did

demonstrate evidence of utilizing those elements. However, Thwaite was concerned

to see the teacher neglecting to teach the social functions or the language features of

the genre.

There is a growing call for a marked increase in a genre-based writing

pedagogy that incorporates explicit instruction in how language is used for specific

purposes to create meaning. Hyland (2007) insists that a genre pedagogy using either

Systemic Functional Linguistics or English for Specific Purposes is required to

"provide teachers explicit systematic explanation of the way writing works to

communicate" (p. 150). Fang, Schleppegrell, and Cox (2006) go on to say that

students require this type of explicit language instruction in order to build knowledge.

After studying three predominant school discourse samples (narrative, science text,

and history text), they concluded that teachers must create a more "visible pedagogy"

of academic language in order for students to participate more fully in these academic

discourses, both oral and written.

It is possible for students to understand the abstract concepts of language,

recognize language patterns, and glean meaning (Williams, 1999c). What has yet to

be studied in depth is how teachers can use elements of genre pedagogy, including

SFL or ESP, to better instruct students in writing.   Gebhard, Harman, and Seger

(2007) conducted a case study in a fifth-grade classroom in order to study how SFL

may help their students "crack the code" of academic writing using the genre of

persuasive writing. Following the unit the researchers found that the students used

genre knowledge and specific grammatical features of persuasive writing in their own

writing. They found that it was definitely possible for teachers to help students understand and utilize linguistic choices available to them to accomplish their goals.

Genre pedagogy must include instruction on the form of the genre, the linguistic or grammatical features of the genre, and include a focus on an authentic purpose for the writing. Williams (1999a) claims that meaning and purpose in grammar instruction are inextricably linked. Teachers should focus on how meaning is created from the grammar in collaborative reading and writing experiences. The grammar instruction will provide them with tools to better understand the meaning of the text. Therefore, having an authentic purpose for reading or writing requires grammar instruction.

Specifically in writing instruction, an authentic purpose is of paramount importance. Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau (2007) asked how effective authentic purpose was with and without explicit instruction in an empirical study of second grade science writing. They found that "language forms are best learned in the context of authentic use (p. 41)." In fact, they found that authentic purpose for the writing was more effective than explicit instruction in science writing instruction. Tower (2005) conducted a case study in two fourth grade classrooms to study how the students understood science writing. Author's purpose was found to be an important part of their understanding. Teachers must not only attend to the structures and language forms of a genre but also ensure that their students write for authentic purposes to further their writing.

Genre knowledge is flexible, contextualized, and integrates form, function, purpose, context, and audience. It is evident that elementary students can understand and utilize genre knowledge. The genre knowledge of elementary age children is emergent and seems to develop in quantity and quality throughout the years. Student understanding of genres not only supports writing skills but may also support content area understandings. Given the benefits of genre knowledge it is crucial that students receive excellent instruction in genres including modeling, guided practice, read alouds, scaffolding, and explicit instruction in the linguistic features of genres.   We must continue to study both student development in the area of genre understanding as well as best teaching practices in the area of genre writing in order to gain a better understanding of how best to induct students into all academic discourses and then to critique them as necessary.

It seems logical that students could grasp the structures or forms of genres at young ages, as youngsters are well known experts at seeing language patterns and categorizing. According to Williams' (1999b) research, elementary age students can engage in the abstract analysis of the language patterns of genres. In two case studies with a classroom teacher, Williams (1999b) asked what would happen if they introduced students to elements of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) as a way to talk about the meaning of a text. He found that the students were able to use the labels for grammar of SFL to identify language patterns and talk about language. The grammar therefore becomes a tool to better understand the meaning of a text not an end in itself. The key he felt was to start from the unit of

meaning in the text and work towards the language of grammar. Williams (1999b) hypothesized that these abstract language skills may also benefit the students' writing skills.

Summary

This review helps to understand and inform the context for the study, the intervention, the data analysis, and the findings. The literature on process writing suggests a predictable pattern for writing instruction including a mini-lesson, ample writing time with teacher supports, and regular teacher feedback. The content of instruction within the process-writing paradigm has expanded from a focus on the behaviors of writers to include studying published text as a writing resource, and specific strategy lessons. Similarly, the literature on bilingual writers suggests they would benefit from writing instruction that is direct, specific, with an authentic and purposeful context. When provided with adequate time and instruction, bilingual writers demonstrate achievement similar to their monolingual peers.

Literature on genre theory suggests specific content around the structure and purpose of a text for writing mini-lessons to develop student writers. Research demonstrates that genre knowledge develops in quality and quantity over the elementary years and student genre understanding supports writing skills. In order to be successful, genre instruction must include context, audience, form, linguistic features and purpose. SFL theorists apply similar understandings regarding genre, structure, and purpose of a text but insist on a focus on language used to accomplish specific purposes in a text. This study asks what happens when SFL theory guides

the content for specific writing lessons for monolingual and bilingual students in a

process writing classroom.

Glossary of Terms

- **Adjectival**- word or phrase that describes a noun

- **Adverbial**- word or phrase that describes a verb

- **Apposition**- describes when a definition is embedded in the text immediately after a term is introduced

- **Circumstance-** adverbial or prepositional phrase modifying the verb.

- **Clause-** basic unit of meaning in English – usually includes a noun, verb, and circumstance

- **Closing-** describes the ending of a narrative or recount

- **Field-** the topic of the discourse

- **Forever Verbs-** verbs in the timeless present tense

- **Genre-** texts that share the same purpose and often the same structure

- **Identifying Statement-** Introductory statement in an explanation that provides a general explanation of the phenomenon

- **Meta-language-** language developed to talk describe language

- **Mode-** the kind of text being made such as a letter or a book

- **Orientation-** term to describe introduction of narrative or recount text because it "orients" the reader to the characters, setting, and problem

- **Participants-** the subject of a clause

- **Process**- the verb in a clause

- **Purpose**- the intended function of a text; for example to persuade, to explain, or to report information.

- **Register-** texts that share the same context of situation such as science texts

- **Step-by-Step-** instructional term to describe the sequential nature of the body of a narrative or recount

- **Summary Statement-** Optional concluding statement in an explanation

- **Tenor-** relationship between the speaker or writer and the intended audience; includes writers voice

Chapter Three

Research Design

This study seeks to explore the question: What happens when teachers incorporate Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of language into writing instruction of Personal Narratives in a testing context and Scientific Explanations? My goal in this study is not to identify "scientifically proven" methods for teaching writing but to tell the story of how two teachers used SFL in one classroom and how student work changed in response to the instruction. Therefore, I chose to answer this question with descriptive case studies of student writing in response to SFL-inspired instruction. As Dyson & Genishi (2005) explain, "Singular case studies do not aim to determine context-free associations between methodological input and student achievement" (p. 11). Case studies instead seek "to understand *others'* understandings (their sense of what's happening and, therefore, what's relevant) and the processes through which they enact language and literacy education" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 12).

To conduct the case study I first revised my personal narrative and scientific explanation units to include several key elements of SFL theory. Then, in concert with the classroom teacher, I taught the units to a class of fourth graders. During and after the units, I analyzed the resulting writing, searching for links between the student gains and the SFL-influenced instruction. I analyzed the instruction for any evidence of SFL theory in the planning, teaching, conferencing, or student feedback and then compared that evidence with the student's writing at the time. I sought to

connect my teaching with the students' writing performance, looking for areas of strength, weakness, or confusions. This process allowed me to draw some conclusions regarding how SFL-inspired instruction had impacted these particular students' writing in this context. Then, I examined the understandings to determine what ideas or concepts could inform thinking in other settings with other teachers and students.

Because this study is a naturalistic inquiry, I seek to ensure the study demonstrates trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (2007) developed four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. They go on to list techniques to accomplish these four criteria. In order to build credibility I used triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. For transferability or generalizability the reader will find rich description of the setting, the instruction, and the student writing in the results chapters of the study. This will provide the reader with sufficient information about the setting, participants, intervention, and results to make their own determination regarding how the findings may apply to other settings. Similarly, I am as transparent as I can be about my sampling and analysis in order to allow the readers to judge for themselves the dependability of the data and findings. As the co-teacher, data collector, and researcher, I make no assertions about the neutrality or objectivity of the study. Because I am an actor in the study, my view is necessarily different from an outsider. I merely claim that this is my interpretation of the happenings in the classroom and allow the reader to determine for themselves how fair or objective my findings are.

Setting

This study was conducted in a fourth grade classroom in an urban district in Massachusetts. The classroom had 24 students, nine of whom identified themselves as bilingual, primarily speaking a language other than English at home.   This particular classroom was selected because I have a strong working relationship with the classroom teacher and school administrator. The teacher was willing and interested in exploring new methods of writing instruction and the school was in restructuring due to low state assessment scores and would benefit from additional literacy coaching.

The classroom teacher, Mia, a pseudonym, was in her fifth year of teaching. Mia grew up in the community and was deeply committed to the students she served. As Mia's literacy coach, we had worked together for three years in reading and writing instruction. Much of the work we did was in her classroom working with students together, and I had found that Mia was always anxious to improve her instruction. Often, she would come to me with a question or a concern about her students' learning and together we would develop strategies to address her concerns. Aside from her academic focus, Mia was also extremely focused on developing a strong, supportive community of learners. Her classroom is a place of warmth and calm amid a sometimes-hectic urban setting.

Mia participated in a great deal of literacy professional development over the last several years. Mia utilized a writer's workshop model for writing instruction.

She had been following the Calkins' 3-5 Yearlong Writing Units up to this point, teaching Narrative and essay writing (2007). Mia also spent time teaching her students how to answer Open Response questions following a text reading. Mia and I jointly created many of the lessons and often studied student work together following instruction. I will indicate these joint efforts with the pronoun, "we."

This particular classroom was selected because Mia is a strong teacher, the students represented a wide range of linguistic backgrounds, the principal was in full support of the project, and the students at the school had historically struggled with writing for state assessments.

Participants

The entire class participated in the instruction, sharing, and conferring of both units of study. Every student in the class was given regular feedback and the entire class' writing performance was used to inform future instruction. There were six focus students for this study who were observed, interviewed, and periodically videotaped while working. All of their writing was collected for closer inspection following the study. I conferred with the six focus students and Mia conferred with the remainder of the class.

Several factors determined which students were selected for focus students. I utilized the students' personal narrative pre-assessment to ensure that the focus students represented a wide range of writing proficiency levels. Efforts were made to include a balance of linguistic backgrounds and gender. The school population is primarily Portuguese, limiting the options of Linguistic Background. All of the

students in the classroom received free or reduced lunch, indicating that the selected

participants in the study came from a low socio-economic background. There were

some gaps in student writing collections due to attendance issues. Figure 3 reviews

the six focus students.

Figure 3
Description of the Six Focus Students

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Language Background	Ethnicity	Relative Pe on Pre-asse
Joelle	12	Female	Spanish/English	Latina	High
Amanda	9	Female	English only	Caucasian	Middle
Carlos	11	Male	English Only	African American	Low
Adam	9	Male	Portuguese/English	Portuguese	High
Tom	10	Male	English Only	Portuguese	Middle
Aubrey	10	Female	Portuguese/English	Portuguese	Middle

Procedure

General Overview

The study was conducted over two months at the end of the school year. Two

instructional units informed by SFL were taught during the study. The first unit,

personal narratives in a testing context was four weeks, five days a week. The second

unit, scientific explanations was shorter lasting five days a week for three weeks due

to the nearing end of the school year. At the beginning and ending of each unit

students were asked to write an uncoached sample of the focus genre. Throughout

each unit I collected data regarding instruction and student writing. Most lessons

were videotaped, lesson artifacts such as plans and teaching charts, as well as all

focus student writing was collected for future analysis. Following the intervention

and data collection, the data was analyzed.

Intervention

In order to better understand the intervention, data collection, and analysis procedures it will be helpful here to outline an overview of the general process followed for the writing units described in the study. This process is one that Mia and the students utilized with different genres of study.

For both units of writing in this study I followed a particular format. I gleaned this format from a myriad of writing teachers including Stead (2001), Calkins (2006), Ray (1999), Fletcher (2001), and Graves (1994). The teachings of these writers combined with on-the-ground experience teaching writing in many different classrooms have provided a basic blueprint for all my writing instruction. The blueprint includes studying exemplars, specific and detailed writing instruction, and then publishing.

Before instruction in both units, we began with an un-coached pre-assessment. For the MCAS Long Composition Unit, the pre-assessment writing prompt is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Pre-assessment MCAS Prompt

Think about friend who has been an important part of your life. How did you become friends with this person? Think about when you met, what you did, and how your friendship grew.

Write a story about this friendship. Give enough details to tell the reader about this friendship.

In order to collect a true assessment of the students' capacity to write scientific explanations, we had to select a scientific concept that the students already had strong knowledge of. The students had just successfully completed a unit on the water cycle and how it relates to weather, so we decided on a water cycle explanation question. The pre-assessment prompt for the explanation unit is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5
Pre-assessment Scientific Explanation Prompt

Answer the question in the space below:

Why does it rain?

The students were given the pre-assessments and told to respond to the prompt. Mia explained to them, "We want to know what you already know how to do in your writing so we will know exactly what to teach you." After noting student frustration and confusion around the content of the question, I pointed out the water cycle anchor chart the class created the previous week. This chart supported their content knowledge. They were given a full hour writing period, plus additional time if needed to write a first draft. We did not ask them to write a final draft due to time constraints.

Both instructional units began with a genre immersion period. This was a time for the students to study exemplars of the genre they would eventually be writing. Instead of writing themselves, the students spent time examining pieces that exemplified the genre and modeled exactly what I planned to teach them throughout

the unit. During this immersion portion of each unit, I helped them deconstruct the

genre (Martin, 2009) noticing structural and language attributes and, equally as

important, I promised them that they too could accomplish these same attributes in

their own writing. This was the point in the unit when I shared my goals for them as

writers for the unit and encouraged them to believe they could achieve those goals.

This portion of the unit was much shorter than the student writing portion because we

wanted to give our students as much time as possible to write genres themselves.

Once the students were clear about the genre under study, it was time for

students to begin writing. Mini-lessons in both units were kept mini, between seven

and fifteen minutes. The students were called to the rug with a large easel in front of

them. Every lesson followed the Lucy Calkins (2006) lesson format. I began each

lesson with a "Connection" or brief reminder of what they had learned up to that

point, and I used this time as an opportunity to review and demonstrate how the

lessons were building on each other. The connection ended with a clear statement of

the day's teaching point, which was something to the effect of, "Today I am going to

teach you . . ." Then, I taught them the day's content.   Sometimes I would model for

them as a writer myself, using a lot of think-aloud. Other times I studied an exemplar

in front of them, pointing out what I wanted them to notice. Still other times I would

share a story or bit of learning with them that exemplified a point I was working

towards.

Following the teaching portion I would give them an opportunity to try or

discuss whatever I taught for the day with a partner on the rug. Calkins (2006) calls

this Active Engagement. This often was a turn and talk opportunity, but sometimes it involved the students actually writing or thinking independently.   At the end of the mini-lesson came the Link, when I reminded them of the teaching point for the day one last time, and sent them off to write.

Student writing time was always the largest portion of the workshop period. Students wrote for approximately thirty to forty minutes while the teachers conferenced with individual students and or worked with small groups.   When we conferenced we used the Calkins (2006) conferencing format where we listened, praised, taught one new thing, and then moved on. Students worked on their own pieces and generally progressed at their own pace. For the Writing Personal Narratives to the Prompt Unit, I did establish more rigid timelines to better match the testing context. During the explanation unit students were allowed to move through pieces independently and start new pieces at will.

At the end of each writing workshop period, we called the children back to the rug for a sharing period. We used a variety of methods to reinforce our chosen teaching point and to allow students to share. Sometimes they read just one example of what we taught, whereas other times we brought up two or three students who specifically exemplified the content we were teaching. Occasionally we just asked students to share what they were working on today as a writer with the person next to them.

We often used the share time as an assessment window as well. We would give feedback to the students and ask them to go to their seat and make any necessary

changes before they forgot! Thus, share time had three purposes: to give kids an opportunity to share, to give teachers a chance to assess, and to provide the teachers with another avenue for student feedback on their writing.

At the conclusion of each unit of instruction we had a celebration and sharing time. We wanted this time to be very festive and congratulatory so we made treats for the kids, invited special guests like the principal or the special education teacher, and treated the students like rock stars! The children had an opportunity to read their piece, the teachers complimented specific things the writer had done, and then we all applauded the hard work of the writer.   We used this time as one last opportunity to drive home our goals for the unit and to remind them how far they had come.

The final assessment for the test writing narrative unit was the MCAS itself. The students were given the prompt first thing in the morning. Mia read them the directions but was prohibited by statewide testing regulations from reading them the actual prompt. Then the students were given the entire day to plan, draft, revise, edit, and write a final draft. The class was given the first booklet, which had the prompt on the cover and provided space for planning and then four lined pages to write their first draft. The class worked on planning and drafting their pieces for approximately an hour, after which they were given a brief break. After the break, the students were given a new booklet to record their final drafts. They edited, some revised, and everyone copied their final drafts into the final draft booklet. Everyone was given as much time as they wanted to complete the writing.   The 2009 Fourth Grade MCAS Long Composition Prompt is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6
Post-assessment MCAS Prompt

> Think about a time you were helpful. For example, maybe you helped a new student feel comfortable in school, helped a teacher with a job in the classroom, helped with a project in your neighborhood or school, or helped to care for an animal.
>
> Write a story about a time you were helpful. Give enough details for readers to understand how you were helpful.

The final un-coached writing assignment for the explanation unit is shown in

Figure 7.

Figure 7
Post-assessment Scientific Explanation Prompt

> Explain how a rock is formed?
> Plan on this page and write on lined paper.
> Planning
>
>
> Science Vocabulary

Mia and I decided to use a different format for the final question due to our learning

through the unit. The students were deep into a rock study at the point of this writing

prompt, so again the science content should not have been an issue for them.

The instructional structure outlined above remained the same throughout this

study. SFL would provide Mia and me with an overarching lens through which to

view all writing and therefore, writing instruction. For these two units we would look

at writing through a functional lens. That meant we began our thinking and talking about writing with an eye on the context, purpose, and audience of the piece. We wanted to make the language and structure choices that effective writers make more transparent to our students. SFL provided the specifics of each genre, the meta-language and a useful theory of language to help us do that.

Part of the intervention was to orient the students to the concept of functional grammar: the idea that all aspects of a writing piece exist to accomplish a unique purpose for a specific audience in a given context. Every aspect of instruction was undergirded with references to the context, purpose, and audience. The goal was to show our students how these elements guided all decision making as a writer. We wanted them to see that if they were clear on their purpose, audience, and context, they would then be able to make better structure and language choices to accomplish their writing goals. Therefore, we had to teach them some of the more effective options available to them in the genres under study. This meant we needed to teach them about the best structure and some specific language features they might use to accomplish different goals in their writing.

We used the meta-language of SFL to talk about the structure and language with the students. The meta-language enabled us to notice, describe, compare, and discuss various structural elements and language features of the texts we studied. Then we were able to teach specific mini-lessons on these features. Mia and I discovered that we needed to support the students' structural understanding with graphic organizers that allowed the students to build a mental image of the genre's

structure. During instruction, I called the language features "tools," because like a hammer or screwdriver, they help the writer accomplish a specific purpose given the context. Continuing the analogy, I explained to them that as writers they needed to select the best tool for the job.

Before I began, I knew I needed at least four different categories of lessons. Process lessons would teach the students how to go about writing in that particular genre, or in other words what writers actually do to accomplish the genre at hand. Structure lessons would teach the students the basic structure of the genre, making sure to connect the structure to the purpose. Finally, Language Lessons would teach the students how to use language features of the genre to accomplish their particular purposes. The larger focus on purpose and audience as well as the specific structural and language lessons were the changes SFL inspired in my instruction.

The ordinal structure of our writer's workshop continued on as before, but the content changed. The figures 8 and 9 summarize how the content for our lessons shifted during each unit of study.   The column on the left lists the collection of topics we would have studied with the student writers for an MCAS long composition unit prior to the intervention. The corresponding list in the right column outlines how the topics shifted based on our understandings of SFL theory. Many of the topics remained the same, but with a new emphasis on purpose and audience. Conversely, the craft lessons shifted dramatically. Whereas previously, we had taught students to add details to their narratives, we now would teach them to make the writing more vivid for the reader with adjectival phrases. Before, in explanation writing, we taught

young writers to use "science words" in their writing. Now, we would show how

writers use appositions to define scientific language for their readers within a text.

The examples given make clear how a focus on audience and purpose was integral to

every mini-lesson of the intervention.

Figure 8

MCAS Long Composition Unit of Study Mini-Lesson Topics

Prior to the Intervention	SFL Influenced Intervention
Process Mini-Lesson Topics • Deciding on a Topic • Prewriting with a timeline • Planning across pages • Writing long on each page • Revision • Editing • Publishing	Process Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Matching topic to audience and purpose ➢ Prewriting with a timeline ➢ Planning across pages ➢ Writing long on each page ➢ Revising with language tools ➢ Editing for the intended audience ➢ Publishing for the intended audience
Structure Mini-Lesson Topics • Lead to grab the readers' attention • Step by step body to the story • Close in endings	Structure Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Orientation- its job is to grab the readers' attention and tell who, when, and where ➢ Step by step using action verbs to move the action forward ➢ Endings that connect the reader back to the prompt or summarize the story
Craft Mini-Lesson Topics • Adding details • Adding dialogue • Telling the inside of the story • Show Not Tell	Language Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Using adjectival phrases to help your reader visualize ➢ Using adverbial phrases to help your reader visualize ➢ Saying verbs tell your reader more about how things are said ➢ Sensing verbs show your reader how the characters are feeling ➢ Showing the reader instead of telling the reader using all the language tools.

Figure 9
Explanation Unit of Study Mini-Lesson Topics

Prior to the Intervention	SFL Influenced Intervention
Process Mini-Lesson Topics • Web • Restating the question • Writing supporting statements • Writing concluding sentence • Revision • Editing	Process Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Selecting a Question matching topic to audience and purpose ➢ Researching the question if necessary ➢ Planning using a web or timeline ➢ Writing an identifying statement ➢ Writing a detailed explanation ➢ Writing a summary statement ➢ Writing a title question ➢ Revising with language tools ➢ Editing for the intended audience ➢ Publishing for the intended audience
Structure Mini-Lesson Topics • Topic sentence • 3-4 supporting statements • Concluding statement	Structure Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Title- usually a question ➢ Identifying statement ➢ Step by step explanation ➢ Summary statement (optional)
Craft Mini-Lesson Topics • Links • Including Science Vocabulary	Language Mini-Lesson Topics ➢ Temporal links ➢ Cause and effect links ➢ Using scientific nouns in text ➢ Using oppositions to define terms ➢ Using factual and specific adverbials ➢ Using qualitative, factual, type and comparison adjectivals ➢ Using "forever" verbs

SFL is a large and complex theory of language with many facets and applications, and so it is important to underline the fact that I only applied portions of the SFL theory to our instruction and resulting data analysis. Mia and I were both new to using SFL to inform our writing instruction. As a result, our instruction grew as we progressed through the units. Over the course of the two units, we learned to

explicitly connect each lesson to the intended purpose and audience. The lessons'

contents were determined by structural elements and language features discovered in

exemplar texts.

Data

In order to answer the question adequately, it is important that there be a tight

fit between the question, the data collected and the analysis techniques (Howe &

Eisenhart, 1990). The chart in Figure 10 delineates the data I collected as it relates to

the specific questions of this study. The final column of the chart indicates how that

particular data or data set will help toward answering my questions.

Figure 10

Review of Data Sources

Question:	Data:	Purpose:
What happens when teachers incorporate Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of language into writing instruction • Of personal narratives? • Of Scientific explanations?	• Daily Videos of instruction • Lesson Plans • Lesson observations • Conference Notes • Videos of conferences • Teacher feedback notes • Teaching artifacts	• To document the actual instruction to identify/document how SFL influenced instruction.
	• Notes from teacher-researcher meetings • Researcher's journal	• To provide a glimpse into the teacher and researcher's thinking and decision making regarding instruction with SFL.
	• Pre and Post un-coached writing samples from each unit	• To show what the students' independent writing was like before and after instruction for comparison.
	• Coached writing samples each week of instruction	• To document any changes or growth in student writing in relation to instruction at the time.

In order to answer my question, I first needed to document how SFL informed

and influenced the writing instruction during the study. I collected information

regarding my lesson planning, my thinking about my teaching, and our actual

instruction. I used my lesson plans, lesson video-tapes, and lesson observation notes

to capture what we actually taught in each lesson.   The mini-lessons were video

taped for later study. For each lesson I prepared a lesson observation form that

included the day's lesson plan, a column for the observing teacher to record her

observations, and a column for any comments the observing teacher may have

regarding the lesson. Figure 11 shows the form Mia used to record her feedback.

Figure 11
Teacher Observation Feedback Form

Lesson 16: March 23, 2009
Goals: 1- Students will write adverbials to describe their verbs telling why? and with whom?

Plan	Observed	Comments
Connection: • Compliment their addition of adverbs to their pieces on Friday. WeKnow Friday was hard to stay focused there seemed to be a lot of craziness in the classroom. • Remember Friday, I promised you I would show you the last two types of adverbials. • Today I want to show you how writers add adverbials to describe their verbs Specifically, how they use them to tell why? And with whom?		
Teaching: • Share the chart with types of adverbials with examples (and adverb and adverbial phrase each). • Review the two types going over the example and explaining how the adverbial helps the reader better understand the verb.		
Active Engagement: • Ask kids to use each type of adverbial phrase and adverb to describe cried in the sentence "She cried."		
Link: Today and everyday, writers remember to include adverbials to help your readers better envision and understand your writing. Reread what you have written so far to see where you can add in these new types of adverbial.		
Mid-Workshop Share: • Return to rubrics • Review purpose • Invite kids to find a partner when ready to read piece with the rubric • Model for them what that would be like • One compliment for each part • Help them revise one thing in their story		
Share: Students will share an example of a sentence they wrote with a terrific adverbial phrase.		

Conferences were another opportunity to view how SFL informed instruction

and to gather data regarding student responses to instruction. I took notes during each

of the student conferences I did with the focus students using a form to record the

praise I gave the student and the teaching point for the conference. Many of these

conferences were video recorded as well, providing a further glance into instruction.

Student feedback was another instructional opportunity that could have been influenced by SFL. Class-created rubrics and sticky notes with anecdotal notes were used to provide students with feedback on their writing. These comments and rubrics were copied for future review through the study.

Finally, during all instruction the teachers used charts, overheads, and posters to assist in the teaching, all of which were photographed. These artifacts provided a more complete picture of the instruction during the study and reflect much of the metalanguage teachers used to describe texts.

In order to capture my thinking about instruction and student responses in development, I kept a notebook of my thinking. I wrote in my notebook before and during my lesson planning times, during my meetings with Mia to discuss our instruction, and immediately following and sometimes during the writer's workshop with students. In the notebook I recorded our impressions of how the instruction was going, how Mia and I felt students were responding, and what we would do in future lessons. I used it as a thinking pad. This data gave me a window into my thinking as the units progressed and as I studied student responses to the instruction.

To determine what happens in student writing when the teachers incorporate ideas from SFL into their writing instruction requires a detailed analysis of student writing samples before, during and after instruction. We collected an un-coached piece of writing before each unit of instruction began, which we then used for our instructional planning and to select our focus students and to serve as a baseline before instruction. Studying these pre-assessments helped us ascertain what the

students already understood and could do with the particular genre. Following instruction, a second piece of un-coached writing was assigned. This allowed me to compare writing before instruction with SFL to writing following instruction with an SFL influence. This enabled me to get a sense of what the students could do without teacher assistance both before and after instruction.

I was also interested in studying how student writing changed over time in relation to the instruction given. This required the collection of student writings over the course of the units. Each focus student produced approximately one piece of writing per week. All artifacts connected with these pieces, including planning pages, first drafts, feedback notes, and rubrics, were collected, dated, and copied for future study. These same student samples were also used in the short term for planning future instruction in the class. Each evening following instruction, Mia and I would study student work to determine what skills their writing demonstrated and what needed to be re-taught based due to inconsistent or nonexistent application. Mia and I would plan small, re-teaching groups and revise lessons based on our findings.

Analysis

The analysis of the data for this study took part in two distinct phases. The first phase of analysis was for the purpose of instruction. During the study the teacher and I formatively analyzed the data to inform future instruction. Following the two units of study and all corresponding data collection, there was a second phase of analysis that was summative in nature. The purpose of this analysis was to determine trends and connections between SFL-influenced writing instruction and student

writing in order to describe any connections. This more rigorous analysis allowed me to extrapolate some general findings that may assist other teachers of elementary writers, particularly bilingual writers.

Formative Analysis

The data that was collected throughout this study was used to inform instructional decisions. The initial un-coached pieces of writing collected at the beginning of each unit provided the preliminary focus for instruction. The classroom teacher and I took these writings and analyzed them based on the following checklists of goals we developed for each genre as seen in figure 12.

Figure 12
Instructional Goals for Each Unit
What students should be able to do at the conclusion of the unit

	MCAS Long Composition	Explanation
Purpose	• Write a narrative that tells a detailed story and matches the given prompt	Write an explanation that tells why something is the way it is or how something happens.
Structure	Write a narrative that includes: • Orientation • Step by step body • Ending that connects to story and prompt	Write an explanation that includes • Title • Identifying statement • Step by step explanation • Summary statement (optional)
Language	Includes the following language tools when appropriate: • Adjectival phrases • Adverbial phrases • Action Verbs • Saying Verbs • Sensing Verbs • Action Verbs to accomplish step by step	Includes the following language tools when appropriate: • Oppositions • Temporal links • Cause and effect links • Scientific nouns • Factual and specific adverbials • Qualitative, factual, type and comparison adjectivals

After reading each piece, we recorded what skills and strategies the students were demonstrating in their writing and what skills and strategies were lacking. Once the entire class was evaluated we began to look for trends or commonalities in the skills and gaps in the student writing. We recorded our thinking on a chart, seen in figure 13, to provide an overview for the entire class. With this information we were able to plan out the instructional objectives this particular class required to be successful with the selected genres.

Figure 13
Looking at Student Work Organizational Chart

Looking At Student Work

Genre _____

Student	What can he/she do?	What's Missing?	What's Next?
			For Purpose:
			For Structure:
			For Language:

Each week of the unit consisted of lessons, conferences, mid-workshop

shares, and end-of-workshop shares on process, structure, and language. Mia and I

taught, observed, and conferenced, and then studied student work. Based on the

resulting student writing and our reflections of our observations and conferences, we planned future lessons, conferences, and shares.

At the conclusion of each week, the teacher and I took the notes regarding instruction and the student writing notes including the conferencing notes to make instructional decisions for the following week. We looked to find any connections between the explicit classroom instruction and evidence of new skills in student writing. Where there appeared to be connections or instructional success, we worked to build on those successes in future weeks and to find further evidence of the effectiveness of that type of instruction. Where there was no evidence of student progress, we found alternative instructional opportunities for the students.

The formative analysis was set aside to use during the summative analysis. Teacher and researcher findings and observations during instruction were added to the findings of the summative analysis.

Summative Data Analysis

There were two focus areas for summative data analysis: a comparison of the students' un-coached pre- and post –instruction writing samples and a linear, simultaneous analysis of the SFL-inspired instruction alongside the resulting student writing. The pre- and post-assessments provide a glimpse into the students' independent writing skills before and after instruction. The weekly writing samples collected during instruction illuminate the students' attempts and growth over time. It

was useful to study the student writing concurrently with the instruction to better link instruction with student writing.

For both the pre- and post-instruction writing and the weekly writing samples analyses, I used a system of selective coding guided by the categories of SFL (Charmaz, 2000), memo writing (Charmaz, 2003), and then noticing patterns and themes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Borrowing the strategies of triangulation and constant comparison from grounded theory, I then made "meaning" out of the themes and patterns, (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Charmaz, 2000; Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

To analyze all the pre- and post-instruction writing samples I used a template, shown in figure 14, where I recorded notes regarding the students' demonstrated awareness of context and audience, topic selection, mode, process, structure and language. The criteria for analysis was determined by the features of SFL taught in the unit. Each piece of writing was coded based on the criteria in the template, a process that was repeated several times until saturation. Then, each student's pre-assessment was compared to his or her post-assessment. The purpose was to see areas of growth as well as areas of instruction that did not appear in the post-assessment writing sample.

Figure 14
Writing Analysis Recording Form

Name_____ Date _____

Prompt _____

Genre: Personal Recount

Awareness of Context	
Awareness of Audience	
Appropriate Topic	
Mode • cohesion • conventions	
Independence as a writer	

Structure of the Genre: Personal Recount

Orientation	
Step by Step Sequence	
Closing	

Language Elements

Complex / Compound Sentences	
Participants	
Processes • Action • Noun/verb agree • Mental • Dialogue	
Adjectivals • Adjectives • Adjectival phrases	
Adverbials • Adverbs • Adverbial phrases	
Time Linking Words	

At the conclusion of the study the same instruction-related data used for the

formative analysis was examined to conduct a more comprehensive data analysis to

answer my question: What happens in student writing when a teacher incorporates

SFL theory into her writer's workshop instruction? This analysis required a

chronological study of all aspects of the both instructional units including the whole

group teaching, conferencing, and student feedback. This analysis was then

compared to the students' writing samples at each point in the instructional units.

The goal was to tell the story of the instruction and then to connect it with any evidence of that instruction in student writing.

I used selective coding to match my question regarding what happens in student writing when an SFL-inspired workshop is implemented. I coded the data relating to instruction for any evidence of context, purpose or structure, audience, language, and process. This data included the lesson plans with Mia's observational comments, instructional artifacts, my own research journal, conferencing notes, and the lesson videotapes. I read and reread the data, underlining and highlighting any evidence of those elements in the teaching. The relevant data points were recorded onto templates like the one in figure 15, based on the key areas of instruction: context, purpose, audience, language, and process. For the videotapes, I recorded relevant quotes or actions onto the forms described above.

Figure 15
Example of An Analysis Form Used to Study Instruction

Evidence of **Purpose**: meaning the teachers discuss how purpose of the writing affects the structure and decisions we make as a writer or the students utilize the correct structure in their writing to accomplish the given purpose. Or Kids could discuss the purpose while conferencing or planning.

| Date | In Teaching | | In Student Work | |
	Where?	What? Evidence…	Where?	What? Evidence…

This data then needed to be connected with the students' corresponding writing. Just as the pre- and post-instruction student writing was coded,   I coded the students' writing for evidence of an awareness of context, purpose or structure, audience, language, and process. In fact, the same template used to study the pre- and post-assessments was utilized here to study the students' writing during instruction. Again, the coding was focused strictly on the content of instruction because the goal was to connect instruction with student writing.

To allow for a direct comparison I transferred the codes from the instruction and the codes relating to student writing onto charts such as the one below. These

charts allowed me to collect all interesting data points onto one document. It enabled

me to tell the story of the instruction using all relevant data and then to immediately

relate it to the student writing.

Figure 16
Form Used to Align Codes From Instruction and Student Writing

Day and Teaching Goal:	Day 1: Students will learn to read the prompt, decide what "they" want, pick an appropriate topic and prewrite.	Day 2: Students will use planning boxed to plan their stories across 4 pages.	Day 3: Students will revise their writing by adding adjectival details.	Day 4: Student will use a rubric to improve their personal narratives.	Day 5: Students will write a final draft of their long composition so that their audience can read it.
Big Ideas					
Instructional Maneuvers					
Student work to include					
Other Artifacts To include					

Finally, the synthesis chart described above was used as an outline to describe

the instruction in narrative form. The goal was to create a sort of scrapbook of the

instructional maneuvers Mia and I made throughout the study and the students'

responses to that instruction.

Chapter 4

Portrait of Personal Narrative Writing Instruction

In order to answer the question: "What happens when teachers incorporate

SFL theory of language into writing instruction?" I will describe the instruction that

took place as well as the students' responses. The focus of the descriptions will be on

evidence of SFL influence in teaching and student writing.

Several key findings are evident in the description of instruction and student

writing. Throughout the unit, the situational context, purpose, and tenor framed

nearly every lesson making the learning authentic and practical to the learners. SFL's

lens allowed the teachers to identify and explicitly teach elements of a successful text

including text structure and language elements. The metalanguage allowed teachers

to explain the functions of various language tools in useful ways to students. Readers

will note how SFL's metalanguage informed language lessons, conferences, and

student feedback. Most notably, in this description, readers will find that focus

students attempted nearly all structure and language elements explicitly taught in the

unit. This suggests that the SFL based content and the sequence of instruction;

studying mentor texts, structure lessons, and then language lesson; was useful for

student application of SFL inspired writing instruction.

The chapter is broken into four sections, a brief immersion period and three

cycles of instruction using three different MCAS prompts. Each section will begin

with the stated and posted instructional goals for the cycle of lessons and the MCAS

prompt used. Then, each lesson will be described demonstrating exactly how SFL

was infused into instruction. Teacher feedback and student writing will be included

alongside the instruction descriptions to illustrate how student writing developed as a

result of SFL influenced writing instruction.

Immersion Lessons:

The first day of instruction our goal was to introduce the students to several

key concepts of SFL including, context, purpose, audience, and the structure of

personal narrative. Because they had been writing personal narratives for so many

months I incorrectly assumed they would be able to analyze for the structure of

narratives and that the new learning would be around context, purpose and audience.

To launch the unit and begin the day's lesson I explained we were going to

begin preparing for the MCAS long composition. The students did not respond

enthusiastically. I placed an exemplar on the overhead and explained that we would

be studying exemplars for the next two days to build a rubric for ourselves.   I read

the exemplar to the students and noticed evidence that the writer was aware of

context, audience, and purpose. Then each student received an exemplar of an

MCAS long composition. They were asked to analyze their piece, in pairs, looking

for evidence of the context, audience and purpose. Then, the partnerships were to

mark the orientation, step-by-step body of the text, and the closing.

The students were extremely frustrated with the task. Many of the

partnerships could not read the text and were overwhelmed with the length of the

pieces. It was clear from the student forms as seen in figure 16, that the students did

not understand the directions. After a few excruciating minutes of group work time,

we pulled the class back together. I modeled for them how to analyze a piece for context, purpose, and audience, and then noted the structural elements. Mia wondered if we tried to do too much in one day. I agreed and wondered how I could undo the damage the following day.

Figure 16
Student Exemplar Analysis Recording Sheet

Context: Do you think the writer understood that she needed to show all she could do as a writer to impress the test readers? Why do you think that?	yes- She use big words that Cre out used puntuation, gave details
Audience: Did the writer understand that she was writing for strangers up in Boston? Why do you think that?	yes- She knew that she had to do her Best.
Purpose: What was the writer's purpose for this piece? What genre is the best choice for this purpose?	The purpose was so she could tell a time when you met a new person. The genre is personal narative.
Structure:	
Orientation (Lead): Did the writer grab your attention? How? Circle the who, when, and where in the orientation.	NO- When four years ago / person who is talking / Who / Where bus School
Step by Step: Did the writer write the story in sequential order? Number the steps of her story.	
Closing: Did the writer write an evaluative or summary ending? How did you know? Underline the closing of the writing.	

I decided that for the remainder of the units I would not teach context, purpose, and audience in isolation but would weave them into every lesson taught. Structural elements would be specifically taught but, I would use the process and graphic organizers to support student understanding of structure along the way.

For the second day of immersion I focused on the sentence level, so that I could introduce the meta-language to describe four language tools including adjectivals, adverbials, nouns, and verbs. I pulled out several sentences that were particularly long and complicated for the students. I wrote each one on sentence strip paper and modeled for the children, how to cut the sentences up into the four parts of a sentence. I described the "job" or purpose of each language element and explained that I would teach them how to use each one of them in their writing to help their reader better understand their story. I drew arrows to show the relationship between adjectivals and nouns and adverbials and verbs.

Pairs of students received a sentence to cut up and label according to the four language tools taught. After a calm and productive work time, students were called back to the rug to share their sentence analysis with the class. It was a struggle for students to use the meta-language to describe their sentences but, with some assistance, all incorporated the terms into their shares. During each share I insisted the students connect the language tools they noticed back to the author's purpose, asking, "Why did the writer do that?" Figure 16 shows the resulting student work.

Figure 16
Introducing Language Tools Student Work
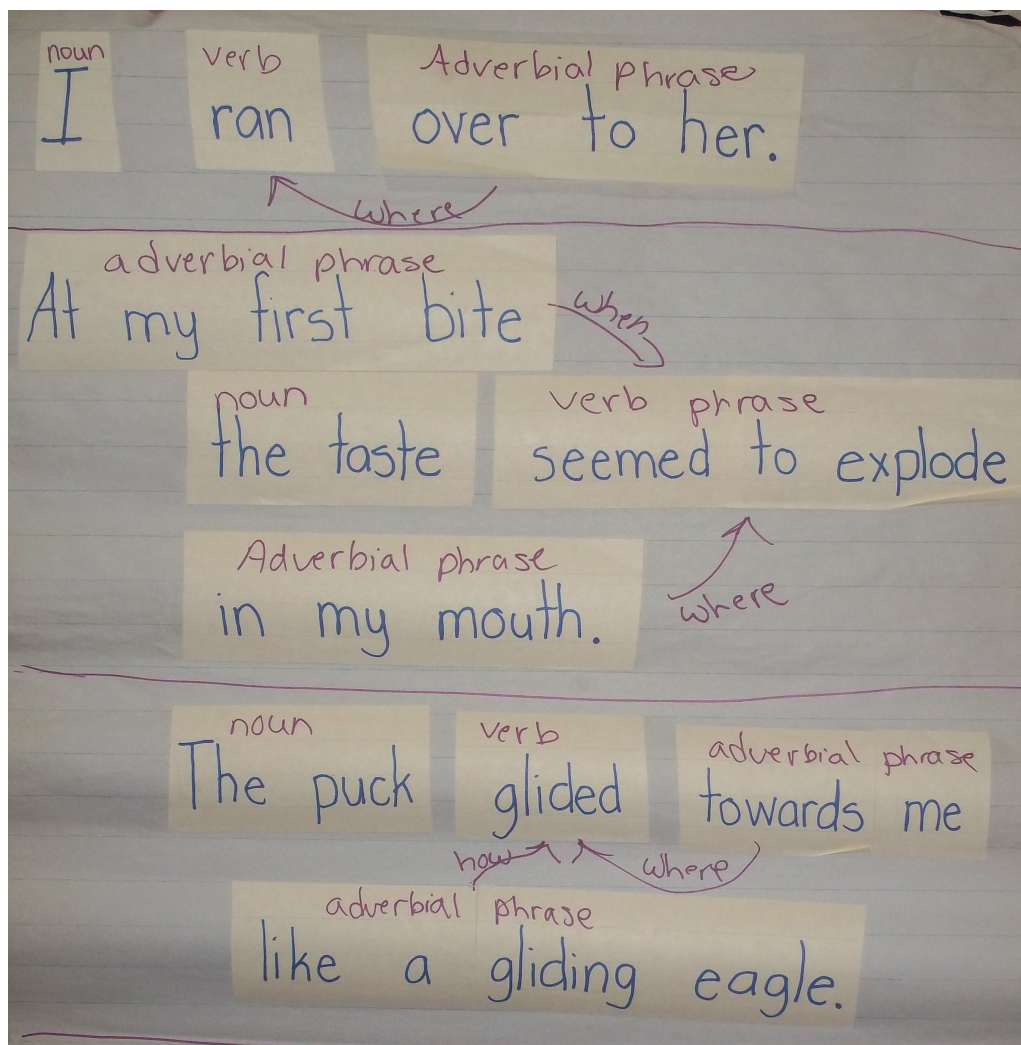
The students quickly noticed that writers could include several adverbials and adjectivals in one sentence. They dubbed that phenomenon "stacking." I concluded the lesson with a solemn promise to teach them how to use these tools to write sentences like these in their stories.

Writing Lessons:

Following the brief two-day immersion lessons, began writers' workshop lessons in which the students wrote following instruction. The student writing portion of the MCAS Long Composition Unit was broken into three five-day cycles. A new prompt was introduced at the beginning of each cycle. The students worked on that prompt for the duration of the cycle moving from prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and then to a final draft. The writing block was approximately one hour a day. In an effort to match the time constraints of the actual test situation we pushed the children to complete their final draft in the five sessions allotted as that would be equivalent to the time the students would have to complete the MCAS itself.

Figure 17
MCAS Unit Prompt 1

Think about the best time that you have ever had. Maybe you played all day with friends outside, went on a special trip, participated in a game, or spent some time at camp.

Write a story about this best time. What were you doing? Who was with you? Where were you? Why was this the best time ever? Give enough details in the story to show the reader what happened.

Figure 18

Cycle 1 Instructional Goals

Week's Goal: Students will write a strong personal narrative to a prompt.

Day 1 Goal: Students will learn to read the prompt, decide what "they" want, pick an appropriate topic and prewrite.

Day 2 Goal: Students will use planning boxes to plan their stories across 4 pages.

Day 3 Goal: Students will revise their writing by adding adjectival details.

Day 4 Goal: Students will use a rubric to improve their personal narratives.

Day 5 Goal: Students will write a final draft of their long composition so that their audience can read it.

The stated and posted goals for each lesson are shown in figure 19. The first day's goal was, "Students will learn to read the prompt, decide what "they" want, pick an appropriate topic and pre-write." It was crucial that the students become clear about who they were writing for and the unique situation of this type of writing. My unstated goal was to show the children how to go about starting a new prompt on test day, to learn one pathway of actions that would actually accomplish this type of writing. Already I could see two instructional imperatives emerging in my thinking around SFL inspired writing instruction. First I could see that it was useful for writers to begin with a writing project with a clear focus on purpose and audience. Second, it was imperative that I explicitly teach and scaffold students into the actions

required to accomplish those goals. Both of these imperatives were introduced in this first lesson but became the foundation of all the other mini-lessons in the unit. The purpose and audience determined what the students needed in their writing, and the pathway was how.

I began the lesson by reviewing the goal of the entire unit and then the goal for that day. I could see by their downtrodden faces that they felt the goal was not attainable. Unfortunately, this was a group of students used to school failure. I made it clear that I believed in them by pointing out the language in the goal, "Students will . . ." not, "Students might. . ." So, I began with a promise that each and every student in the room could in fact write a strong personal narrative to a prompt. This detail will be important later as it shows how low their confidence was at the outset of this unit.

I decided to model for them exactly how I would read a prompt, think about what "they" want, decide on a topic, and prewrite. I posted the chart in figure 19 alongside an enlarged prompt for me to work from.

Figure 19
MCAS Process Instructional Chart

<u>Writing to the Prompt</u>
1- Read the prompt.
2- Think about what "they" want.
3- Decide on an appropriate topic
        -appropriate for my audience
        -has lots of interesting details
4- Prewrite.
        Story > Timeline
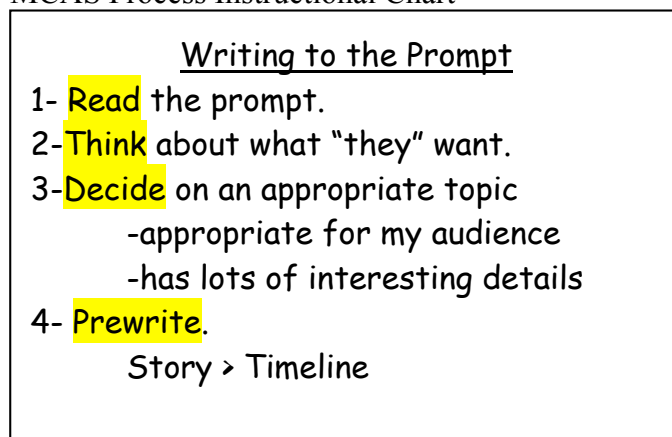
I decided to use the prompt the children responded to for their pre-assessment about a time with a friend. I methodically read the prompt aloud, stopping periodically to share my thinking so far. Then I stopped to think aloud, "Hmm what do they want?" I reminded the kids that the "they" were the "strangers up in Boston" who would be reading their MCAS writings. I found the words "Write a story" in the second section of the prompt and exclaimed, "Oh, they want me to write a story! I can do that!"

Once I determined that the audience required a story I had to decipher what they wanted the story to be about. I continually reminded them that in this situation they had to give the audience exactly what they wanted. So I reread the prompt and determined they wanted a story about a friendship. I rattled off several different topic suggestions. I thought about each one deciding if it was appropriate for my audience and I could remember lots of interesting details from the time. Throughout this modeling I was alternately referring to the Writing to the Prompt Pathway chart to show them exactly what I was doing and sharing my thinking about the audience, situation, and purpose.

All of the focus students selected topics appropriate for the audience. There were stories about fishing, roller coasters, puppies, family beach trips, and playing with friends. Adam, in his conference told me he selected the family beach trip because he remembered it very well so he could add details to his story.

Then, I told them that now that we knew the genre, topic, and audience it was time to prewrite. In studying different texts with SFL I realized the structure of the

text was one key to accomplishing its purpose. Therefore, I needed to offer my

students better support from the beginning to accomplish the correct structure.   This

meant I had to select a prewriting strategy that supported the end structure of the

writing. In this genre I decided a timeline was the best-suited prewriting strategy. It

forced students to think about things in a chronological sequence of events. In

essence I was already corralling them into the required structure for this purpose with

the pre-writing. I had reservations about being so rigid with the students but I had

promised them all success and this was a pre-writing strategy that was most likely to

make them all successful.

I taught the students, "Every time I am asked to write a story I know that I

need a timeline. Timelines help me tell what happened, and then what happened

next, and then what happened next." While I said this I pointed to the timeline I was

drawing on my chart paper, as seen in figure 20. I took the time to talk to them about

where they would draw their timelines in their test booklets.

Figure 20
Teacher Modeled Timeline for Prewriting

Write a (story) about this (friendship.) Give enough details to tell the reader about this friendship.

↑ saw moving trucks
walked over
hoping for a girl
spotted Mom
walked over
asked
said yes
called "Wendy"
girl came over
said hi
decided to play
brought her to my swingset
played airplane
decided to be best friends ↓
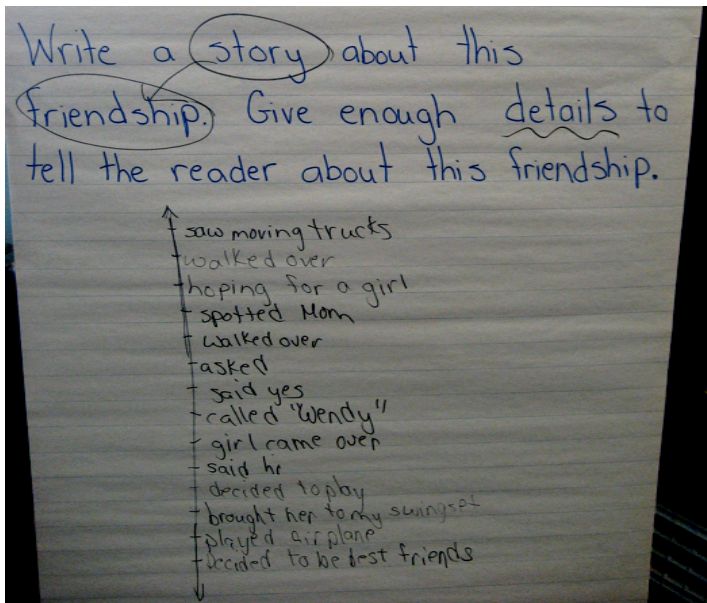
I modeled for them how to narrow down my topic from a "giant watermelon topic to a tiny seed topic (Calkins, 2005)." Then, I wrote my timeline being careful to model a step-by-step progression of actions that would lead to an action filled, sequential story. Even though it was not part of my instructional goal, I also included thoughts feelings, and dialogue in my timeline. While I had not taught that yet, I felt it was a good idea to model the type of work we were hoping they would eventually accomplish.

For the active engagement portion of the lesson I passed out their prompt for the week and asked them to turn and tell the person next to them what "they want" in this prompt. While they were turning and talking Mia and I listened in to make sure all the students were on the right track. Once the hum settled back down I pointed back to the Writing to the Prompt chart and told them it was their job to "Read,

Think, Decide, and Pre-write" during their writing time.   Every single student in the class wrote a timeline as their prewriting strategy. Most of the focus students including Joelle, Amanda, Tom, Adam, and Aubrey had a clear, step-by-step timeline that served them well in their drafting. Figure 21 is a representative portion of Joelle's timeline as an example. She wrote action in chronological order in her timeline. Carlos struggled to make his timeline a sequential series of events. He wanted to include his trip to Florida, an Easter Egg hunt, and a basketball game in his timeline.

Figure 21
Student Example of an Effective Timeline for Planning
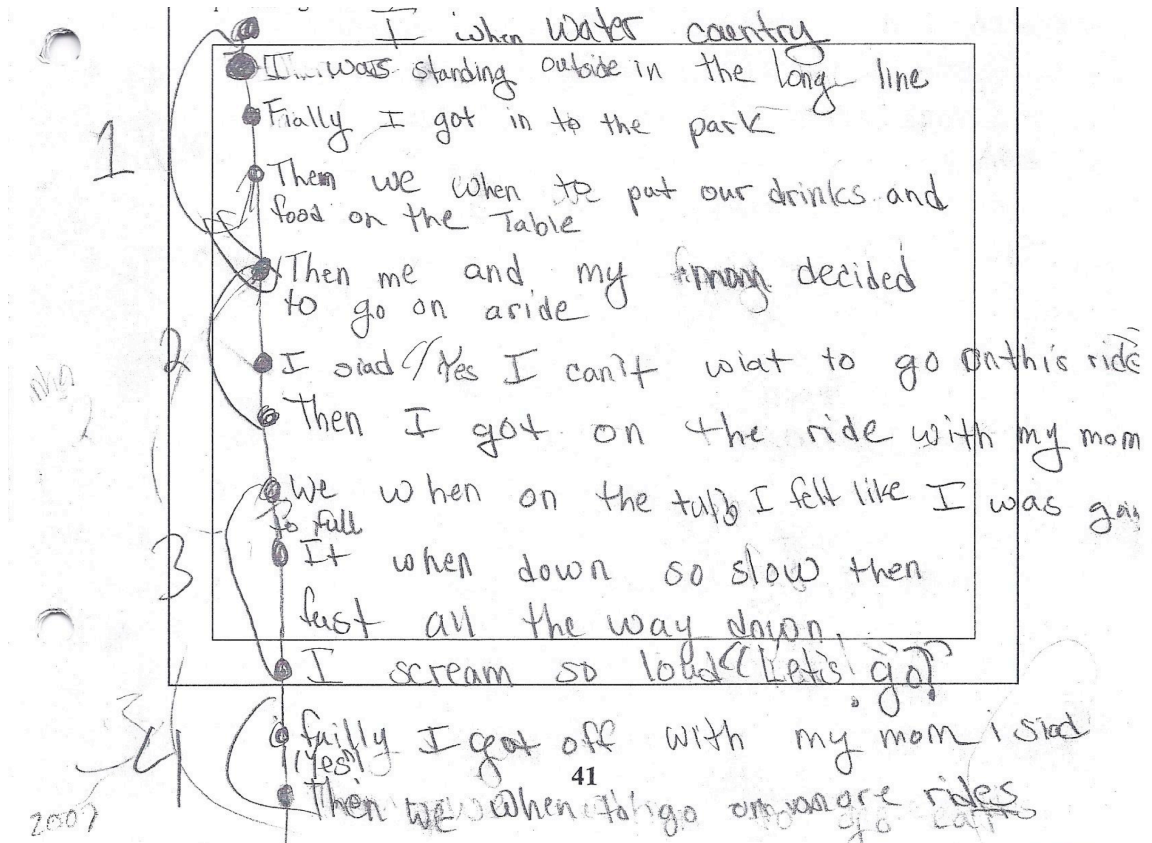
Joelle's timeline, shown in figure 21, includes the characters thoughts and feelings. She included lines such as, "I was screaming in side my mind. I was saying o no, o no in my mind." In her timeline, Aubrey wrote complete sentences with full dialogue such as, "I siad, "Yes I can't wiat to go on this ride." Or, "I scream so loud 'Let's go!'" This decision to include dialogue before I taught it did backfire a bit with Tom. His entire timeline was in dialogue with no actions. Figure 22, is an excerpt from his timeline. Despite his teacher's best efforts to encourage him to include what he did, he chose to write the entire timeline in dialogue.

Figure 22
Tom's Dialogue Timeline
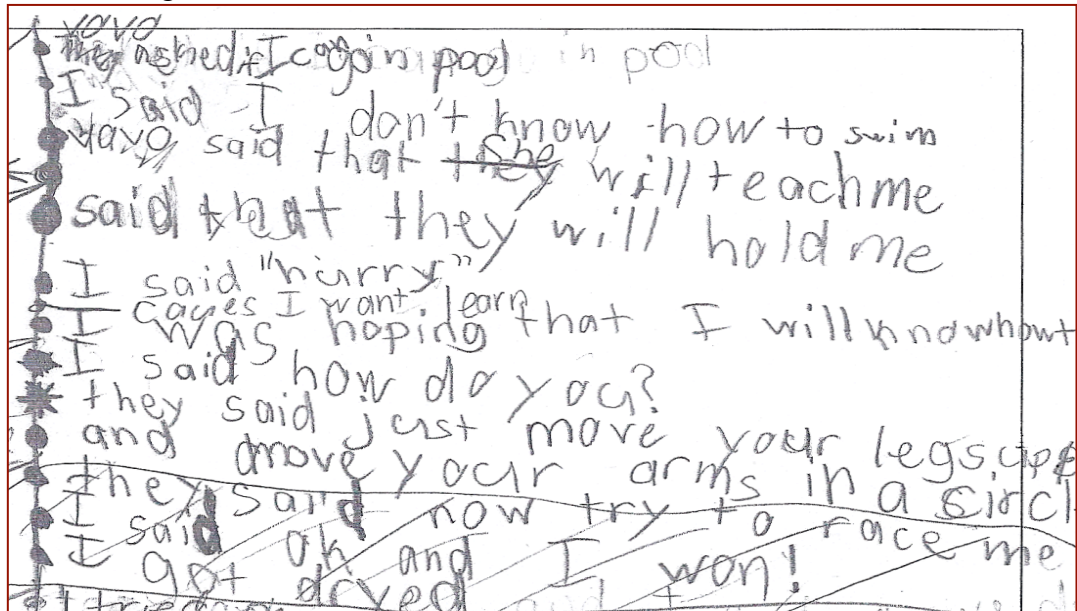
   That night, Mia and I each took half of the students' timelines home to read

over. We checked to make sure they had an appropriate topic and a step-by-step

timeline. Every student had an appropriate topic. However, there were six students,

Carlos among them, who did not have step-by-step timelines that would set them up

for a sequential story. We made plans to pull aside those students at the beginning of

writing time the following day. It was important to us that we give them ample

feedback and re-teaching early in the process to ensure their eventual success.

   The purpose of Day Two was to show the students how to organize

themselves to write a personal recount, and then begin drafting. Day two was

purpose driven, I needed to make sure the students used the required structure to

accomplish the specified purpose for the piece, "Write a story about a time when . . ."

I began my lesson by reviewing what they learned thus far with long and elaborate compliments regarding their performance to date. I complimented the students' topics as being perfect for the "strangers in Boston." I complimented the step by step timelines that "I was confident would lead to stellar stories." Mia watched the students glow with pride and lean in to hear the next piece of instruction.

I reviewed our goal chart, reminding them that each of them would write a "strong personal narrative to a prompt." Then, I pointed out how they already met yesterday's goal and moved on to the day's goal: "Students will use planning boxes to plan their stories across four pages." I decided to keep the goal for the day short in an effort not to overwhelm them. In truth, I planned to have the students plan their writing across four pages, write a lead, and then begin drafting. I would use my own modeling and the Writing to the Prompt Pathway Chart to show them the exact actions I expected of them.

The students had been taught how to use planning boxes, write leads, and draft across several pages in a previous personal narrative unit with Mia. However, that was months before this and Mia was not at all confident they would remember all these things without some strong reminders. We decided in the interest of time to join them into one lesson around the Writing to the Prompt Pathway.

I brought the students attention back to the Writing to the Prompt pathway chart that now had some additions as can be seen in figure 23. Overnight I added a line for planning boxes, writing a lead, and drafting. I wanted to make sure that the process the students went through to write their stories would lead them to the correct

structure. I used strong language like, "Every single time you receive a text writing

prompt you must go through these steps." I was still uncomfortable with the rigidity

of my approach around the process but I had promised success and I felt confident

that if they did it this way they would be successful.

Figure 23
MCAS Process Chart – Revised

```
           Writing to the Prompt
1- Read the prompt.
2-Think about what "they" want.
3-Decide on an appropriate topic
      -appropriate for my audience
      -has lots of interesting details
4- Prewrite.
      Story > Timeline
5- Make and fill in 4 Planning Boxes.
6- Write a strong lead.
7-Write long about each part of the story.
```
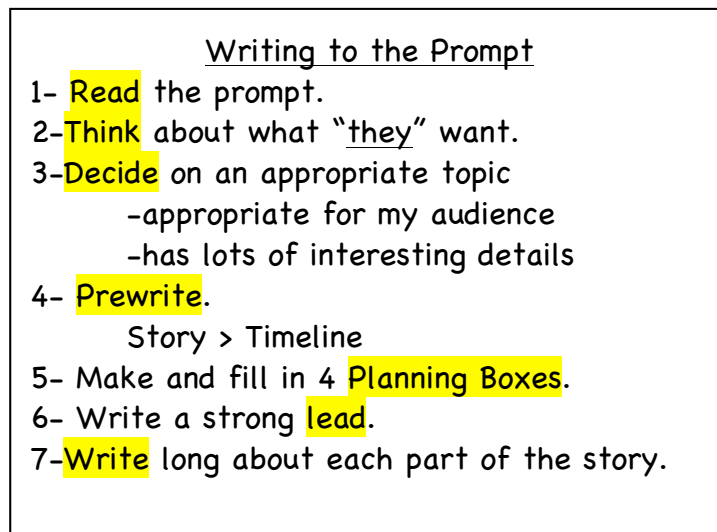
Returning to my modeled timeline from the previous day, I reread my timeline

and referred back to the pathway chart thinking aloud. I explained, to the students,

that I should break my timeline into four pieces if I was going to create four planning

boxes for my story. As can be seen in the figure 24, I bracketed my timeline into four

sections explaining how those parts "go together."

Figure 24
Modeled Planning Four Parts for a Narrative
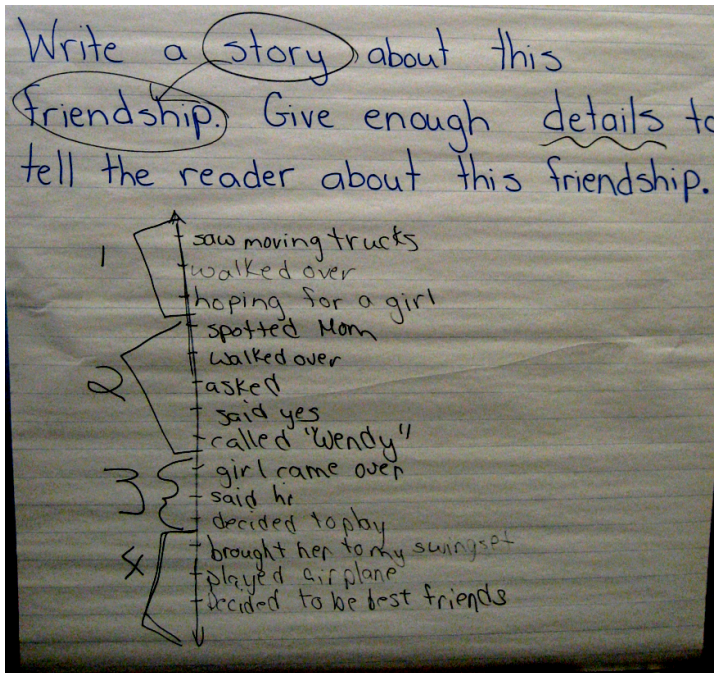
Mia and I were confident this was the best way to teach our students to

paragraph their stories. At the minimum, every student would write four paragraphs

with this pathway. When I modeled, I slipped in other reasons to start a new

paragraph, but this approach would get them started on correct paragraphing.

Next, I showed them my booklet of 2 stapled chart pages. I explained on test

day that they would receive their prompt on the cover of a booklet like this one with

four pages inside to write on. I counted the pages in front of them showing them how

they needed to use the front and back of the papers. It seemed tedious to constantly

be referring to the logistics of the testing situation but, SFL makes it clear that

understanding the situation is crucial to effective writing. I decided that all these

logistics were part of understanding the situation of the writing and tucked it inside

my not so mini – lesson.

I then referred back to the pathway chart and pointed out that I was ready to

make my planning boxes. I drew a box on the top of each page of my booklet. Then

I went back and summarized each grouping of bullets inside the corresponding box in

my draft booklet. I wrote all four planning boxes looked up and smiled. "Now I'm

ready to write!" I exclaimed.

Aubrey's timeline and planning boxes in figure 25, offer the best example of

how students used this technique to organize for writing. Aubrey has a step by step

timeline that she broke into four distinct groupings: arrival, decide on a ride, getting

on the water slide and beginning the descent, and the conclusion of the ride.

Figure 25
Example of a Students' Plan for Paragraphing

pre-writing activities).

I when water country
II was standing outside in the long line
Fially I got in to the park
Them we when to put our drinks and food on the Table
Then me and my friend decided to go on aride
I siad Yes I can't wiat to go on this ride
Then I got on the ride with my mom
We when on the tulb I felt like I was gan to fall
It when down so slow then fast all the way down,
I scream so loud (Lets go)
Fuilly I got off with my mom i siad (Yes)
Then we when to go on more rides yo Caff

41

Once Aubrey completed her timeline she was ready to create her planning boxes in her drafting booklet. She drew a box on the top of each page of her booklet and then she summarized each bracketed section of her timeline into the boxes as seen in figure 26.

Figure 26
Student example of planning boxes

Page 1	Page 2
"When *(went)* to water country"	"Then got in the Tubb"
Page 3	Page 4
"Got to the bottom of the ride"	"I got off with my mom"

I conferenced with Joelle this day and noticed that she had only planned one page and began writing. By the time I got to her she had written her entire story on the first page with little elaboration. At the beginning of the conference, I was able to remind her that she neededto complete all of her planning boxes before she begins to write, so that she does not try to "squish her whole story onto one page." She was able to correct this herself after I left.

Like Aubrey, after a brief reminder Tom and Adam of the focus group used their planning boxes to map out their stories across the four pages. Carlos and Amanda required some re-teaching and teacher support to use this tool to stretch out their stories. This turned out to be a strategy useful for future language instruction because it allowed us to set expectations around various language tools such as, "You must have at least one piece of dialogue per part," or "Each part of your story has to include at least two adverbial phrases."

The modeling portion of my mini-lesson ended with a demonstration of the beginning of drafting. To begin their stories, I told them they needed a strong lead. I decided to use the term "lead" instead of the SFL term, "orientation" because Mia taught the idea using "lead" earlier in the year. Again, SFL made my instruction more clear. In a story or narrative, the lead's purpose is to orient the reader to the setting, the characters, and the timeframe. Therefore, I taught the students that their leads had two jobs, first to grab the reader's attention, acknowledging the importance of the audience, and second to tell the reader who, when, and where.   I planned to remind the students about several strategies they could use to grab the readers'

attention later in the workshop, so I moved right into writing my own lead.   After I wrote my lead I stopped and asked, "Do you think the people up in Boston would like that?" Again, it is evident how that initial lesson on audience and purpose is lacing through today's lesson as well.

With my lead done I referred back to the Writing to the Prompt pathway chart to remember I then needed to, "Write long about each part of the story." I read the first planning box, read my lead and then wrote the first several paragraphs of my story. In my modeling I worked to show the kids all the language tools they would eventually be learning in the unit, action verbs, sensing verbs, saying verbs, adjectival and adverbial phrases and temporal links to connect ideas. I also inserted a little cue about beginning new paragraphs with new dialogue or new actions. I wanted the students to realize we paragraph to alert the reader any time something different is happening in the story, not just because of a new "part" in the story.

I skipped the active engagement portion of the lesson because there were six students not yet ready to move forward and the lesson was much too long already. So, I reminded them of their job today pointing to the Writing to the Prompt pathway chart. I gave them back their timelines with a new booklet of blank papers stapled to the back and sent them off to create planning boxes, write their leads, and then write long. Mia took the six kids in need of re-teaching to the back table to rework their timelines allowing me to conference with students one-on-one.

For the mid-workshop share we decided to review several strategies for grabbing the reader's attention they had learned during previous units with Mia. I

posted a familiar chart with a list of strategies including dialogue, setting, action, and sound effects. Using my own story as an example I showed them how I might use each of these strategies to write a lead. I concluded this mid-workshop interruption with a warning that they would be asked to share their excellent leads at the end of the workshop and I sent them back to work.

At the end of the writing session we gathered on the rug for our share. I decided to ask kids to share their leads based on the strategy they used. First I asked who had used dialogue in their lead. Few kids raised their hands. I asked Joelle to go first and she read her lead, "Boom!! I heard all kinds of noses [*noises]* out side. So I deicied *[decided]* to look out the window to see what was going on. I saw people bluliding *[building]* a carnival and other cool stuff." I paused because she had in fact done most of what I asked in a lead but it was not a dialogue lead. It was then that I realized that perhaps many of the students did not remember what we meant by dialogue. I explained that dialogue is exactly what someone says in a story written out. I went on to show them how Joelle had done a terrific job grabbing our attention with a sound effect but it was not exactly what a character said.

We reviewed the chart, asking if she told the reader "who," "when," and "where?" We noticed that she did not tell us when the story took place. I looked at Joelle and said, "So when did this happen?" She said, "While I was watching T.V." "Great!" I responded, "Go add that into your lead before you forget." Joelle quickly raced to her seat and squeezed in "when I was watching TV" into her lead and returned to the circle. We continued around the circle in much the same way,

listening to the leads, evaluating them for the two requirements, complimenting or

questioning them as needed, and then sending kids back to their seats to revise if

needed.

Mia noted how SFL based instruction on structure allowed for clear

expectations in this share and the kids seemed only too eager to return to their seat to

improve their leads after further instruction. As we moved through all the dialogue

leads, then to action, then setting, and finally sound effect leads, children who had not

yet shared grabbed pencils to revise their leads before it was their turn to share.

Figure 28 lists the focus students' leads following the instruction. The

specificity of the leads job, as seen through SFL, made this lesson so clear that the

students couldn't help but be successful, with sufficient instruction.

Figure 28
Student Leads Categorized By Strategy

Dialogue	"We where *[were]* waiting are thay done yet yes thay are my mom said then we went outside with my family in florida." - Carlos
Action	"We climbed into the boat and I fell ahhhh I said very loud and my dad and my dad catche me befor I fell on a bunch of pointy rocks. " – Amanda
Setting	"The hot summer day standing out there waiting to go into the park 'Let's go" I siad" - Aubrey
Sound Effects	"Woosh, Woosh I listned to the waves when I steeped on to the beach. It was one hot day and I was just getting ready to jump into

	the ocean whene we found are *[our]* spot." - Adam

After school that day, Mia and I met to discuss specific language lesson we would teach the following day. Mia felt strongly that we should begin with adjectivals because she felt that would help them add more details into their writing and because they were required to identify adjectives on the upcoming MCAS. I decided to use Derewianka's (2008) chart of adjectivals to explain the various purposes of adjectivals, in figure 29.

Figure 29
Adjectivals Teaching Chart

Determiners		Adjectives				
Articles/ Pointing	Possessives	Quantity	Opinion	Factual	Comparison	Classifying
Which?	Whose?	How many?/much?	Qualities	Qualities	What degree?	What type?
A The This That	Your Mine Joe's their	One Many first	Elaborate Fancy Beautiful gross	Red Old fuzzy	Best Longest More pretty	African Plastic

I began my mini-lesson reviewing the Writing to the Prompt pathway chart in figure 30, reminding them of the importance of audience and structure in this particular testing situation. Due to the unique circumstances of a test genre, I also reminded students that they needed a complete first draft by the end of the following day's workshop. There were gasps of surprise in the group, but most nodded their heads in confidence. I then revealed the newest edition to the chart: Revise. I explained that they did not need to be done with their draft to revise. They could revise while writing their first draft and also when they completed their first draft.

Figure 30

Revised Writing to the Prompt Chart

<u>Writing to the Prompt</u>
1- <mark>Read</mark> the prompt.
2-<mark>Think</mark> about what "<u>they</u>" want.
3-<mark>Decide</mark> on an appropriate topic
     -appropriate for my audience
     -has lots of interesting details
4- <mark>Prewrite</mark>.
    Story > Timeline
5- Make and fill in 4 <mark>Planning Boxes</mark>.
6- Write a strong <mark>lead</mark>.
7-<mark>Write</mark> long about each part of the story.
8- <mark>Revise</mark>

I read them the goal for the day, "Students will revise their writing by adding adjectival details." I brought the students' attention back to the cut up sentences we did at the very beginning of our unit during our immersion in the genre. I showed them one of the long cut up exemplar sentences. I reminded them of how we discovered that our audience likes long "grown up" sentences. I had promised them I would show them how to accomplish that and today was the day I was going to begin. Pointing to the adjectivals in the cut up sentences, I reminded the class that they already knew what adjectivals were, words or groups of words that describe the subject or a noun. Then, I explained that today I would be showing them all the different types of adjectivals and how they can serve them in their writing.

I posted Derewianka's (2008) chart of adjectivals in figure 31, to review with the students. Focusing their attention on the audience and the purpose for the text, I explained each category of adjectivals. "Whenever you want to show the reader how many you would use a Quantity adjectivals," I explained. Then I reviewed examples

of quantity adjectivals. I went through the same process with each type of adjectival.

I decided to focus on single words, at first, to make it simpler for the students. I

planned to introduce adjectival phrases during the mid-workshop share. At this point

Mia wrote in her notes, "Getting it" and "Seems simple."

Figure 31
Instructional Chart – types of Adjectivals
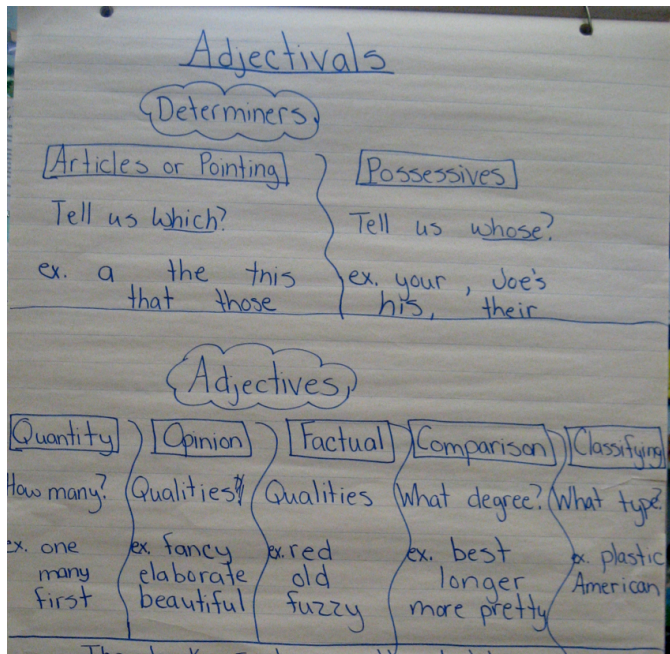
For the active engagement I asked for their help in adding adjectivals to my sentence, "The book sat on the table." First I identified the noun, book, and the verb sat. I felt that classifying and comparing were the two most difficult so I modeled how to revise for adjectivals using a classifying and then a comparing adjectival. Then I asked them to turn and talk to select a quantity adjectival. The students quickly turned and I could hear them listing all the various possibilities. I selected one and recorded it. The students turned and discussed an opinion adjectival next. Finally I asked them to list possible factual adjectivals. There were so many good ideas I decided to show them how to use several adjectivals in a row. They used the word they created for this phenomenon, "stacking" the descriptors. I sent them off to write and revise their writing for adjectivals.

Every student in the classroom added or wrote with single word adjectivals that day. Some of the students like Carlos used only simple, single word adjectivals like "pretty". Others added single and stacked adjectivals to their writing like Adam, "the great big blue ocean," and Tom, "my best Hawaiian bathing suit."

After writing quietly for about ten minutes I called the groups attention again to compliment their stacking of adjectivals. I told them the people in Boston were going to go wild for the stacked adjectivals. I shared Tom's swimsuit example. Then I brought their eyes to a new chart on adjectival phrases. I explained that adjectivals did not have to be just single words or even stacked words they could be whole phrases describing the noun. We then reviewed the chart, in figure 32, with the various purposes of adjectival phrases reading an example from each category. At the category "What like" I paused to explain that in my own research of long composition exemplars I discovered that the people in Boston especially like "What like" adjectivals. I explained that at the conclusion of the lesson today we would be sharing adjectivals and adjectival phrases.

Figure 32
Adjectival Phrase Instructional Chart
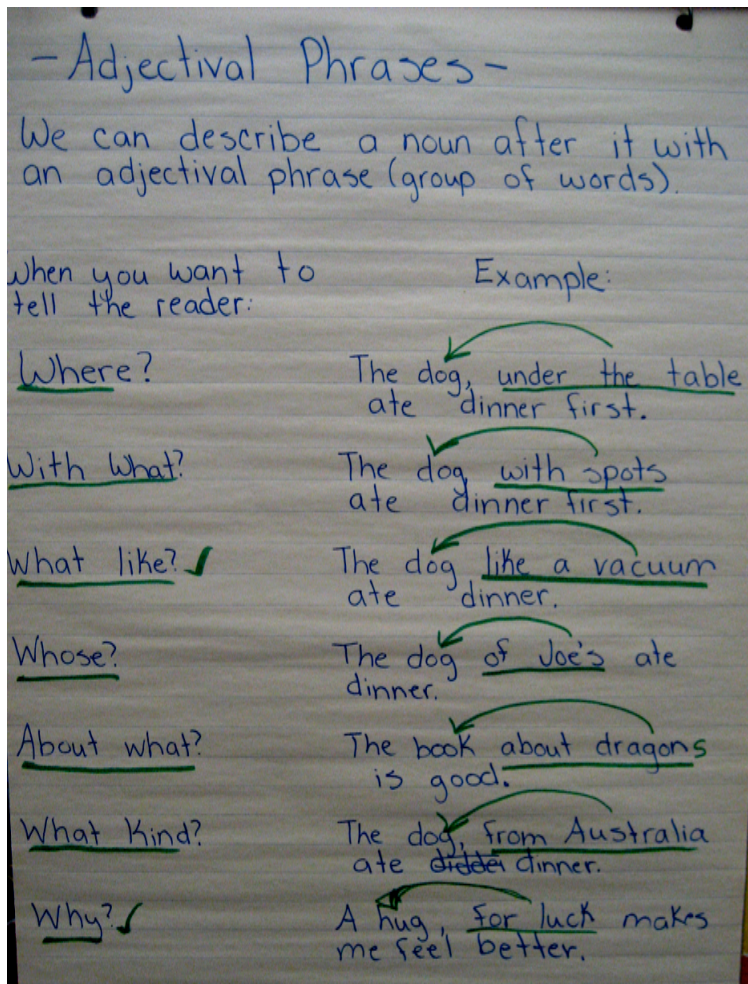
At the share time, we went down the list of purposes for adjectival phrases

and asked students to share their examples. Several of the students shared adverbial

phrases with a similar purpose while sharing. For example, Joelle shared, "I was

sinking in to the seet like a baby that had been skinked." The "like a baby" portion

describes how she was sinking not the seat or her.   Carlos shared, "we ran like a

hurricane." I took the time to praise their brilliant writing, teasing them for reading

my plan book and already doing adverbials, something I was not planning to teach

until next week. I did however make sure to explain to them that their phrases described the verb and that writers can and should use both adjectival phrases to describe the nouns and adverbial phrases for the verbs.

Here is a selection of the adjectival phrases the focus students added into their writing during this week of instruction.

"the water was cold like there was a bunch of icicles" – Amanda

"the waves like race cars getting ready to hit me." – Adam

"a big puddle of water"- Aubrey

"it was the funnest ride in the carnival" - Joelle

Tom and Carlos were the only two students who did not attempt to add adjectival phrases to their pieces this week.

This was the third day of instruction, a day in which I anticipated students would have their story structure in place ready to focus their attention on language tools to revise their piece. By the time I got to Amanda to conference with her, she had a long timeline about a four-day camping trip. She had erased and rewritten her first two pages at least twice and was on the verge of tears trying to add in adjectival phrases. I sat down with her and asked her what she wanted to write about. Her eyes lit up when she explained she wanted to write about the paddle boats on the pond with her family. I helped her rewrite her timeline, zooming in on just that part leaving out the remaining parts. Together we broke her story into four parts and wrote her planning boxes. She finished her piece in two more sessions including many examples of adjectivals in her final draft. It seemed that she could not settle in to

work on language until she had a zoomed in topic and an organized story structure in which to place to place it.

While Amanda is a success story of teaching intervention, Carlos is an example of what happens when a teacher fails to intercede when text structure is inappropriate. Carlos was in Mia's timeline re-teaching group and had a working timeline following her group. When he returned to his seat he planned his story using both timelines, trying to write a all about going to Florida and an Easter Egg Hunt in one draft. Unfortunately, I did not discover his confusion until the conclusion of the cycle. While he did attempt some adjectivals, "Aunty fancy black car," the language tool was lost in the confusing structure of his text.

The following day I introduced the rubric, in figure 33, to the class. The rubric was created using the structural, language, and convention elements identified during the SFL focused immersion portion of the unit. I reviewed every element in the level four row of the rubric with the class and explained that Mia and I would be using this rubric as the measuring stick to judge their writing. After modeling for the students how to reread their piece and assess their own work using the rubric, I explained that when they completed their draft they would need to assess their own work. If there were criteria not yet met, they were to fix, add, or delete as needed. I sent the students off to finish their stories and use the rubric to score, revise, and edit. Few students completed their drafts in time to practice using a rubric this week. None of the focus students used a rubric. Mia and I did use the rubric at the end of the week to provide specific feedback to the students.

Figure 33
MCAS Long Composition Rubric

Name:

My goal for Topic and Structure:

My Goal for Language:

My Goal for Conventions:

Rubric for Long Composition

	Topic and Structure	Language

6	• Answers the prompt
	• Strong lead
	   *includes who, when, and where
	   *grabs the readers attention
	• Step by step (no summaries)
	• Strong ending
	   *connect to the prompt
		• Includes dialogue
		• Includes feelings
		• Includes thoughts
		• Includes lots of details
		   *with adjectivals
		   *with adverbails

5	• Answers the prompt
	• Good lead
	   *includes who, when, and where
	• Mostly step by step
	• Good ending
		• Includes some dialogue
		• Includes some feelings
		• Includes some thoughts
		• Includes some details
		   *with adjectivals
		*with adverbails

4	• Answers the prompt
	• Has a lead
	   *includes who, when, or where
	• Lots of summary with some step by step
	• Has an ending
		• Includes little dialogue
		• Includes few character thoughts
		• Includes few character feelings
		• Includes few details
		   *adjectivals
		   *adverbials

3	• Answers the prompt • Has a lead • Some events in sequence	• Includes one or two details • Also includes some junk details
2	• Answers the prompt • Few events in sequence	• Includes one or two details
1	• Answers the prompt	
0	• No writing • Not to the prompt	

	Conventions
4	• Neat • Makes sense • Correct paragraphs • Most words spelled correctly • Correct punctuation • Correct capitalization • Correct grammar
3	• Neat • Makes sense • Correct paragraphs • Some errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar but they don't make it difficult to read.
2	• Readable handwriting • Some paragraph separation • **Sometimes** spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar errors make it difficult to read.
1	• Messy handwriting • Writing is not separated into paragraphs • Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar errors **often** make it difficult to read.
0	• No writing • Not readable

The final day of week one was focused on the tenor, or relationship with the audience, for publishing. To begin the mini-lesson I reminded the students that the audience needed to be able to read the draft, meaning the text had to be neat. We discussed the impact spelling had on the readability of the text. I encouraged the students to spell the words as accurately as possible. Then, I modeled how to transfer their four part drafts, into four paragraph stories using indention to cue the reader about a new "part" in their story.

Figure 34
MCAS Unit Prompt 2

A change in the weather can be wonderful. Sometimes we are surprised at how a snowy, rainy, windy, or sunny day can change the way we feel. The weather can bring chances for fun, creativity, time alone, time with your family, or something out of the ordinary.

Write a story about a day in which the weather made the day special for you. Give enough details to show the reader what happened on this day.

Figure 35 lists the teaching goals of the second cycle of lessons. Each day, the lesson began with the new teaching goal for the day posted just as it is in the chart.

Figure 35
Cycle 2 Instructional Goals

Week's Goal: Students will write a strong personal narrative to a prompt.

Day 1 Goal: Students will plan their writing with past tense action verbs to ensure step-by-step action in their stories.

Day 2 Goal: Students will use saying verbs that help their reader understand <u>how</u> it was said.

Day 3 Goal: Students will use sensing verbs to add character thoughts and feelings to their stories.

Day 4 Goal: Students will revise their endings to connect back to the prompt and provide an evaluation or summary for their story.

Day 5 Goal: Students will edit their writing for dialogue punctuation.

Day 6 Goal: Students will write titles appropriate to their topic that grab the reader's attention.

Over the previous instructional cycle the students demonstrated their ability to follow the process -pathway to create a piece of writing that had the required structure and appropriate topic for the audience. That accomplished, I felt it was time to explicitly teach students the language tools that would help them not just write a piece but write it well. We began the work with adjectivals the previous week but it was clear we needed to teach much more. As can be seen in the language of my teaching objectives, each lesson was an explanation of how a particular language element could help them accomplish their purpose better. Each lesson was a review of the process with the addition of a language feature or tool that would enable them to write with more skill and sophistication.

I decided to begin the second cycle of lessons with a thorough review of the process we taught the preceding week, guised in lavish compliments about their work. I methodically reminded students of every phase of the process beginning with a careful read of the prompt, to determine exactly what the prompt requires, and ending with a close read and edit of the final draft. The students enthusiastically agreed that they knew what to do and felt confident they could go through the process on test day independently.

I pointed out the rubric, figure 33, we created and used the previous week to evaluate their stories. Step by step was an element on the rubric. I explained that this day I would show them how a writer could use past tense action verbs to better

accomplish step-by-step action while writing a timeline for their story. Specifically, I said, "Today I want to show you how the verbs will help you plan out your story so that they will be really step by step."

For the teaching portion of the lesson, I began with a short explanation of action verbs. I posted a chart, figure 36, I had created that explained that action verbs are for telling about doings or happenings. I listed a few examples of action verbs, describing them as things that you can do. Then I launched into a very brief explanation of present, past, and future tenses. I drew a timeline on the chart and described how things that are happening right now are described with the present tense, things that happened before are past tense verbs, and to tell about happenings in the future one uses future tense verbs. Immediately I connected this line of thinking to the writing task at hand by asking, which tense is the most helpful for writing personal narratives? One student suggested present tense. I responded, "Really, to tell about what happened before?" The whole class chimed, "Past tense." Relieved, I agreed and explained, "If we remember to write in past tense then our reader will understand it happened before and they will be able to understand what's happening even better." I wanted students to understand that action verbs helped them accomplish the sequential action part of a narrative. "Action verbs get us step by step and the past tense tells our readers this happened before," I went on.

Figure 36
Action Verbs Teaching Chart

Action Verbs
  -    to tell about doings and happenings
  -    Ex. take get run come make

For Personal Narratives we need Past Tense verbs to
show the doing or happening happened before.

Walk > walked
Plan> planned
Use > used
Study > studied

On the same chart I wrote a list of past tense verbs reviewing the rules for

forming the past tense. Carlos connected with their weekly spelling words which

happened to be the pattern of changing the "y" to an "i" and adding "ed." I explained

that these past tense action verbs were what we needed for our timelines.

To show them how past tense verbs are useful while planning a timeline, I

modeled with a different prompt. Making sure to model my thinking around purpose

and audience I planned my story orally. Then I turned to the chart paper and began

creating a timeline.   I pointed out how each line of my timeline began with a verb

and then I pointed out all the action verbs, noting that tomorrow we would discuss

saying verbs. I asked, "Are you noticing how ridiculously fabulous past tense verbs

are while writing your timeline?" I ended my modeling by saying, "If you want your

story to be step by step you need to practice using action verbs now today in your

timeline."

For the active engagement portion of the lesson the students were asked to think about their recess today and name one past tense action verb that they did there. I listed their action verbs noting how the past tense of the verb was formed often correcting their confusions and pointing our "rule breakers." My final remark to the class was, "When it comes to writing your timeline you're going to think past tense action verbs because you know you have to do step by step." I passed out the new prompt and sent the children to their desks to work. The total lesson took sixteen minutes. This is quite a bit longer than a traditional mini-lesson because it included two key teaching points, what are past tense action verbs and how to use them to accomplish step by step while planning for a personal narrative story.

After ten minutes of student work time I interrupted the students to explain irregular past tense verbs to the students. Together we listed some verbs that break the rules when they are changed to past tense. I explained that there was no rule for this but that they would simply have to memorize them. The list we made was posted in the classroom for their reference. Then the students went back to work on their timelines, planning boxes, and first drafts.

Mia noted that every single student had a completed timeline following this lesson and work period. Of the six foci students only Carlos created a timeline with several summary statements such as "had a cookout, had fun, played, had a dance off". I made sure to conference with him to assist him in stretching his story out with more action verbs using a mini timeline for each part of his story during the drafting stage. Amanda's timeline, in figure 37, is a representative example of the class's

timelines following this lesson. With Adam, I was able to extend the lesson with a

conference on how to write a "baby timeline" next to a planning box. This strategy

enabled Adam to take one part of his story and stretch it out further using past tense

action verbs to zoom in even further, as seen in figure 38. During a peer conference

later in the week, Tom agreed that Adam had "good action verbs." Adam used the

tools in his writing and Tom was able to use meta-language to describe why Adam's

piece was strong.

Figure 37
Example of a Student Timeline Using Past Tense Action Verbs

Figure 38

Example of a Student "Baby Timeline
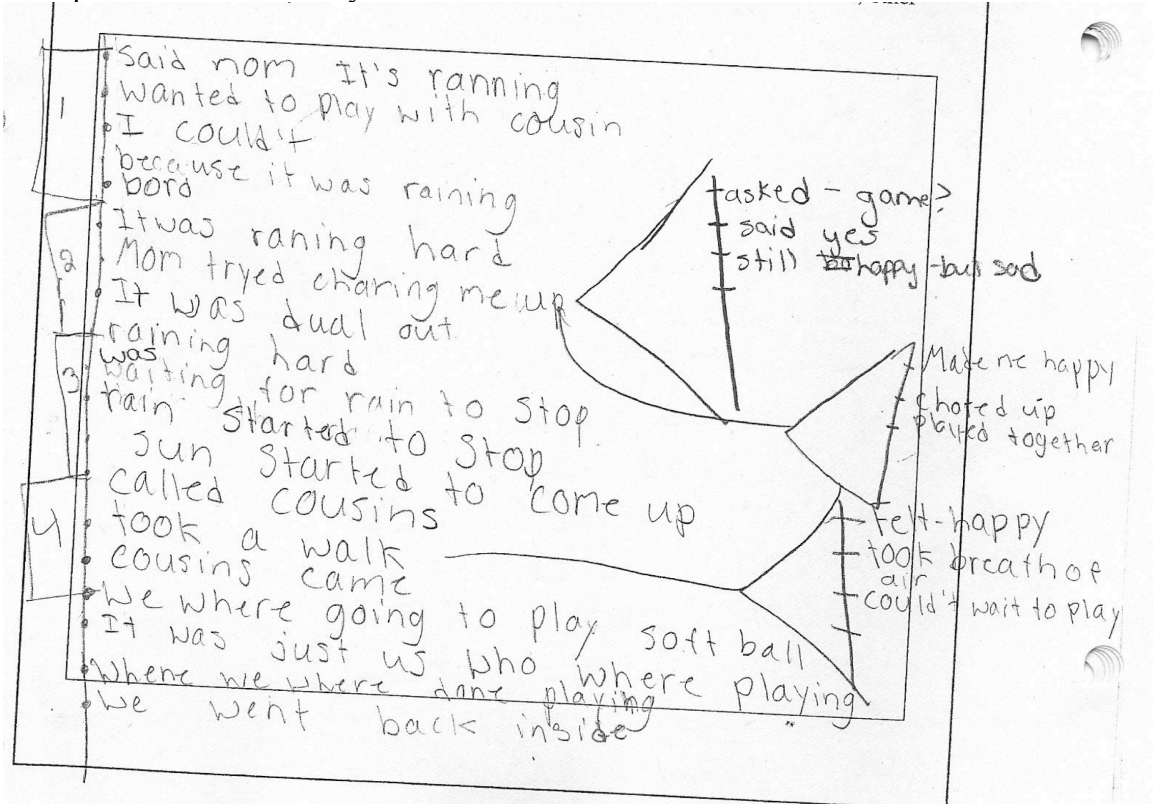
As I hinted in the first day's lesson, day two of this cycle was dedicated to saying verbs. The goal of the lesson was to show students how they could incorporate saying verbs that would show the reader how the dialogue was said thereby illuminating the speaker's state of mind. I began the lesson by complimenting the students independent use of the process including the timeline and planning boxes. I then pointed to the dialogue requirements on the rubric noting that in order to receive top marks, students must incorporate dialogue into their stories. To be more specific, I told them this meant they must have several instances of dialogue in every part of their story. After reading the learning goal to the students I

explained that we don't want to use "said, said, said" in our stories because it is boring for the readers.

To teach students the power of saying verbs I decided to revise a part of my own story in front of them. I posted the first part of the story I planned the previous day. I was full of dialogue but I only used the saying verb "said." I read the story to them once with terrific expression and underlined every saying verb. As a quick aside and review, I pointed out to the students how I had already revised for adjectives. Then I explained that this expressive version is how I wanted them to read the story but that is not how it was currently written. I read the story a second time exactly as it was written with a flat monotone for each "said" tagged dialogue. The students were directed to listen to my reading for what was different. Before I even finished the students began complaining that it was boring. I explained, "Today I want to show you that you can use all different kinds of saying verbs to show how your characters said it."

I knew that the students' vocabulary would be a struggle in this lesson so I wanted to offer them a word bank of choices. I posted a list of varied saying verbs including, "screamed, yelled, chuckled, answered, replied, yelled, murmured, and whined." After pointing out that there were countless saying verbs, I read the collection on the poster with the affect the saying verb implied. It was important to briefly show them what the words meant so they could apply them appropriately in their writing. The children chuckled with the dramatic reading of several saying verbs such as "whined," "murmured," and "screamed." A perfect example of student

confusion of saying verb meaning came during the share. Adam wanted to use a saying verb in his lead and went to the list and selected "replied" for the first sentence in his story. It was clear he did not know what "replied," meant. After quickly explaining it to him, he was able to revise his saying verb and used "replied" correctly in future pieces.

After reading the word bank of saying verbs I began revising my story for saying verbs. Before I finished the first saying verb revision the class was calling out appropriate saying verbs to replace "said." I pointed out, "I want you to notice how it changes the meaning of my writing." I reread the revised part and asked students to, "see if my meaning is clearer now that I've fixed my saying verbs." The class agreed my meaning was clearer.

For the active engagement I asked the class to turn and talk to decide how my last two instances of "said" should be revised in my story. The students offered justifiable saying verbs based on my intended meaning. I selected one for each instance and revised. I sent the students off with this reminder, "Today and everyday for the rest of your life when you are writing a story, it is your responsibility as the writer to use lots of dialogue which means that you're going to write what the characters say a lot. And when you use all that dialogue you need to make sure you use lots of saying verbs that help your reader understand how it was said."

Saying verbs immediately made a notable difference in many students writing. Aubrey and Adam utilized a variety of saying verbs appropriately in their text to build meaning. Adam in particular showed a dramatic shift in his use of dialogue from the

first cycle to the second. Examples of his dialogue include, "'Mom! It's raining I shouted . . ." and, "'I guess, sure I'll play' I replied." Amanda and Joelle did use a variety of saying verbs but used an adverbial phrase, to show how it was said, such as "said so excited," "said mumbling," or "said with surprise." Tom chose to over-apply this language tool in his writing resulting in a story that was almost entirely dialogue. Conversely, Carlos struggled to use any dialogue in his piece. The only dialogue that appeared in his final draft was written with one-on-one assistance during his conference with me.

The lesson concluded with a share in a circle on the rug. I asked each student to read one sentence that included a great example of dialogue. As we went around the circle I complimented saying verbs, corrected misconceptions such as Adam's and asked kids to quickly fix errors when discovered. While listening, I compiled a list of students who did not include dialogue or were confused. At the conclusion of the share I called those kids aside and explained that the following day they would be meeting with me in a small group to write dialogue because it was not optional.

The third day of this cycle, we continued studying verbs by adding sensing verbs to the repertoire. I began the lesson with by complimenting the students' use of saying verbs in their text. I pointed out how their application of action verbs and saying verbs would move their score up on the rubric. Then I noted that there was a decrease in adjectivals in their texts. I reminded them that they still have to utilize this language tool in their text while they are learning new tools.

I directed their attention back to the rubric, pointing to the lines, "Includes thoughts; Includes Feelings." I explained that we asked them to include character thoughts and feelings however, we had not taught them how to accomplish that in their writing. I said, "So, I thought I'd show you the kind of verbs you need to show what your characters are thinking and feeling."

By this point the students had grown accustomed to the rhythm and flow of my lessons. They leaned forward ready for the new bit of learning. I returned to the class' verb chart and added sensing verbs to the list. I wrote that the sensing verb's job is to, "tell what characters are thinking and feeling." I pulled out a chart of sensing verbs, and read them to the class commenting on their meanings where appropriate, "thought, felt, decided, wished, realized." I turned to the class and elaborated, "These verbs will help me explain to my readers what I was thinking during my story." I also pointed out that I already put these sensing verbs in past tense for them because we know we need our verbs in past tense for personal narratives.

Then I turned to the story I had been working on in front of them. I showed them how I had added part two to my story. Part two included several examples of sensing verbs including "I thought," "I hoped," and "I wondered." I read this section and asked the kids to say, "ooooh," when they heard me read a sensing verb. I circled each sensing verb and stopped while reading to comment on how that sensing verb helped me tell my readers what I was thinking and feeling. All the while I commented on my adjectivals.

Mia and I had noticed that students were over applying saying verbs forgetting step-by-step verbs in their texts. Once I finished reading this section I pointed out how I sprinkled the various verb types throughout the piece explaining it was the variety of verbs that lead to a strong story that showed step by step, dialogue, thoughts, and feelings. I also tucked in a reminder of the process we expected students to use by pointing out the "baby timeline" I used to get my ideas together for this part. I showed them how I only used my past tense action verbs to get the step by step down before I began writing using all three types of verbs.

I turned back to the first part of my story and asked the students to help me revise it for sensing verbs. I read it out loud and asked them to turn and tell a partner what I could write to add character thoughts and feelings to the piece. I picked one and revised my piece. I concluded the lesson explaining that Mia and I would be reading their pieces looking specifically for adjectivals, action verbs, saying verbs and sensing verbs.

The students' responses to this sensing verb lesson were varied. Following the lesson on sensing verbs, Aubrey and I conferenced on how to keep a balance between action, saying, and sensing verbs. As a result, Aubrey demonstrated the strongest and most balanced application of the three verb types. The following is a representative excerpt of the balanced saying, sensing, and action verbs in her piece, "She replied, 'yes.' We went outside. It was snowing bad out there. I thought that there was not going to be school tomorrow. When I went outside I got all wet and

white with snowflacks. I wardened [wondered] if I sould [should] of stay inside because I got all wet and it was getting a little cold."

Tom and Amanda did not include any sensing verbs in their text despite an explicit conference with Amanda to make sure she uses a balance of action, saying, and sensing verbs. Joelle and Adam included a smattering of weak references to character feelings without sensing verbs such as, "he was happy" or, "I liked the idea."

Tom, Amanda, Joelle, and Aaron were all completed with their first draft by the time we got to this lesson, while Aubrey was just beginning her draft and Carlos was writing his conclusion. Aubrey and Carlos were able to place sensing verbs into their text while still creating their first draft. It is possible, even likely, that the students who struggled with this skill were wrestling with the mechanics of adding in new text while revising not with the language tool itself. The following week, I conferenced with Adam to show him how he could add text into a draft while revising, using an asterisk and number system.

On day four, Mia and I decided to return back to the structure of personal narratives and review for students how to write a closing. Mia taught several lessons earlier in the year around writing endings that stayed close to the story. The students knew several strategies for writing endings including, writing the very next thing that happened, what you were thinking, or what you were feeling. I began this lesson reviewing those three strategies for ending a personal narrative or recount and then connected it to a more functional idea, that we must make sure our ending matches

the situational context. I explained that the readers for this test might not be smart enough to remember the prompt they assigned so it was their job as the writer to remind them of the prompt at the end of the story, to connect back to the prompt.

I pulled out two exemplar endings, from the MCAS exemplars the students had previously studied.   I read an ending and then asked the students to turn and talk to their partner and identify what the writer did to make the ending so strong. Carlos turned to his partner and explained that the writer showed his feelings and used some of the same words that were in the prompt. I shared his good thinking with the class.

It was at this point in the lesson I realized I did not explicitly teach them that the function of an ending in personal narratives is to summarize or evaluate. So, I hastily noted that the exemplar we were studying was an evaluation of the story. I briefly explained that a summary would be a quick reminder of all the "really cool" parts of your story.

With the goal of hopefully clarifying the lesson, I ended the lesson with a grand summary, "When ending stories try using one of the strategies and at the same time think about how you are going to connect back to the prompt either by restating the prompt, evaluating with some of the prompt's words, or summary."

I sent the children off to revise their endings. Following the writing time, we gathered on the rug to share our stories endings. I asked each student to read their ending and as a class we decided if it accomplished it's many jobs: summary or evaluation, connect back to the prompt, and is interesting for the readers. If the kids did not meet all the criteria they were sent back quickly to revise for the missing

piece. While observing the share, Mia wrote that it was the "most powerful part of the lesson for assessment and immediate feedback for revision." In discussions after the lesson she shared how positive the experience seemed for the students, especially the ones who returned to their seats to revise because they were able to return to the circle and share an improved ending.

In a true testament to Mia's fine teaching prior to this unit, Amanda, Carlos, Adam, and Joelle wrote excellent endings to their story that connected back to the prompt and provided some evaluation or summary in an interesting way for the reader, as seen in figure 39.

Figure 39
Effective Closings

Student	Closing
Amanda	"We stayed ourside for about 2 minutes and we all went in with a gib smile on our faces. I was so lucky it wan't sunny because that day I had a fun time in the snow making a colorful snowman."
Carlos	"I hope we do it agin this summer and agin and agin I had a blast I hope it does not rain agin and then I said I am sur[sure] Galde[glad] that we had that cook out because we got to cook on the Grill we got to eat my aunt famous maconi[macaroni] and my cousin sleeped over. That's why I am so glade it stopd raining. I was never forget this day."
Adam	"Whene It started to get late me and Brett beat Bianca I know we would probley beat her thene I suggested to go home. I said by to Brett and Bianca that was the best rainy day ever and I came home with happiness."
Joelle	"We walked home. I didnt want to stay inside so I grabed a popacil[popsicle] out my freezer and went on the pourch. I was seeing all the people walking by. The weather really changed my mom[mood]."

Carlos wrote a summary ending, with some nice evaluation as well, "Tom and Aubrey did not demonstrate strong application of this lesson. Joelle, Amanda, and

Adam connected neatly back to the prompt and offered some evaluation using their thoughts and feelings to end their pieces.

As seen in figure 40, Tom and Aubrey struggled to apply this lesson to their stories.

Figure 40

Ineffective Closings

Student	Closing
Tom	"I came inside and asked 'Can me and Dawson have hot coco?' 'Yes.' My mother answered. When I took my first sip it was like I was in hevan. That's how the weather changed my day."
Aubrey	"I was getting cold so was my sister was to I asked, 'Do you want to go inside?' Yes I'm getting cold. Boy I wish there was another day like that."

Tom wrote the last thing that happened and connected with the prompt but provided no summary or evaluation.   Perhaps the "it was like I was in hevan," was his attempt to provide some evaluation. Aubrey wrote the last thing that happened followed by a vague sentence saying she wished she could have another day like this one. It leaves the reader wondering what about the day she loved and does not directly tie into the prompt.

The mid-workshop share for day four was a fast review of paragraphing rules. Mia had taught them when to start a new paragraph much earlier in the year but we noticed many students were not following those rules. I posted the chart, in figure39. I reviewed each reason explaining how it helped their readers follow their stories when they began a new paragraph. Then, I revised my piece for new paragraphs in front of them showing them how to use the paragraph symbol in the rough draft. I

asked them to stop where they were, reread their piece and indicate with the symbol whenever a new paragraph should begin.

Figure 41
New Paragraph Instructional Chart

```
         New Paragraphs
  1.  New Character
  2.  New Setting
  3.  New Part/Action/Idea
  4.  Whenever Someone New
```

Day five of this cycle of lessons was closely linked with tenor or relationship between the writer and the audience. On this day I taught the students how to punctuate dialogue in their text. I framed the lesson by explaining that their readers would be confused if they did not use punctuation as markers to cue the reader that this was what someone actually said.

I began the lesson with a brief review of the process reminding them that they only had two more writing times to complete a final draft. I turned their attention to the process chart and pointed out all the steps they had completed and what still remained. In this explanation I made it clear that it is not a straight linear process but a more circular redundant process saying, "Of course you revise and edit while you are writing; and you edit while revising. These are not clear steps but you know round about we have to do all these things." I pointed to Edit on the process chart and explained today's lesson goal would be to use correct punctuation in their dialogue. I went on to explain, "if you don't use correct punctuation your readers get confused."

Three versions of the same sentence were posted for the students. Each sentence placed the saying verb in a different part of the sentence. I went through each sentence first circling the saying verb and then highlighting the quotation marks, commas, and ending marks. For each punctuation mark I explained how it helped the readers, "The quotation marks tell the reader this is exactly what came out of the speaker's mouth." "The comma cues the reader something different is coming." "The end marks tell the reader how the character might have said it; as a question, exclamation, or statement."

Then it was the children's turn to punctuate a few sentences. I put up three more sentences with missing punctuation and asked the students to turn and tell their partner how it should be punctuated. After a few minutes I called the group back and asked two students to tell me how to punctuate the sentences. Again, I sited the purpose behind each mark. One student suggested we add our exclamation point to the beginning of the exclamation as well. The Spanish speakers in the room all agreed audibly. I quickly told them that would make perfect sense but in English we don't cue the reader at the beginning of the sentence. The group seemed to understand immediately the difference in rules.

There was no time to share at the end of this lesson because the students needed the time to complete their rough drafts. Mia and I took the extra time to conference with more students either helping them edit their piece or quickly finish their first draft.

The student results of this lesson indicated that the students who received either one on one or small group instruction specifically on editing for punctuation were able to apply it throughout their piece independently. Joelle, Aubrey, and Tom were all able to edit their entire piece after a brief bit of direct teaching from Mia or myself. Those who only received the whole group instruction, Adam, Carlos, and Amanda, struggled to apply the punctuation tools to their writing. When we conferenced with the students we heavily emphasized the message they were trying to communicate and showed them how to punctuate for that message. Perhaps it is difficult to learn how to punctuate for meaning with someone else's meaning.

The final day of this cycle was a celebratory day. I explained how excited I was to read their final drafts that evening so I needed them to hurry up and finish. Mia and I decided to return to structure and teach the class how to title their pieces. We had noticed that many of the exemplars from the state website included titles and that many of the students were struggling to add appropriate and interesting titles. As with all my structure lessons I began by explaining the purpose for titles, "to give the readers and idea of what the story is about and to catch the readers attention."

Then, I shared some strategies writers use to generate titles for a piece. The list of strategies was, 1-Write a character name, 2- An important word or phrase right out of your story, 3- A Mysterious words somehow connected to the text that will make the reader want to read to figure it out, 4- An important item from the story, or 5- A catchy summary. For each strategy I held up a published text and explained how the writer used the strategy to grab the readers attention and give the reader an idea of

what the story is about. I selected these strategies based on the texts I have on my

classroom library bookshelf. I studied the titles and generated a list of generalizations

or strategies I saw writers using.

Following my survey of title strategies I asked them to help me select the best

title for my story about putting my daughter Emma to bed. Listed on the chart were

three titles, "Emma," "Bedtime," and "Good Night Emma." The students were asked

to turn and tell their partner which title was the best and why. Joelle's team said they

liked "Good Night Emma" because they liked a little piece of dialogue. Carlos'

group "Bedtime for Emma," because it told what my whole story was about. After

this discussion I sent the students back to their seats to finish their drafts and then title

their stories. A large portion of students required the entire writing time to complete

their drafts so again, there was no share for this lesson.

Figure 42
Focus Student Titles

Student	Title
Carlos	"The Cook out."
Tom	"Snowball Fight"
Aubrey	"The snowball Fight"
Adam	"The Best Rainy Day Ever!"
Joelle	"The Weather Changed My Mood"
Amanda	"The Snowday"

Most students selected a summary title, as seen in figure 42. Unfortunately

they were not especially catchy but I was not sure how to explicitly teach that idea so

I accepted these titles. Adam selected a phrase from his story that summed up the

essence of his story well. Joelle and Adam both did an excellent job of connecting to

the prompt in their title. It is possible they were able to generalize the idea that we

need to explicitly connect to the prompt from my lesson on closings. It is also likely

it was just a happy accident.

Figure 43
MCAS Unit Prompt 3

> There are many fun activities to do outside. Maybe you like to fly a kite, play outside at school, go camping, or build a snowman. Maybe there is something else you like to do outside.
>
> Write a story about a time you had fun doing an outside activity. Give enough details to show readers what you did and why the activity was so much fun.

Figure 44
Cycle 3 Instructional Goals

> Week's Goal: Students will write a strong personal narrative to a prompt.
>
> Day 1 Goal: Students will begin their writing independently.
>
> Day 2 Goal: Students will use adverbials to describe their verbs telling where, when, or how.
>
> Day 3 Goal: Students will write adverbials to describe their verbs telling why? And with whom?
>
> Day 4 Goal: Students will use action, saying, and sensing verbs plus adverbials to show not tell their characters' feeling.
>
> Day 5 Goal: Students will edit their writing for correct spelling using a dictionary.
>
> Day 6 Goal: Grand Review.
>
> Day 7 Goal: Celebration of Learning. Students will read their best piece to their class.

The third and final cycle of this unit involved much review and opportunities to build independence as can be seen in the list of teaching objectives shared with the students seen in figure 44. The long composition testing day was approaching and we wanted to cement the students' learning in their mind, encourage them, and help them see how they could expertly apply all they learned in a piece of writing. Day one was of this cycle was an opportunity for Mia and I to see which students were able to independently begin the process we taught of writing a story to a prompt and which ones needed more support and instruction. The process we taught enabled all the students to achieve the required structure into which they could apply the language skills we were teaching. We knew they had to be firmly independent to achieve success on test day. I decided to give a mini-lecture using a metaphor to make our point.

As always I began my lesson with compliments about their leads, endings, dialogue, and adjectivals. I explained that they would receive their rubric and feedback on the previous prompt tomorrow. The students seemed eager to receive a new prompt. I explained this was the last prompt before the actual MCAS assessment where they would "get to prove you know to do everything on the rubric." I explained, "We know you can do it. Now you need to prove you can do it to the mean ladies up in Boston." I read the students the day's goal, "Writers will begin their prompt independently."

I began my actual lesson, "I want to tell you about the time we taught Emma how to ride a bike. I know you are wondering what that has to do with writing –

you'll see!" I explained, "at first Emma used training wheels so she did not really have to do any work to balance; there was no way she could fall. That was like when we first began studying exemplars, it was easy. "

I continued, "Then we took the training wheels off. Emma was afraid. She didn't know how to balance. So her Daddy and I would run behind her and hold on to the back of the bike so she couldn't fall." I related that to when they began with their first prompt. Mia and I were right alongside them conferencing and giving them feedback so that they would be successful.

"After a while, Mr. Harris and I realized the only way Emma was going to believe that she could ride her bike all by herself was if she did it by herself," I went on. I explained how hard it was for the parents, but we got Emma started and then we let go. She was able to do it because she had practiced so much with our help. I concluded, "So that's what we want for you today; to believe in yourself. To know when you get that prompt on the 31st that you can do it all by yourself."

To get them started I read them the prompt and asked them to turn and tell their partner what topic they selected to write about. Then each student shared his or her topic with the class. Periodically I would give reminders to the students about zooming in, writing step by step, or adding details with adjectivals. I explained that Mia and I would not be helping today but we would take home their work tonight and come in ready to help anyone who was confused the following day. "This is due in 6 days. I gave you a head start now go work independently," I concluded.

The class returned to their seat and began working independently. Joelle, Adam, Aubrey, Tom, and Amanda got right to work on their detailed step by step timeline. They each used a variety of verbs to begin each point of the timeline to accomplish a balanced and step-by-step piece of writing. Carlos sat for two days before I intervened. By that point he had written an entire draft of his story next to the timeline he drew. I helped him generate planning boxes based on that draft and showed him how to stretch out the parts of his story. I told him that every part in his story had to include dialogue, thoughts, feelings, and step by step. I was uncomfortable with the prescriptive nature of this conference but felt strongly he needed more clarity around my expectations.

Joelle, Adam, and Aubrey were able to use the process from timeline to planning boxes to parts per page well to write an organized and detailed story. Tom and Amanda used all the tools but struggled to separate their story into meaningful parts resulting in paragraph breaks that did not make sense. Carlos did have planning boxes because we did them together. Even then, Carlos struggled to separate his piece into parts much like Tom and Amanda.

Following this lesson I wrote in my notebook, "For adverb lesson I need to work at being short and sweet – I think they retain more when I say less. I'm going to just do the three where, when, and how tomorrow and tackle why and with whom on Monday." Mia and I were growing concerned that the students were becoming saturated. I knew adverbials would be a huge lift for their writing so wanted to slow down my instruction to allow for more opportunities for learning and application.

On day two and three of this final cycle of the unit I taught the students about

adverbials. They remembered my promise to teach them how to use adverbials from

the studying exemplar stage so they were interested in learning more. Using the chart

in figure 45, I reviewed the various functions of adverbials and distinguished between

single word adverbs and adverbial phrases.

Figure 45
Adverbial Instructional Chart

The first day I explained how adverbials can describe the verb by telling the

reader "where", "when", or "how" something occurred. I showed them examples of

both adverbs and adverbial phrases for each purpose. I paused and highlighted adverbial phrases that tell "how" because the MCAS readers seem to favor pieces with those in them for their exemplars. I explained, "Those mean ladies up in Boston go hog wild for these." I summarized, "Adverbs and adverbial phrases are very helpful to you as a writer because they give you a way to describe how, where, or when you did something in one sentence. It makes your sentence more grown up and sophisticated."

I posted a sentence I had already revised for adjectivals; changing it from "She sang," to "The pretty young girl sang." I wanted to remind them about adjectivals because we still were not seeing much evidence of them in the writing. Then I showed them how I could revise it with an adverbial to tell "where" or "when". Then I asked them to turn and tell a partner how it could be revised to tell the reader "how" the pretty young girl sang. I listed their suggestions based on the purpose. When we shared I learned that the students thought that a phrase was several single adverbs stacked together. I was able to distinguish between several stacked adverbs and an adverbial phrase. I gave them a few stems to help them see, "like . . ." or, "in a . . ." Several students gave examples of adverbials telling "with whom" this first day making me question my decision to split the lesson in two.

Once we had clarified phrases, I sent them back to their seats to write. Their directions were to first, reread to see if they could add any adverbials to what they had already written and second, to continue writing remembering to included adjectivals and adverbials as they went. As a final reminder I asked, "Which one is

the rock star?" They responded, "the 'how' adverbial phrase." I explained that for

the share time today we would be looking for students who included at least one

"how" adverbial phrase.

For the share we asked each student to read one sentence from their writing

that contained an adverbial. Only one student was confused and was able to return to

his seat quickly and revise for an adverbial after Mia's re-teaching. The rest of the

students had at least one sentence with an adverbial following this first lesson.

The following day I followed the exact same format referring to the final two

purposes for adverbials "why", and "with whom". I reviewed the chart explaining

how "why" adverbials tell the reader why something happened the way it did and

"with whom" adverbials tell who or what the verb occurred with. Then I posted my

sentence for revision. Again I had already revised my sentence for a better adjectival

to review that skill. I asked them to turn and talk to generate adverbial phrases that

told "why" or "with whom". One of the most struggling readers in the class

generated this sentence, "The poor little girl cried with her brother because their dog

died." I pointed out how he had used both a "why" and a "with whom" adverbial

phrase. I noted the past tense action verb, the subject, and the adjectivals describing

the subject. "Remember when I promised to show you how to write long sentences?

Well this is it – actually, better than what we studied in the exemplars," I explained.

I concluded the lesson with clear expectations; that Mia and I expected to see

adjectives, adjectival phrases, adverbs, and adverbial phrases in their writing. It was

no longer a choice. I encouraged them to reread their piece so far and revise for these

language elements and then to continue applying these language tools to their writing as they continued on.

Every single focus student included several adverbs and or adverbial phrases in their writing. Joelle, Amanda, Adam, and Aubrey used them seamlessly in their writing, neatly tucking them where they made sense. For example, Joelle wrote, "I twisted my body over the couch," to explain how she move to see the clock indicating her laziness. Aubrey wrote, "I slowly whispered back because my sister was sleeping." Amanda wrote, "It stung me like a hornet," using one of those how adverbial phrases the MCAS readers like so much. Similar to Amanda, Adam wrote, "We hopped on rocks like frogs to touch the water," to describe how he jumped to the water. Likewise, Carlos wrote, "We fell [flew] down the hill like a rocket."

Tom included them in his writing but he created awkward sentences. For example, Tom wrote, "I saw my cousin doing his homework, in his room, at noon, alone, and quietly." He over-applied the idea of stacking adverbials to the point it stopped being appropriate.

During the mid-workshop share I pointed out that several students seemed to believe that they were done with their first draft. I encouraged them to get a rubric and a buddy who was also done and read over one another's pieces to offer advice for improvement. Unfortunately, I did not do adequate instruction on how to use the rubric to give useful feedback to peers so much of the feedback was things like "nice job" or "add details."

The fourth day of the cycle our goal was for students to combine action, saying, and sensing verbs with adverbials to show, not tell a character's feelings. We decided this would be an excellent culminating application for the language tools they had learned through the unit.

As always, the lesson began with dramatic compliments. Today I decided to compliment their application of all our teaching points. I explained, "When I teach something, you guys do it." As a result of their consistent application of the lessons, their writing grew tremendously. I pulled out a students writing in which I highlighted all the adverbials. The class gasped when they saw that almost half of his first page of text was highlighted. I read the story to them noting all the different types of adverbials he used in his text for varied purposes.

"Today I want to teach you what you can do with all the good word tools you can use," I began. "We can show how we were feeling instead of just telling and it is more interesting for the reader plus it helps push our story forward because you can show with action verbs and sensing verb and saying verbs and adverbials."   Many students had begun doing this in their writing already so Mia and I decided to share two examples and send the kids off to write. I showed them how I revised "She was happy," to "My whiny little sister skipped back to her room with a smile on her face." I circled the action verb, the revised subject, and the two adverbial phrases; one to show where and the other to show how. I explained that I showed my readers how she felt instead of just telling them. Together we envisioned what my sister looked

like and inferred that she must have been happy. "No more will I see you writing, "I felt fill in the blank," I said. "You will show your feelings."

My second exemplar began with the sentence, "I was angry." I revised the sentence to say, "I stomped back to my room yelling at the top of my lungs." I pointed out that the subject stayed the same but I added an action verb with an adverbial telling where and a saying verb with a how adverbial.

For the active engagement I asked the students to help me revise the sentence, "I felt excited." I began by asking them to imagine in their heads what they do or say when they are excited. I modeled, to their delight, what my kids do when they are excited. Then I asked them to turn and talk to share their ideas for revision. Most of the partnerships wanted to show the feelings with actions and dialogue but also keep the sentence, "I felt excited." I said, "You just need to say what you did. Trust your readers to figure it out."

I ended with the lesson by insisting the writers return to their seat and reread what they wrote so far. Wherever they found a sentence that began with, "I felt . . ." they were to remove it and show the feeling using action, saying, and sensing verbs with adverbial phrases to help out. "You no longer have to tell how you were feeling, you show them," I explained, "it makes it much more interesting for your reader and allows you to stretch out your story."

Every focus student included at least one example of show not tell in their story. Some, like Joelle, Amanda, Tom, and Aubrey used the strategy throughout the piece when there were strong emotions to convey. Others like Adam and Carlos put

them in because I told them to but in places that did not necessarily demand

explaining how the characters were feeling. Figure 46 lists representative examples

of show not tell from each student.

Figure 46
Show Not Tell Instructional Chart

Student	Example of Show Not Tell
Adam	"I can tell they were happy because they were laughing and similing[smiling]." "I jumped in the air with victory."
Tom	"cool! I cheered, "This is cool." "I made a fist and moved my arms up and down and cheered 'Chah ching!'"
Joelle	"My heart pounded." "I was thinking cant wait til 5:00."
Aubrey	"When I heard that I jump up and down because my mom knows I love dressing up my sister when we go out."
Amanda	"I got off and hopped up and down yelling 'Yay me I did it.'" "She was smiling."
Carlos	"Oh My God I can't beleave it I am tacking my new bike out. Cool."

During the work time Mia and I discussed how hard the students were

working and decided to use the share time to allow students to share what they are

most proud of in their writing. The students articulated what aspect of the rubric they

had applied that made them proud. It was nice to end on a positive note.

The following day, the students' schedule was changed so Mia gave them

time to write intermittently through the day but no new lesson was taught.

The final day of instruction in this cycle and this MCAS long composition

unit was dedicated to editing. The students seemed more and more anxious as the

week progressed so we decided to keep the lesson short and very low key. The goal

of the lesson was for the students to use a dictionary to edit for correct spelling. I

framed the lesson with the idea that they are writing so well it would be a shame if

our readers could not read it. Therefore, it was important for them to reread their

piece and fix as many of the spelling errors as possible. Luckily, students are allowed

to use a dictionary for this portion of the MCAS so I used this lesson to show them

how to do that on test day.

I posted and reviewed the figure 47 with the students. I called it, "The

spelling procedure." I told them that this was to be done after they finished the first

draft not before. This was the first time I had even mentioned spelling to the students.

I fact, most often I tell students to figure it out on their own if they ask how to spell a

word. I told the students I wait until late in a unit to discuss spelling because I know

how important it is for children to be able to get their thoughts down on paper. I did

not want them bogged down worrying about spelling while they were working on

getting their meaning on paper. Again, I reminded them that this procedure was for

after they completed their first draft.

Figure 47
Spelling Instructional Chart

To edit spelling:
1. Reread entire piece – circle each
   word that doesn't look right.
2. Look up each circled word in the
   dictionary.
3. Erase the incorrect spelling and
   write the correct word.

Together we read a piece of my story looking for spelling errors. I circled the errors with their help. I briefly modeled for them how to use the dictionary to locate words using think aloud to describe my thinking and actions. Before sending them off I reminded them that first they needed to finish their first draft, then they could do the spelling procedure, and then it was time to write their final draft.   Tom, Amanda, and Aubrey used the spelling procedure with much success. There is evidence in their writing that they circled incorrect words and wrote the correct spelling in the circle. Joelle wrote a long and mostly correct piece. Either she did not try the strategy or did not recognize the few misspellings she had in her piece. Adam's piece was littered with misspellings and he had time to use the procedure. I do not believe he sees his own mistakes; as they are common words he has been misspelling regularly for a long period of time. Words such as, "laghing[laughing]," "smileing[smiling]," and "shore[sure]." Carlos lost the first two days of the cycle due to poor work habits and misbehavior. He just completed his rough draft at the end of the cycle so he did not have an opportunity to attempt the spelling procedure. The two students who needed the most help with spelling, Carlos and Adam, were least able to access the strategy.

The following day was designed to provide a final review of all the procedures, language tools, and strategies we taught. We also needed to remove all the teaching charts from the classroom before the assessment so, Mia and I decided to do a ceremony of removing the charts because they were no longer needed by the class. We read and reminisced over each chart spread throughout the classroom. I

began with the process chart that listed the exact steps students must take to write a strong personal narrative to a prompt. Then I went to all the charts listing the various language tools we learned about including adjectivals, various verbs, and adverbials. Then we removed the chart showing how to apply these tools to show not tell. Next I removed the rules for paragraphing, dialogue punctuation, titles, and editing for spelling. Finally, I took down our rubric noting how they now knew how to do everything on the rubric.

I asked the students to turn and tell their partner the most useful tool or strategy they learned. Many students explained that the planning boxes was the most useful tool. Several others cited the adverbials and show not tell as the most useful tools for writing. Still others pointed to the rubric as the most useful tool to writing a strong personal narrative. The teacher, Mia said, "I can't believe how much they've learned. They really own it." The students were asked to complete their final drafts and then select their best one for our author celebration the next day.

To celebrate their hard work and growth as writers, I brought in cookies, brownies, and juice for an author celebration. We sat in a bunch around an author's chair and listened to each student's story. After each story Mia and I gushed about specific structure or language tools the writer used effectively. We used the praise as a way to remind them of all the tools and strategies they now knew so well. The children went home that night excited about the upcoming writing test the next day. Many expressed confidence in their abilities. Mia was thrilled to see their confidence and was also looking forward to the next day's test.

Conclusion

The lessons in this unit spanned four weeks beginning with a brief exploration of exemplars, followed by explicit lessons on process, tenor, structure, and language tools, and ending with a grand review and author celebration.

Figure 48 below lists each of the lessons taught in the unit and delineates the functional focus for each lesson. The process lessons were woven into all the lessons. It was crucial that we show kids how to go about applying whatever tenor, structure or language tool or strategy we were offering so every lesson referred to the process pathway.

Figure 48
MCAS Unit Lesson Summary Chart

	Lesson Topic	Tenor	Structure	Language Tools
Cycle 1	Selecting a Topic *Process-generating topic*	Selecting a topic that the audience will appreciate.		
	Timeline *Process-planning*		To accomplish step-by-step structure.	
	Planning Boxes *Process-planning*		To stretch out each part of the story and allow room for future language lessons.	
	Orientation *Process-drafting*		Stories begin by orienting the reader to whom, where, and when.	
	Adjectivals *Process-revising*			To describe subjects for the reader.
	Introduce the Rubric *Process- self assessing the writing*	To ensure that the writing meets the expectations of the desired audience.		
	Writing a Final Draft *Process-publication*	Ensuring the final draft is readable for the intended audience.		

	Lesson Topic	Tenor	Structure	Language Tools
Cycle 2	Action and Past Tense Verbs *Process-planning*		Review of timeline.	To accomplish step-by-step action.
	Saying Verbs *Process-drafting*			To accomplish dialogue.
	Sensing Verbs *Process-drafting*			To tell what the characters were thinking or feeling.
	Rules for Paragraphing *Process-editing*	To cue reader to changes in setting, part, characters, dialogue, etc.		
	Endings *Process-revising*		Stories most often end with an evaluation or summary of the events.	
	Editing for Dialogue Punctuation *Process-editing*	To help the reader follow the dialogue.		
Cycle 3	Independence *Process-planning and drafting*		To assess if students could apply steps of process to achieve desired structure.	
	Adverbials *Process-drafting*			To add details by describing verbs.
	Show Not Tell *Process- revising*			To apply all the language tools to show a characters feeling.
	Editing for Punctuation *Process-editing*	To make the writing more accessible to the audience.		

At the completion of the unit, as we dismantled our instructional charts, it became clear that we had cycled through three keys types of lessons, taking care of our readers, building the correct structure for our purpose, and applying language tools that would help accomplish the intended meaning of the text. The instructional content of all three types of lessons was informed by SFL theory. The chart makes clear how we cycled through these lessons in a predictable pattern through each instructional cycle: situating the writing based on audience first, then creating the required structure, fleshing out that structure with strong academic language, and returning to tenor to ensure it is accessible to the reader.

Through the unit, every single student learned how to use a specific process, in order to create a story that had the correct structure for the purpose including an orientation, sequential body and closing. They were all able to select topics appropriate to the context and audience. It was the application of the language tools that was most varied in the student writing. Joelle, Aubrey, and Adam were able to apply all the language tools in the writing. Joelle applied them with the most finesse but Aubrey and Adam were able to use them in service to their meaning. Tom and Amanda applied action verbs, saying verbs, and adverbials well but fell short with sensing verbs and adjectivals. Carlos struggled each cycle to manage the process to accomplish the structure therefore, all conferences and small group re-teaching for him revolved around structure. This seemed to limit his capacity to regularly apply

the language tools without teacher intervention. Similarly, the students who were

most efficient with the process and structure were able to apply the editing strategies

best. At the end of the unit, each focus student demonstrated remarkable growth in

their writing and budding independence.

Chapter 5

Beginnings and Endings – Personal Narratives

The primary question in this study was: What happens when teachers incorporate SFL theory of language into writing instruction? One way to answer that question is to compare un-coached student writing written just before instruction with un-coached student writing completed following instruction. The chapter begins with an overview of the focus student shifts in writing from the beginning to the end of the unit. Then, each writing sample is examined for the structure, language, and process elements that were taught within the unit. The goal of this chapter is to illuminate any shifts or changes in the students writing between the first pre-assessment writing sample and the final MCAS long composition.

Overview of Focus Student Growth

All six students wrote longer, more developed pieces following instruction. In fact, the school scored above the state average in the long composition portion of the MCAS for the first time. Figure 49 shows more specifically how the students' work changed following instruction. The students are listed in order from lowest to highest left to right based on their writing pre-assessment and split into monolingual and bi-lingual. An "X" indicates quality use of the tool and structural elements or strong understanding of the concepts. A blank indicates few or no instances of the language element or little evidence of understanding of the concept.

Figure 49
Summary Chart of Student Application of SFL Structure and Language

		Monolingual						Bilingual					
		Carlos Before	Carlos After	Amanda Before	Amanda After	Tom Before	Tom After	Adam Before	Adam After	Aubrey Before	Aubrey After	Joelle Before	Joelle After
Aware of Situation			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Aware of Audience			X		X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Appropriate Topic			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Independent Process			X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Word Count		117	203	174	404	162	281	87	310	180	560	313	90
Structure	Orientation		X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X
	Step By Step		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	Closing		X				X		X	X	X	X	X
Language	Partici-pants		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
	Action Verbs		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Sensing Verbs	X	X	X		X	X	X			X		X
	Saying Verbs		X		X		X				X		X
	Adjectivals								X				X
	Adverbials	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
	Linking Words		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X

Figure 49 shows how dramatically each student shifted over the course of the unit. Students like Carlos and Adam who came in with extremely limited writing skills left with many tools they could apply independently in his writing. Meanwhile students who came in understanding structure and some language elements were able to add more language tools into their repertoire. Unfortunately, figure 61 does not capture the growth students such as Tom or Joelle made. They both came in with many strong skills and understandings about writing in structure and language. Their growth had more to do with the quality and purposefulness of their decisions as writers.

Only the two highest writers at the beginning Tom and Joelle demonstrated an awareness of audience at the beginning. At the conclusion of the unit every single student demonstrated thoughtful awareness of their audience either with their topic selection, their compliance with the prompt, or specific language choices. Similarly, the group made substantial gains in their ability to write using the correct personal recount or narrative structure. At the beginning only two students applied the correct structure at the conclusion every student used the correct structure.

In rare instances a student did not demonstrate a particular language skill at the conclusion of the unit that he or she exhibited at the onset. This was alarming at first glance but on each occasion there is a viable reason. For example, Tom used linking words in his pre-assessment but did not in his MCAS writing. In Tom's post assessment he chose to use strong action verbs in a very zoomed in and small story.

This eliminated his need for linking words. It was his action, sensing, and saying verbs that allowed the reader to follow the time sequence. Both Amanda and Aaron used sensing verbs well in their pre assessment and chose not to use many in their MCAS piece. They did however use action and saying verbs to "show" their reader how they were feeling, another mini-lesson we taught.

Looking at the chart, it is clear the students struggled to utilize adjectivals in their writing. No monolingual students chose to use them and two of the three bilingual kids incorporated adjectivals into their writing. It points to the strong possibility that the instruction on adjectivals was not appropriate or timely for the students, particularly the monolingual students. Or perhaps adjectivals are not useful language tools for ten year olds writing personal narratives or recounts.

Individual Student Growth

Most of the focus students did not demonstrate the structural and language elements of the unit prior to instruction. For these students it made sense to first analyze the pre-assessment and post-assessments sequentially. Joelle did exhibit many of the structural elements and language tools in the pre-assessment. The changes in her writing were in her quality of application not the presence of a tool or structure. For this reason, it made more sense to analyze her piece side by side to highlight the growth in quality of application.

Tom – 10 year- old male - English only

When Tom was given the pre-assessment he carefully read the first half of the prompt designed to help the students think about the coming assigned topic. He

underlined several of the questions in this section, "How did you become friends with this person? Think about when you met, what you did, and how your friendship grew." The actual prompt, "Write a story about this friendship. Give enough details to tell the reader about this friendship," was ignored. Therefore, the topic of Tom's writing became an essay in which he attempted to answer these questions instead of a single story about this friendship.

Once he determined his topic, his new friend "Jhon" Tom created a sequential timeline, and then drafted his piece on a single page. Tom's actions indicate his desire to give the readers what they asked for; he just missed the actual prompt. Tom already seemed to have a concept of the testing context in which you must give the testers what they asked for and an understanding of this unique audience.

Figure 50
Tom's pre-assessment response

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Best Friends

Ba-room, ba-room, grrrr- Good mom has the car going now we can go to school.

"Is it hard in the 4th grad?" I said my mom mom said if you try your best then it is easy. I was so nervous about school. One month past and we had a new student.

"Listin we have a new student his name is Jhon." Said Ms. Smith. I thought that Jhon was nice.

I asked if he wanted to sit next to me at lunch "sure" said Jhon.

"Time for lunch." Said Ms. Smith. I saved a seat for him at lunch. Then me and him were friends.

Me and Jhon never fight.

He gave me his phon number and

I called him when I got home.

He came over and we played water guns me and him got souct *[soaked]* with water and he had to go to home and I was very tiyred *[tired]* and I whent *[went]* to bed.

Word count 162

</div>

The post assessment for this study was the long composition portion of the MCAS. Tom was allowed to complete the MCAS in a separate setting. As a part of his IEP, Tom was allowed a scribe for the writing portion of the MCAS. When he sat down with his scribe he politely declined her assistance saying he could do it himself. First, he read the entire prompt and then thought out loud to the proctor listing possible topics until he decided on one, helping his dog dig up a bone. Then, Tom set to work on a timeline. Once his timeline was done, Tom divided his timeline into four sections using brackets and created four planning boxes in his draft booklet labeling them according to the four parts of his timeline. Again, on his own, Tom wrote a draft stretching out each of the four parts of his story in his booklet. Finally, he reread his piece and edited it to the best of his ability. It was at this point that he looked at the proctor and asked that she recopy his piece in his final draft booklet. He told her about the readers, the old ladies in Boston, and explained that probably she could write neater than him. Clearly, Tom recognized the testing context for this writing and was very attuned to the audience.

Tom demonstrated a confident ability to progress through the stages of the process we taught independently. In the final prompt, Tom was able to find the actual prompt and narrow his topic down to a single story. Where before he tried to answer all the questions in the prompt, after the unit, Tom knew to zoom in on exactly what they asked for and work to make that story strong. He wrote the following in response to the MCAS prompt asking him to write a story about a time when he was helpful.

Figure 51
Tom's Post Assessment Response

<u>Helping Nakeea Digging up a Bone</u>

It was last week. I brought my dog outside because she been inside all day. Nakeea was smelling the ground to the backyard. She was moving her head left to right to smell.

She found the spot. She was digging crazy. There was roots in her way, she bit the roots off. I ran to see what it was. I got a shovle and she backed away. I got the shovle because I wanted to help her. I felt glad. I thought it was a dinosaur bone.

Nakeea was excited that I was helping her. She ran around the yard. Nakeea came back and helped dig.

I said, "Dig on the side of me Nakeea." So she digged on the side of me.

"Almos time for lunch Tom!" Mom yelled to me.

"We have to do it fast, so no one will steal what's in the hole." I said so Nakeea will hurry.

I diged faster each minute.

"Bong, bang." Went the shovle.

I hited something!

I felt like I was making a discovery!

I dug around the hard thing I saw it, but I couldint see it very well.

Nakeea barcked *[barked]* and she did the rest of the work.

She bit it and picked it up.

"Rouph, Rouph!" She barked like crazy!

"Lick, lick!" Nakeea licked my face.

She jumped like a kangaroo. She licked licked me like a shower.

We ran inside like a rocket with the bone.

"How did you get that bone?" My mom asked me.

"I helped Nakeea dig a bone up!" I yelled with joy.

"Cool." My mom said.

And that's how I helped Nakeea dig a bone.

Word Count 281

In Tom's pre-test, there is a story structure with a lead, step-by-step body and a closing. The structure became confused because he was trying to answer too many questions in the piece. In essence, Tom wrote two leads. One lead at the very beginning caught the reader's attention with the sound effects "Ba-room, ba-room, grr" and establishes who and when, he and his mom on the first day of school. However, this first lead really has little to do with his actual story, which is about meeting his new friend "Jhon" during the second month of school. When his real story begins he has another sentence to orient the readers, "One month past and we had a new student." This sentence seems to serve as the lead for his actual story telling us when it takes place and what the story is about.

Tom's final piece requires only one orientation as he understood the prompt. His lead was, "It was last week. I brought my dog outside because she been inside all day." He told the readers when the story happened, who was involved, and what the story was going to be all about. I believe he attempted to use strong action to grab the reader's attention, a strategy we taught during the unit. Unfortunately, his action verb was weak, "brought" so, it comes off a little boring.   Regardless, already in just his lead, Tom's structure is stronger and clearer in the final piece.

The most dramatic growth in Tom's writing may be seen in the shifts in the body of his story from the pre-assessment to the final MCAS.   There is an identifiable step-by-step structure to the piece, it was lunch time, he saved a seat for his friend, he gave him his phone number, he called, they played water guns, got

soaked, and went home. Clearly Tom understands that story must follow a sequential order. In the center of Tom's piece there is a rogue sentence that feels like it belongs in a report instead of a personal recount. He writes in the center, "Me and Jhon never fight." It is as if he slipped into a different genre right there or perhaps he was trying to answer one of the questions in the early portion of the prompt.

It is Tom's use of action verbs that move his pre-test story forward. He does employ the occasional sensing verb, for example, "I thought" and several instances of dialogue using "said." Tom uses temporal links such as "and" or "then" to connect his sentences together. When Tom orients the reader to the sequential portion of his piece, he uses a temporal link, "One month past," placing the next event in sequence for the readers. It is these links combined with the action verbs that keep his story moving forward.

Even before we ever taught him about adverbial phrases there is evidence of him using them in his writing. He wrote, "now we can go to school," to tell his readers where and when they were going and "I saved a seat for him at lunch," to tell the goal, the recipient and when.

In his MCAS sample Tom utilizes a more balanced array of verbs in the body of his story to move his recount forward sequentially. His action verbs are more frequent and a bit more interesting. "Bit," "ran," and "was digging, " are a few examples.   Tom used several sensing verbs to communicate to the readers what he was thinking and feeling in his story. He used verbs such as "thought," "felt," and "wanted," periodically to balance all the action. Dialogue was also more developed

in his final piece. Despite the fact that one of the main characters was a dog, Tom used saying verbs such as "said," "yelled," and "barked," to convey dialogue to the readers. The effect of the variegated verb usage is a much more interesting step-by-step body to his story. In fact, his story was so sequential he did not need to use temporal links to connect his sentences together. His writing flowed smoothly from moment to moment.

These varied verbs in Tom's final MCAS piece were supported with much more sophisticated adverbial phrases and clauses. Tom used adverbial phrases independently and combined them using two or even three adverbial phrases stacked together to modify the verbs in his story. For example with action verbs, he wrote, "She was moving her head left to right to smell," and "We ran inside like a rocket with the bone." Even when his action verbs were relatively simple, the adverbial phrases he placed around them added sophistication and interest to his writing. Tom also used adverbial clauses to modify sensing verbs like in this sentence, "Nakeea was excited that I was helping her," to tell the reader exactly what was exciting him. Tom even used some adverbial clauses to modify his saying verbs, for example he wrote, "I said so Nakeea will hurry." The adverbial phrases and clauses serve to make his writing more detailed and his sentences more complex and interesting. As many new learners do, Tom did over apply adverbial phrases and clauses to his text.

The participants in both Tom's pre and final assessments were appropriate for the genre and the topics he selected. Names and pronouns made up the bulk of Tom's participants throughout his stories. Similarly, there was no marked difference in

Tom's use of adjectival phrases in his pre and post assessments despite an instructional focus on them during the unit. In both pieces, Tom had a token few basic adjectives such as "one," "new," and "dinosaur." Given Tom's effort to try so many of the things Mia and I taught through the unit, it makes me wonder if perhaps adjectivals are not particularly helpful for personal recounts or perhaps they just aren't relevant to ten year olds.

Aubrey – 10 year- old female bilingual – Portuguese and English

When Aubrey received the first prompt asking her to write a story about a friendship she began by listing friends in her life on her planning sheet. Then Aubrey selected one friend, Oriana to write about. Aubrey created a timeline with just seven bullets to organize her story into a sequential story structure. We called this "step by step" with the students. Each bullet contained a three or more word phrase indicating an event such as "so we stared [*started*] talking." The seven bullets on Aubrey's timeline were divided into four sections using boxes indicating Aubrey's attempt to plan her writing across paragraphs. Then Aubrey moved to a draft.

Figure 52
Aubrey's Pre-Assessment Response

> Oriana
> One day when it was the first day of third gread. So I when to sit near these girl's and the first one was some girl and her name was Oriana she said "hi" I said "hi" back.
> Then we stared talking about everything then it was recess. We were hanging around and taking and playing then it was time to go inside to do work but in was easy.
> After that I did'nt know a awser and Oriana was helping me with it. So then it was almost time for lunch so we were talking agein. Then it was finally lunch.
> Then it was lunch time I told her to "sit near me" she said "ok." So I was sitting near her and aked her some questions about her and I told her about me.
> "Finallly" lunch was over I said to my self. It was late already so we started to get our things I was so happy because I had Oriana as a friend. And then the bell rag and she will be my friend forever.
>
> Word Count 180

Aubrey did respond directly to the prompt indicating an awareness of the need to give the audience what they wanted, a friendship story. For a testing context this was particularly important. Aubrey used great care in writing her piece neatly and with correct punctuation. On her draft you can see how she drew arrows to remind herself to indent for paragraphs in her final draft. She seemed to be working hard to make her writing accessible.

The piece exhibited a story structure including an orientation, step-by-step sequence in the body of the piece, and a closing. Aubrey's orientation, "One day when it was the first day of third gread [*grade*]," attempted to orient the reader to when and where the story took place. Her orientation lacked the lead character introduction. She failed to use any attention grabbing strategy to capture the reader's attention at the beginning of the story. There was no exciting action, explicit description, or engaging dialogue to catch the readers' attention early in the text. The step-by-step portion of the writing was very bland because Aubrey failed to zoom in on a small story and use the necessary language tools to engage the reader. Aubrey attempted an evaluative ending for her closing, "I was so happy because I had Oriana as a friend. And the bell rag [rang] and she will be my friend forever." This closing also connected back to the prompt making it particularly strong for the testing context.

Despite the developed story structure Aubrey's piece left me unaffected. It felt like the piece was her oral language written down, like she did not know that written language is different. To me it was as if she was writing to her classmates, expecting them to fill in the necessary details. I looked to the language to see what exactly she did that left me bored.

Upon further inspection of the language I could see that she used "and" and "so" to connect clauses into complex sentences, a better match for oral language. Her participants were herself "I" and her friend "Oriana, she, her." The Verbs were interesting because Aubrey used primarily past continuous verbs such as "was talking" and "were playing" which may have caused the confusing quality of her writing. Aubrey did attempt some dialogue in her writing but again it was awkward and a little boring. For example she wrote, "she said 'hi' I said 'hi' back." This writing also indicated that Aubrey was confused about dialogue because there are a few instances where she used quotation marks inappropriately such as in the final paragraph, "'Finally.'" I was pleased to note that Aubrey did attempt to express what the characters were feeling using a relational verb and an adjective, "I was so happy . . ." Expressing feelings is a typical ending in personal recounts.

Aubrey's use of adjectives was miniscule. She used primarily quantifying adjectives such as "one", "first", and "third." This made her piece feel empty and gave the reader little help in imagining the setting or characters in her story. Aubrey was able to use Adverbials more readily in this piece such as "talking about everything," and "go inside to do work". These adverbials did provide the reader

with more detailed information but Aubrey was extremely general in her adverbials again making the piece a bit dull.

Clearly, Mia taught time order linking words because Aubrey's piece was littered with them, "One day," "So", "Then," and "After that," to name a few. She was sure to start each new paragraph with a time order linking word.   It seems that Aubrey understanding of the sequential structure of personal recounts supported her use of time order linking words in her writing.

Aubrey had much to build on in her writing. She understood the rules of the game so to speak. She knew she had to deliver exactly what the testers were asking. She knew it had to be readable and that she should use correct print conventions to express herself to this particular audience. Aubrey also demonstrated an awareness of the structure of stories and was particularly good at closings.

Following our twenty-one day "Writing to the Prompt" unit Aubrey sat down to take the MCAS. She looked nervous but was confident. When she received the prompt she thought for a moment and then set to work on her timeline. She divided her timeline into four parts using brackets and then planning boxes to plan her story across four pages. She worked steadily through the period and finished this first step in a little over an hour. She returned from her break and took some time to read over her piece. Then Aubrey wrote the final draft in response to the MCAS prompt asking her to write a story about a time when she helped someone.

Figure 53
Aubrey's Post-Assessment Response

It was a Sunday morning hearing my little sister cry. I decided to wake up and go have breafest *[breakfast]* so I did that. I notice my mom and dad were getting ready for work. I know that's why Michele was crying she wouldn't be crying for any old reason.

"Aubrey" my mom called, are you a wake.

"Yes I am" I replied back to my mom

"Oh good but can you take Michele Because me and your dad are trying to get ready for work but we can't because your sister is crying right near us."

"Okay I will love to take Michele." I awser *[answered]*.

But can I have breafest *[breakfast]* first"

Okay go downstairs and have breafest *[breakfast]*.

Fine I replied.

As soon as I leafed *[left]* my little sister started to cry.

"Okay Michele but you have to eat to" "Would you like if you were hungry and you wanted to have your bottle" I yelled.

"Okay then stop crying" I said.

I was getting my breafest *[breakfast]*. I was so hungry like a dog that didn't eat for 8 weeks the breafest *[breakfast]* was going down so good.

I still heard my sister crying.

I felt like I wanted to smeam *[scream]* so loud because she never wanted to stop crying.

Okay Aubrey are you going her today or tomorrow my mom yelled from upstairs.

"Don't worry I will get her right now" will that make you happy I said.

"Yes that will Aubrey so I can get ready I am almost done.

"Okay" I yelled from downstairs.

I yelled, "Michele do you want to come downstairs and we can whach *[watch]* mickey mouse together."

She still crying.

I guess she did not hear me say that. Because she will look and started to cry so I can get her.

But okay whatever

Finally I yelled it loud then louder and lastly loudest.

Okay Aubrey. I think we all headed *[heard]* what you yelled.

"Oh well mommy didn't you want me to take Michele.

"Yes but you didn't have to yell."

"Okay I will take Michele now"

I ran upstairs like a rocket will.

When I ran upstairs my little sister was larghing *[laughing]*.

Oh Michele you think everything is funny "don't you" I shouted. I shouted because she larghed *[laughed]* and she looks so cute with her little teeth.

I when *[went]* downstairs with her. I change her diper *[diaper]* and made her a bottle. She sat to drinked.

Then she gave me her bottle She was all done with her bottle. I tried to put her to sleep but I guss *[guess]* she didn't even want to sleep.

I put on her favorite show mickey mouse we started to whach *[watch]* mickey mouse I didn't want to whach *[watch]* tv.

It was boring.

> The eplose [*episode*] we were whaching *[watching]* was new that makes Michele super happy because it is new. I have to whach *[watch]* this for the rest of the day because every time I will chang it micky mouse she will cry.
>
> She started to largh *[laugh]* She looked at me when she was larging *[laughing]* of cause *[course]* I had to largh *[laugh]* with her
>
> And that is why I love her so much and that was when I did something helpful think I did for my mom and dad.
>
> ## Work count 560

The seriousness with which Aubrey attacked the writing assignment signified her understanding of the test-taking context. She was nervous before hand and she did not waste a moment during the session. There was evidence throughout the piece that Aubrey was showing off, that she was putting her best foot forward. She used the timeline and planning boxes to map out a much longer and fleshed out story. Throughout the piece there was evidence of the mini-lessons Mia and I taught such as saying verbs to express the characters emotions, adverbial phrases to tell the reader when, and using sensing verbs. She was doing her best to show these readers what she was capable of.

The topic for the piece, taking care of her little sister was very appropriate for the intended audience of strangers in Boston. Her conventions were appropriate most of the time with the exception of spelling. Although, I do believe the spellings in this

piece do represent her best work. As in her first piece, Aubrey showed a strong story structure with an orientation, a step-by-step body, and a closing.

For the orientation Aubrey wrote, "It was Sunday morning hearing my little sister cry." The sentence is a confusing orientation for the reader. She tried to establish who- her and her sister, when- Sunday morning, and the problem- a crying baby.   The reader had to read on to understand why the baby was crying and what that had to do with Sunday morning. She attempted to grab the reader's attention by beginning with an action, hearing her little sister cry but did not fully answer all the questions a reader would likely ask.

What was markedly more developed in the final piece was the step-by-step body of the story. Aubrey zoomed in and focused on a small moment in time the waking up routine of her family. This allowed her to write with considerable detail about the actions and dialogue her characters took. The closing in Aubrey's final piece did not summarize and connect back to the prompt as in her first piece. Aubrey began by stating how much she loves her sister and with what feels like an afterthought wrote, "and that was when I did something helpful think [*thing*] I did for my mom and dad." There was little evaluation or summation to the closing.

The piece overall sounds and feels more like a written text. Occasionally Aubrey would fall back into oral language such as when she wrote "But okay whatever." For the most part she seemed to understand that a written narrative demands a different language structure. The focus of Aubrey's topic seemed to allow her to use more sophisticated language in her piece. As in the pre-writing sample

Aubrey used complex sentences with simple conjunctions like "and", "but", and "because". However, this time some of her conjunctions were more elaborate such as "of course" and "but I guess". Just as her conjunctions showed signs of growth, Aubrey used more complicated time linking clauses and phrases such as "When I ran upstairs," or "As soon as."

Aubrey used a limited variety of participant labels choosing to use their names, and pronouns for her characters. Aubrey incorporated minimal adjectives into her writing. Those she did use were very simple adjectives such as "little" and "new."

One of the most exciting shifts for Aubrey came with her understanding of the power of verbs. Aubrey incorporated action, sensing, and saying verbs throughout her text. In this piece Aubrey used action verbs to tell what her characters did as in the following sentence, "I **when** [*went*] downstairs with her. I **change** her diper*[diaper]* and **made** her bottle."

There was marked improvement in Aubrey's use of dialogue or saying verbs. In her first piece she used dialogue very little and incorrectly. This piece is filled with a variety of accurately used saying words such as, "yelled," "shouted," and "answered," that propel her story forward and allow the reader to infer how the character said the words. Her strong dialogue enabled Aubrey to maintain the step-by-step structure of the piece.

Likewise, Aubrey utilized mental verbs to tell her audience what she was thinking and feeling through the piece, for example, "I know," "I noticed," "I

decided." Aubrey modified many of her verbs to provide her readers with more

information about the how things happened in her story. Some of her most notable

were, "because your sister is crying right near us," "like a dog that didn't eat for 8

weeks," and "As soon as I left." The varied verbs and adverbial phrases and clauses

as well as her more developed linking words and conjunctions lent her piece the

written text feel I mentioned above.

Carlos 11 year old Male – English Only

Figure 54
Carlos' Pre-Assessment Response

My friend Name George

George your impotant *[important]* to me you're my best friend I in the hole world I can't belive that were best friend and sometimes I Get a little Mad at you we will be best friend mostly all my Go to diffiend *[different]* school or get me in tribble *[trouble]* but you don't will not have to wore *[worry]* about it because you are the best friend a kid can every have and mybe some kid well mybe want to be just like you some day but that not until a long time so know you're my friend I look up to you and I hope you look up to me sotimes *[sometimes]*

Word Count 117

The prompt demanded Carlos write a story for unknown adults up in Boston,

about a special time with a friend. Instead, Carlos wrote a love letter to George, his

best friend. Carlos' failure to understand the purpose and the audience of this

assigned writing rendered his work ineffective for the testing situation.

Carlos approached the task as if he were writing to his friend George. He

used the participant pronouns, "you" and "we" indicating he felt the audience was

George. He even addresses George directly at the beginning of his writing, "George your impotant *[important]* to me. . ." The piece reads more like a stream of conscious oral monologue than a personal recount.

The structure of Carlos' piece is more like a persuasive essay than a story. Instead of an orientation establishing who, when, and where, Carlos begins with a greeting and a thesis like statement, "George, your [*you're*] important to me." The whole piece then reads as a letter to George telling him how important he is to Carlos. There is no sequence of events representing a story structure of any kind. Carlos closed his piece with "so know you're my friend I look up to you and I hope you look up to me sometimes." This closing matches his thesis statement and the intent of his letter but does not match the required purpose for the piece, a story about a time with a friend.

Due to the persuasive essay structure, there was no sequence of events. Consequently, Carlos did not need to use action or saying verbs to move any action forward. However, Carlos did use several mental verbs such as "I want," and "I can't believe," and "I hope." They were not used to move the story forward but to support his thesis that George is his best friend. Carlos' ability to use mental verbs was transferred over into his stories once he learned the correct story structure.

Likewise, Carlos demonstrated a beginning ability to utilize adjectivals and adverbials in his sentences. He used several adjectivals to describe his friend, "best friend in the whole world," and "the best friend a kid can ever have." Through the piece, there are examples of adverbials such as "I get a little mad at you." His use of

adverbials and adjectivals are appropriate to both the required story structure and the persuasive essay structure Carlos used in the piece. Again, Carlos was able to transfer these skills into the story structure once he was taught.

There are few indications, if any that he sees written language as different from oral language. The mechanics, structure, and language all seem to point to the idea that Carlos sees writing as simply oral language written down. In the center of Carlos' sample there is a line in which Carlos seems to revise his thinking mid sentence. "but you don't will not have to wore [*worry*] about it . . ." I believe Carlos started with one line of thinking with "but you don't" and then went on to revise his thinking with, "will not have to wore. . ." If he understood the audience and purpose he would not have left the first idea on the paper, he would have erased or crossed out the discarded piece. As one would do in oral language, Carlos just kept going adding his revision into the piece but not eliminating the previous attempt. After reading this first sample from Carlos, I realized it would be especially important to make the audience and purpose clear from the beginning because I could see the results of his confusion.

Despite his previous failure on state assessments, Carlos arrived on testing day confident and ready to go. He stated that Mia and I had "taught me [him] how to start to read everything to see what the old ladies want." He seemed to grasp the testing context and the unique audience for this writing. After the directions were read, he was off. He read the prompt and decided on a very appropriate topic for the audience and the prompt, taking care of his sick mother. Carlos created a pre-writing timeline

that included much dialogue and action verbs. He split up his timeline into four

blocks and set to work writing. Throughout the writing he referred back to the

timeline frequently. The behaviors Carlos exhibited indicated that he understood the

testing context and the audience for this writing. The following is Carlos' final

MCAS long composition.

Figure 55

Carlos' Post-Assessment Response

> My mother throw up I asked are you ok.
>   No honye I am sick. my mom asked can you stay home In my mind I said Oh yhea get to. stay home my mom said get me the phone so I can call aunty tisha I said ok then. I got the phone then I made her some tea. this is the hlepfullest thing I ever did. My mother was about to throw up agin so I got her a bucket and as soon as I was about to clean her bucket she. . . throw up! In her Room floor it took me about a hour then it hit five a clock then my mom said I am fleeing better. So then it was time for me to go to bed because it was 10:00 so I woke up and I was sick and in my mind I thought I can't be sick because today is Friday and I have gym after lunch so no I can't be sick then I wasn't looking at my mom she said Get Dressed for school. My mom said and lauged *[laughed]* She said your sick so I did stay home and didn't help a thing.

Carlos worked to make his audience happy by giving them exactly the topic

they asked for, a time when he was helpful. In the middle of his story Carlos stops to

point out, "this is the hlepfullest thing I ever did," just in case his audience missed

that he was in fact helping. Then at the end, instead of summarizing how he was

helpful, you can see Carlos' sense of humor. He wrote, "so I did stay home and

didn't help a thing," because the tables were turned and he was sick.   His quip

definitely ties into the assigned prompt.

The participants for this piece were more appropriate for the story structure, and the audience I, my mother and Aunty Tisha. Where before he was talking directly to his audience, in his final piece, Carlos utilizes participants that allowed unknown readers to follow the story.

The conventions of this final piece are certainly lacking but there is evidence that Carlos worked hard to use some conventions to help his readers. Carlos has periods with corresponding capital letters sprinkled throughout his piece. It is not clear that Carlos understood where sentences began and ended in his writing but, it is progress that he attempted to indicate sentences to his readers. Carlos even utilizes an elipse in his story, "as soon as I was about to clean her bucket she . . . throw up!" The elipse was very effective in his piece.

The structure of Carlos' piece also matches the assigned prompt. He was asked to write a story and his piece has an orientation, step-by-step sequence of events and a closing. In his orientation, "My Mother throw up I asked are you ok," Carlos used action and dialogue to engage his readers. The orientation tells the readers who, and the problem for the story. He quickly goes on to tell us that the story took place in the morning before school. This final piece of Carlos' shows a strong understanding that stories require a sequential series of events. The reader is walked through a step-by-step set of actions, getting the phone, getting tea, getting the bucket, cleaning up, bed time, getting sick himself, and then in the morning no school. Carlos concludes his story with a closing that connects to the prompt in an

unusual way. The growth in the structure of Carlos' writing from the pre-assessment to the final writing sample was exciting.

Carlos' use of action, mental and saying verbs were markedly stronger in his final piece. The step-by-step sequence of events was carried out by several action verbs, "throw up," "got," "made," and "did stay home." A variety of saying verbs were also present in the story including, "asked," "said," and "lauged." Carlos employed these saying verbs to forward the action in his story and to allow the reader to infer how the dialogue was spoken. As in his pre-assessment, Carlos included several mental verbs to communicate his thoughts and feelings through the story. He used lines such as, "in my mind I thought," to tell the reader his thinking. Several of Carlos' verbs were modified by adverbial phrases such as, "she throw up! In her Room floor. . ." telling the readers where she threw up and "Get Dressed for school," indicating why he needed to get dressed.

Carlos included temporal links in this story to connect his step-by-step events. He used "then" as a temporal link several times. However, he employed one more sophisticated link, "as soon as I was about to clean her bucket. . . " Carlos understood that a story is a sequence of events and was beginning to use links to bring his readers along his timeline.

Carlos did not use any substantial adjectivals to describe the nouns in his piece. In fact the only adjectival he used is "some," to describe the tea he made for his mom. This is disappointing because during the unit, Carlos frequently used simple adjectivals in his writing. They just did not materialize on testing day.

Throughout Carlos' piece there is evidence that he was trying to do many of the things we taught through the unit. He certainly used the processing steps we shared including the timeline, rough draft, and final draft to attain the correct personal recount structure. He selected a topic appropriate for the audience. Where Carlos struggled was in the language component particularly the structure of a sentence.

Adam – 9 year- old male bilingual – Portuguese and English

Much like Carlos' pre-assessment, Adam did not select the required structure for his piece. Adam was asked to write a story about a time with a friend and instead he wrote a persuasive essay about his best friend in the form of a letter. Adam did try to go through the process Mia taught them for personal recounts, it just did not work for the report he chose to write. For the pre-assessment, Adam began by creating a list of all his special friends. Bob was at the top of that list so he selected Bob as his topic for the prompt. Adam knew to create a timeline so he drew a timeline. Instead of write the events of a story in sequential order, Adam wrote reasons why he loved his friend next to each dot. At the end of his timeline Adam added a concluding statement that said, "and that's why your important to me." At the pre-writing stage, Adam was already on the path to writing a report.

Figure 56
Adam's Pre-Assessment Response

My friend Bob!
    Bob your inportant to me because we play togethere and we new [knew] each other sence [since] we where [were] born. You make me happy and you make me laugh and we never really fight. I would get really hurt for you if you where in trouble.
    Sometimes you teach me things in hockey that's almost the only reason why I play hockey is because of you. Thats why your my best friend and thats why your inportant friend to me.
Love Adam ♥

Word count 87

Adam has all the structural elements of a report. He has a title specifying the topic of the report. The first sentence is a nice thesis statement about Bob, "Bob your important to me because we play together and we new *[knew]* each other sence [*since]* we where *[were]* born." The body of his writing is a list of reasons Adam loves Bob including that they never fight, he makes him laugh, and he teaches him about hockey. The essay ends with a concluding sentence, "That's why you're my best friend and that's why your important to me."   In the end he wrote a simple essay detailing why he loves his friend not a story.

The medium of this piece is a letter. He decides that Bob is his audience so he writes a letter directly to Bob. The entire piece reads like a persuasive letter to his peer. He even signs the piece with Love Adam and adds a heart. Adam works to write his piece so neatly and with his best spelling. I believe this was due to a dawning understanding of the true audience for this piece. He just did not yet understand how the audience impacted his structural and language decisions.

Adam's structural and audience confusions lead to several errors in language. The participants in Adam's piece were all consistent with a persuasive letter "I," "you," and "we." Adam's participants also confirm his confusion about the intended audience for this writing. Adam occasionally incorporated simple adjectives to describe the subjects in his sentences such as "best," and "only."

All of Adam's verbs were consistent with a persuasive essay. His action verbs such as, "play" and "make" were in the present verb tense instead of the past tense as required by a personal recount. Adam utilized several sensing verbs but they were

used as reasons for why Bob was his best friend not to share what a character was thinking or feeling. As would be expected in an essay, there was no dialogue in Adam's pre-assessment. Many of Adam's verbs were modified with adverbs or simple adverbial phrases such as, "sometimes," and "because we play togethere."

As Adam wrote a persuasive essay that delineated several reasons why Bob was his best friend, he had no need to use time order linking words. He did use "and" to connect thoughts together into more complex sentences.

On the day of the MCAS, Adam arrived calm and confident. Upon receiving his prompt he quickly selected a topic, babysitting for his little cousin, and began creating a timeline. His timeline was full of dialogue but missing action verbs. When it came time to transfer his timeline into a draft, Adam chose not to use planning boxes but did successfully stretch his story across four pages in his booklet.

Figure 57
Adam's Post-Assessment Response

"Adam Im going "to the bank can you be helpful for me and watch Michael for me. Shore *[sure]* how long will you take maybe about an hour or 2 okay by I love you.

I took Michael out of the crib We where *[were]* playing hide and seek Whene ever I would hide he found me it was like he was a wolf he could smell every where I go.

We where *[were]* having so munch fun together. I was going to feed Michael I was going to feed him some ceral *[cereal]*. I tried to keep him still so we dou't *[don't]* make a mess but he did stop Thene we went upstairs to go show my vou Michael she kissed him like a machine.

I thought she should probley *[probably]* stop so Michael does't *[doesn't]* get mad whene he's mad he cry's She did we put Michael on the floor. He ran away from us like lightning. I crawled after him to make him laugh it worked he laughed like a little monkey.

We where *[were]* having lots of fun. Whene I notced Michael was getting tired I picked him up my vou gave him a kiss and I brong *[brung]* him downstairs Whene I put him is his crib he looked more tired thene a bear whene it's getting ready to hibernate.

I put some music on for him thene he fell asleep I just laid in bed so he would't *[wouldn't]* be alone in the room. Whene mom came from the bank she said where is Michael I told her he's sleeping so dou't *[don't]* make munch *[much]* noise. My mom was like a giant stomping it's feet. Thene my mom thanked me for being so helpful for watching Michael. I said your welcome and that was the day I was helpful for my mom.

Word Count 310

The great care Adam gave the task and his efforts to incorporate much that we taught through the unit indicate his awareness of the context. He clearly understood he had to give the testers exactly what they asked for. They asked for a story about a time when he was helpful and that is precisely what Adam produced. The topic was a perfect match to the assigned prompt and the intended audience and this time Adam wrote a story.

The structure of Adam's writing demonstrates substantial growth. His story has a clear orientation, step-by-step series of events and closing. Adam uses dialogue

in his orientation to grab the reader's attention and tell the reader when and what,

"'Adam Im going ' to the bank can you be helpful for me and watch Michael for me.

Shore how long will you take maybe about an hour or 2 okay by I love you." Adam

neglects to explain who "me" is forcing the reader to read on to learn it is his mother.

Adam's reference to the prompt further indicates his awareness of the testing context.

The body of his story brings the reader through a series of sequential events: taking

Michael from the crib, playing hide and seek, feeding Michael, going to visit Vou,

chasing Michael, naptime, and Mom's return. The story ends with a closing that

summarizes the story and reminds the reader that he in fact answered the prompt,

"Thene my mom thanked me for being so helpful for watching Michael. I said your

welcome and that was the day I was helpful for my mom."

The language choices Adam makes in this piece show tremendous growth as

well as much room for further instruction. The participants in this story, "I," "we,"

"Michael," "Vou," "my mom," "us," and "she" are all a match for a personal recount

to an unfamiliar audience. He does not address the audience personally in this piece

but uses pronouns and proper nouns suitable to his purpose.

The past tense action verbs Adam utilized in this story are appropriate for his

personal recount. He used verbs such as "took," "tried," "went," and "crawled," to

tell about the sequence of actions that took place in his story. Interestingly, Adam

used a past continuous verb at the beginning of two paragraphs in sentences such as

this, "We where [*were*] having so munch [*much*] fun together." It seems the timeline

helped him understand that a narrative must be a sequence of events but perhaps

Adam believed that each paragraph needed a summary or evaluative statement at the beginning.

Despite much time and energy devoted to sensing and saying verbs, Adam did not utilize these types of verbs often in his writing. In fact, Adam only used two sensing verbs in his entire piece, "I thought. . ." and "I noticed . . . "Adam did include a string of dialogue at the beginning of his story but failed to mark the dialogue with saying verbs or the speaker. The middle of Adam's story does not utilize any dialogue. In the final paragraph of his story Adam does use some dialogue. He does not use a variety of saying verbs to express how the dialogue was said in the story. He wrote sentences such as, "I said your welcome," and "she said where is Devin." However, there was no punctuation to indicate his intention that this was direct dialogue. Given his efforts to include so many other things we taught, I believe he did intend for this to be dialogue but did not yet understand how to punctuate it.

Where Adam shined was in his use of adjectival and adverbial phrases. We made it clear the audience expected to see "details" in the form of adverbial and adjectival phrases and Adam worked hard to give them what they wanted. He included several strong instances of adjectival phrases to describe his characters. Some examples are, "it was like he was a wolf," and "My mom was like a giant stomping it's feet." Similarly, Adam incorporated several imaginative adverbial phrases into is writing such as, "she kissed him like a machine," and "he laughed like a little monkey." Much like Tom, Adam overuses the similes and metaphors in his

writing. He also utilized some more adverbial phrases to provide practical

information to the readers such as why, where, or when something happens. For

example he wrote, ""I crawled after him to make him laugh," and "I just laid in bed

so he wouldn't be alone in the room." These more practical adverbial phrases

provided his readers with further detail in a more sophisticated sentence format.

Some of Adam's adverbial phrases were used to link sentences temporally.

For example, Adam wrote, "Whene I noticed Micheal was getting tired . . . " The

adverbial clause describes when he noticed but also serves to link the coming event

with the previous series of events. Instead of repeatedly using "thene" Adam uses

some time based phrases to connect events in his story.   This strategy not only served

to make his writing flow sequentially but also made his sentences more complex.

The capitalization and punctuation of Adam's piece made his writing

extremely difficult to read. His confusing and most often missing punctuation forced

the reader to guess where ideas and thoughts began and ended. His inaccurate

punctuation of dialogue made it very difficult to decipher who was speaking. It

appears that Adam does not yet understand the concept of a sentence. He is so

conscientious that he would have punctuated the piece if he knew how. I did not take

time to show the class what makes up a sentence and clearly Carlos and Adam would

have benefitted from some direct instruction in the elements of a complete sentence.

Amanda – 9 year- old female –English only

Amanda took the pre-test very seriously working very hard to give the

intended audience what she believed they wanted. After she received the prompt she

underlined the first two lines, "Think about a friend who has been an important part of your life. How did you become friends with this person?" Then Amanda wrote her friend's name, "Celina" and began a timeline about her friend. The timeline was not a sequence of events from one event in their lives but a list of yearly updates in her friendship. Just as Tom had done, It looks as if Amanda never read to the actual prompt, which directs, "Write a story about this friendship." Instead of writing a story about her friendship she used her planning work to write a report about how she met her friend and how that friendship developed over the years.

I believe that Amanda was already demonstrating an awareness of the unique testing context in this pre-test. The fact that she took the time to underline what she believed was the salient part of the prompt points to the idea that she understood in this context the audience controls the topic. The fact that she worked so hard to comply with the topic and even used similar language in her writing to that in the prompt "Our friendship grew," illustrates her desire to please the testers. The writing that Amanda turned in was placed on the page carefully and remarkably neat. She even cued the reader to turn the page on the bottom of the first page with an arrow and "next page." She attempted to use the mechanics she knew including uppercase letters, ending punctuation, as well as quotation marks. All these things together lead me to conclude Amanda was working to impress the reader in this testing situation.

Figure 58
Amanda's Pre-Assessment Response

"My Friend Celina"

My Best friend is Celina She is very important to me.

We became friends in 1st grade, my other friend Tara led me to her we did not talk much The only thing Celina said is "Hi." Even thow [*though*] we did not talk I geuss we were friends.

In second grade Celina was in my class but Tara wasn't. When me and Celina were [friend and we till are.] friends we would play together at recess.

In 3rd grade Celina was not in my class and Tara wasn't either I as *[was]* so sad that they were both in the other class and I didn't get to see Celina at all.

4th grade I was so exited maybe Celina and Tara would be in my class and they were and I got the teacher I wanted that was good to.

Our friendship grew because while we were in 4th grade we made a club each of us got a secret notebook and you have to wright *[write]* secrets in it.

Word count 174

The structure of Amanda's piece is consistent with what she believed was the purpose, describing how her friendship developed. Her piece is a mixture of genres including persuasive and historical recount. Instead of the orientation required for a story, Amanda began her piece with a thesis statement, "My Best friend is Celina She is very important to me." The body of her piece was a yearly summary of her

friendship with Celina starting in first grade when they met and ending with the current year. In Amanda's summary, she connected strongly back to what she underlined in the prompt writing, "Our friendship grew because . . ." More evidence that Amanda was trying to comply with her understanding of the audience's request.

The temporal links Amanda used in her writing matched her intended purpose and structure. At the beginning of several paragraphs Amanda wrote, "In ___ grade. . ." to cue the reader that there was a shift in time. Her temporal links matched the annual structure of her report.

Amanda's participants and verbs were consistent with her persuasive and historical recount purpose. Her participants were primarily the characters and pronouns such as we, I, and they. There were some action verbs such as "led," and "would play" sprinkled in the piece when Amanda was describing what she did with Celina during that year of friendship. There was a single instance of dialogue at the beginning of the piece when Amanda wrote, "The only thing Celina said is 'Hi.'" Amanda incorporated a few sensing verbs in her piece such as, "excited," and "was so sad." Amanda did accurately use the past tense verb form throughout her piece. In general her verbs and participants were general and summative until she got the closing where she specifically described what she and Celina did together in the fourth grade.

One of the most sophisticated elements of Amanda's writing was her use of adverbial phrases. She used adverbial clauses such as, "When me and Celina were friends we would play together at recess." Amanda used an adverbial phrase at the

beginning of her sentence to tell the reader when and two adverbials at the end to explain how and where. A second example of Amanda's capacity to incorporate strong adverbials into her writing is in the following sentence, "Our friendship grew because while we were in 4th grade we made a club". Here she used adverbial phrases to explain to the readers why her friendship grew and when. Conversely, Amanda's use of adjectival phrases was nominal.

On MCAS day Amanda came in smiling and confident. She read the entire prompt and selected a very appropriate topic for the prompt, a time when she helped at a pet shop. Amanda created a long detailed timeline with using action verbs at the beginning of each line. She split up her timeline into four parts and then used planning boxes to stretch her story across several pages. Once Amanda planned out her piece using a timeline, she went to work drafting.

Figure 59
Amanda's Post-Assessment Response

One bright sunny day I asked my mom if we could go to the petshop "NO" she said "please" I said back "fine" mom said very mad. We put on our sweaters and we put on our matching pink and grey shoes. We walked out the door and got in the car. We drove to the petshop and it took fifteen Minutes to get there. We went in the parking lot and mom parked the car right in front. We both walked to the front door to get in the petshop and all of a sudden I tripped over a scrunched up rug Mom helped me back up.

Mom and me looked at a cute little black, fluffy puppy and it was so cute, "look at that cute little face" I said to mom "your [yes?] it is cute" my Mom said back. A worker came up to us and asked me if I wanted to help feed and brush the puppies because a lot of our workers are sick and we need help. I ran over to mom and said "mom can I help that worker take care of the puppies" "sure" mom said back. I went over to the worker and said that it was ok for me to stay I jumped up and down saying "yes." Mom came over to me and said "I got to go to the store you are gonna stay here ok" "alright" I yelled back. "first I need you to take that cute little black furry puppy and brush him" "ok" I said. I went over to the cage and took out the cute puppy. I took out a brush and started brushing "man this dog has snarly I said to myself. All of a sudden the brush got stuck in the dogs hair I pulled the brush and said "that was a relief" because that dog would have been in alot of pane [pain].

The worker came back over "good job" the worker said to me "now I need you to feed him ok" "ok" I said back. I took out two bowls and filled one with food and the other with water. The dog started eating gulping and splashing water everywhere. Mom came back and said "its time to leave honey" "coming" I said back. We got in the car and that was one of the times I helped someone in there [their] need.

Word count 404

Throughout Amanda's piece there is evidence that she was working to utilize everything we taught during the unit. First and foremost, Amanda learned to give the reader's exactly what they wanted. She found a personal experience that directly tied into the assigned prompt, a time when she helped take care of puppies in a pet store. Amanda also worked hard to make her piece readable for her audience. She laboriously wrote her final piece working to make it as neat as possible. She also used many of the conventions we worked on during the unit including ending punctuation, capitals at the beginning of sentences, paragraphs, and some dialogue punctuation. While her use of conventions was not perfect, it does indicate her working to the best of her ability to satisfy the intended audience.

There was striking improvement in Amanda's structure. Unlike her pre-assessment, the structure of Amanda's MCAS piece directly matched the assigned prompt. As the prompt required, Amanda wrote a personal recount. She began her piece with an orientation that informed the reader of who, when, where, and what, "One bright sunny day I asked my mom if we could go to the petshop." Amanda's orientation began with a description of the weather and dialogue which were both strategies we taught to engage the reader at the outset of their writing.

The body of Amanda's story was a very methodical step-by-step. She used many past tense action verbs to propel her story forward such as, "walked," "filled," and "jumped." As can be seen in the examples, Amanda's choice of action verbs was somewhat benign leading to a rather flat middle of her story. As in her pre-assessment, Amanda did use a variety of adverbial phrases to modify these verbs for

the reader. Sometimes she even stacked these adverbial phrases together to make a much more complex sentence such as, "We both walked to the front door to get in the petshop and all of a sudden I tripped over a scrunched up rug." In that one sentence alone she explains, where, why, and when using adverbials. She appeared to gain skill in her use of adverbial phrases over the course of the unit.

The frequency and complexity of the dialogue in this piece signify another area of significant growth for Amanda. In this piece Amanda chose to use dialogue frequently to tell her story. She used a variety of saying verbs such as said, asked, and yelled. In her second paragraph she uses a string of dialogue to communicate a conversation between her, her mom, and the worker at the pet shop. Amanda did not manage to write it so that the speakers were clear but, she attempted that type of dialogue in her piece. She even tried to modify a saying verb when she wrote, "'fine' mom said very mad." While she did not use the types of saying verbs we showed her to indicate anger such as "snapped" or "shouted," it does indicate she understood the importance of saying verbs in her story.

Amanda also combined her understanding of action and dialogue verbs to accomplish what writers call "show not tell." Instead of saying that she was excited about begin able to help, she wrote, "I jumped up and down saying 'yes.'" In the following example she sought to show the reader how excited the puppy was to eat so she wrote, "The dog started eating gulping and splashing water everywhere." Here she used action verbs with adverbials to show not tell. Amanda was working to use her new knowledge of language to show her readers instead of just telling them.

Amanda chose not to use sensing verbs in her piece, perhaps because she opted to use "show not tell" instead.

As in the pre-test, Amanda used appropriate participants including character names and pronouns. However, in her final piece Amanda worked to include several adjectival phrases to modify nouns. For example Amanda wrote, "a cute little black, fluffy puppy" and "our matching pink and grey shoes." She primarily used single word quality, classification, and opinion adjectives strung together to describe her nouns.

There were few examples of temporal links in Amanda's piece because she chose to use action verbs and dialogue to tell the next thing that happened in her story. Once, Amanda used an adverbial phrase as a temporal link such as, "All of a sudden." She also used a time order word, "First" within some dialogue. Otherwise, Amanda relied on her verbs to communicate the time order of the events in her story.

The closing of Amanda's story was a single sentence, "We got in the car and that was one of the times I helped someone in there *[their]* need." This was a clear attempt to connect back to the prompt. While her closing did serve the purpose of concluding the piece, it failed to summarize her story or provide some evaluative thoughts.

Joelle – 12 year- old female bilingual – Spanish and English

When Joelle received the pre-assessment writing prompt she began by carefully reading the prompt. She underlined the phrase "how your friendship grew," and set out to create a timeline to recount how her friendship grew with her best

friend, Angela. Instead of writing a recount or narrative about one time with Angela;

Joelle chose to write the following piece about a series of interactions with Angela

that demonstrated how their friendship grew.

Figure 60
Joelle's Pre-Assessment Response

I ment by best friend in 3 grade and she is a new student in our class. I going to ask her name.

Hey you what's your name. Angela. The new student said while she was walking up to me. She was a new student in class so I want to be friends with her. WE walked to our seet and while we was walking we was talking. We sat in our seets. In the middle of our conversation the bell rang. It was tine for recess. I like recess.

Me and Angela got up and so did the rest of the class. The class lined up with snackers in there hands. Me and Angela was talking and playing at recess. She ask about me and and I ask about her. And the days went on and I started to like her better ad She started to like me to. I think I will like a best friend.

Then school was over. I was mad cuase I thought I wouldn't see her again until next year. I signed Angela's shirt. I put my name and put next to it [new best friend.] She said "thank you Joelle."

How our friendship grew is by seeing each other often. I thought we wouldn't see each other. "But we did" We saw each other at the pool and Angela came up to me and said hi and then she said do you want to meet my sister. I said yes. We walked to the other side of the pool I saw her and I said you guys look just alike from then me and Angela always had eachothers back and was kind to each other. We always had trust in eachother. And now that were in 4 grade were best best friends. I'm so glad to have a best friend like Angela.

I love you Angela.

Word Count 313

On the day of the long composition for MCAS, Joelle was excited and confident. She took extended time to read the prompt and begin writing. She created a long and detailed timeline and used planning boxes to stretch her story across the four pages.

Figure 61
Joelle's Post-Assessment Response

"Joelle!" my mom yelled. I didn't answer her at first becuase I knew she was gonna ask me for a favor because she been doing it all day and because I was wachting my favorite show in my room that afternoon. I was the oldest sister in the house because my big sister went away for the summer at her dads. I don't know why she will do that if she knew I will need help with Mom and my younger sister.

"Joelle"! mom yelled once agian.

"Coming, Coming"! I yelled back. I ran to her room that was right across my sisters room.

I slamed my hands on my moms bed and look he in her beautiful big brown eyes If she would ask me for a favor I could'nt say no.

"Can you please please help," my mom said until I said to her

"help you off the bed."

"Yes please." She replied I tried to help her off but her big fat belly was in the way so I grabbed her by the arm.

The reason why I had to help her off the bed was because she was having a baby. I was so excited when I heard the but now my moms pushing it with all the favors .

Having a mom that's having a baby is a hard job when your bigger sister left.

"Thank you honey," my mom said in a soft voice.

"You welcome", I replied I went running to my room to see if the show was still on and it was.

I was wachting the show but Im not going to get into the show because I know my mom is going to ask me for another favor.

"Joelle"! my yelled again. You see what I mean it feels like the favors will never end. I'm getting really sick of hearing Joelle, Joelle, Joelle over and over again. I feel like changeing my name.

While I was walking to her room I whisped to myself "What dose she want now?" I was next to her and said "Yes mom".

"Can you get your little beautiful sister dress please." She replied in a sad way beuase she knew I was getting sick of doing favor and I had mad planes to go to my friends house.

"Sure mom I will do it." I said to mom and wlaked away to my sister's room with my shoulders down.

"Jailen," I said hurry up and get your clothes. She gave me her socks and pants.

"Wheres the shirt," I questioned.

"I don't know," she replied in the cutest funniest voice ever. I got her a blue shirt that had diamones on it.   And I got her dress.

"Joelle" ! Mom yelled again. I looked At the time and it was a haft an hour form the last time I look at the time.

Every haft a hour my mom want me to go get a cup of water for her.

"Water!" I yelled

"How did you know", she yelled back. I didn't answer I was to upset. I went to get the water. And then when I entered My mom bedroom door I turned my face away from her and said "here". Holding the cup of water. I turned my face becuase then she will know that Im mad and say what wrong and I don't want her to know. But I think she knew I was mad by the way she looked at me.

I speeded out her room. I went to go cook for my sister Jailen and my sister/brother that's inside my mommy. I went to go cook because I knew my mom was going to ask me that favor. I went to go cook because I had notice the time and didn't feel like helping my mom of the bed.

"Honey" mom yelled. "Can you cook for mommy please it will be the last favor I'll will ask you I promise.

"Already am mom," I yelled back rude. I felt so bad yelling at her like that. But I was getting mad

After I was done cooking I served everybody. My little sister made a big mess in the kichen. I really didn't want to clean it up. I picked up all the noodles and cleaned the table. My mom came in the kichen. I thought oo wow how did she got how did she off the bed. But I wasn't worried about that I was worried about why shes not in the bed relaxing. She looks at me and said, "Joelle honey you had done enough for me today and I really really do appreate what you had done for me I had raied you to be a young responsible lady." And mommys proud of you honey I want you to relax I will clean up this mess for you." I was smiling and tears started to roll down my face.

"No mom After your done I want to relax with your and feel my brother/sister kicking inside your belly," I said.   After she was done we rest in her room I felt the baby kicking about 6 times mom said the baby was happy. I said "hey little baby what you doing." I guess he heard me because the baby kicked again. I love to help my mom. That was an afternoon I was helpful to my mom.

Word Count 901

Joelle's pre-assessment exhibits many of the structure and language elements we taught in the long composition unit. Joelle demonstrated an awareness of the audience and the situation by focusing so deliberately on the prompt. She wrote a recount that included three instances, when they first met, the last day of school, and when they reunited during the summer. These moments strung together well to tell the story of how her friendship with Angela grew over the years. Her piece began with an orientation and ended with a summative and evaluative ending. Joelle came into this unit understanding the structure of a personal recount.

Despite no prior explicit instruction around language, Joelle utilized several appropriate and useful language tools in her first piece. Joelle connected the three moments of her story with links that demonstrated the passage of time. For example she wrote, "And the days went on . . . " Where many children were using rudimentary links such as first, next, last, Joelle was using more specific and integral links such as "In the middle of our conversation."

Joelle used a variety of action, dialogue, and sensing verbs to tell the readers exactly what happened, what was said, and what she felt about it. She demonstrated particular strength with sensing verbs. Throughout her piece, Joelle takes time to explain to the reader exactly how she was feeling and what she thought using language such as, "I want," "I think," or "I am so glad." Joelle did attempt to use dialogue in her piece but showed confusion around how and when to include dialogue. Sometimes Joelle would forget the saying verb and simply write what was said; other times, she would put something in quotation marks that was clearly not

dialogue. She did seem to understand that said indicated dialogue but lacked other resources for communicating dialogue in her piece.

In this first piece, Joelle utilized several adverbial phrases and words to describe the action and feelings in the story. For example she wrote, "I was mad cuase I thought I wouldn't see her again until next year." In this sentence Joelle used the adverbial phrase to indicate why she was mad. Joelle was able to use stacked adverbials to modify action verbs, such as this instance where she describe how they lined up, "the class lined up with snakers in there hands."

Joelle's pre-writing already revealed her ability to utilize many of the process, structure, and language elements we taught in our unit. This MCAS unit inspired by SFL allowed Joelle to write with greater depth and sophistication. It was as if Joelle was unaware of the language tools she was using to express herself. When we taught her why, when, and how to use specific language tools related to the purpose and audience, Joelle was able to apply those tools to create a much more sophisticated narrative that included a true problem and solution complete with character motivations and inner conflict.

Joelle demonstrated her understanding of recount structure in the pre-assessment. In her final piece Joelle wrote a more sophisticated personal narrative including a problem, rising action, climax and solution. Where before she strung together three small instances, in this piece Joelle focused in on a single morning and wrote with terrific detail to slow the moment down and draw readers into her narrative. Right away in her orientation, Joelle begins to reveal the problem in her

story; her mother needs her help but Joelle would rather watch her favorite television program. Throughout the narrative she uses interesting action and dialogue verbs such as "slammed," and "speeded," or "yelled," and "replied," to describe specific events that lead to the climax. Joelle slows the action down at the climax when her mother comes into the kitchen to help clean up, with lots of sensing verbs and dialogue. The entire tide of the narrative shifts from one of being resentful of the work she has to do to one of gentle compassion. Joelle wrote, "I was smiling and tears started to roll down my face." The resolution was reached with her mother acknowledging her efforts and expressing her gratitude. Again, Joelle used the language tools we taught her, sensing verbs, dialogue, action verbs, adverbial phrases, and adjectivals to accomplish this in her writing.

Early in the orientation, Joelle pointed the reader to the inner conflict she was experiencing that of wanting to pursue her own interests but feeling obliged to help her mother. Throughout the piece Joelle continually refers to this conflict using dialogue, actions, and sensing verbs with accompanying adverbial phrases. For example, She wrote, "While I was walking to her room I whisped to myself 'What does she want now?' I was next to her and said 'Yes mom'." It was her use of sensing verbs, saying verbs, and adverbial phrases that allowed her to accomplish this in her writing. Later in the narrative Joelle used saying verbs and action verbs to reveal more of this inner conflict. She wrote, "And then when I entered My mom bedroom door I turned my face away from her and said 'here'. Holding the cup of water I turned my face becuase then she will know that Im mad and say what wrong

and I don't want her to know. But I think she knew I was mad by the way she looked at me."   Here Joelle allows her readers to see a deeper truth, she does not want her mother to know that she is upset. Where before Joelle revealed single emotions at a time with simple telling such as, "I was mad"; in the final piece, Joelle used all her language tools to reveal layered and more complex emotions.

Joelle demonstrates an extremely strategic use of the language tools we taught. In each lesson we worked to describe why, when and how to use the various language tools. Where most students worked to simply use them in their writing, Joelle progressed to finding ways to use her language skills to her greatest advantage in accomplishing her purpose with her audience. For example, Joelle chose not to elaborate on which television show she was watching but did slow down her first interaction with her mother where she wrote, "I slamed my hands on my moms bed and look he in her beautiful big brown eyes." These adjectival details and the strong action verb allow the readers to glimpse the beginnings of her conflict, she loves her mom but does not want to help. Similarly, Joelle described how she got her sister dressed and fed fairly quickly with action, a few bits of dialogue and some strong adjectival phrases such as, "a blue shirt that had diamones on it." However, for the climax when everything changes, Joelle wrote with terrific detail about the feelings, thoughts, actions, and dialogue. These examples show that Joelle was not haphazardly stuffing language elements into her piece but carefully placing language elements that would best accomplish her purpose.

Throughout the piece Joelle stops to rise above the narrative to offer commentary to the reader. During the orientation Joelle explained to the audience, "I was the oldest sister in the house because my big sister went away for the summer at her dads. I don't know why she will do that if she knew I will need help with Mom and my younger sister." Later in the narrative Joelle again stops to explain that her mother was having a baby and that, "I was so excited when I heard the but now my moms pushing it with all the favors." These pauses in the narrative demonstrated Joelle's keen awareness of the readers and her ability to control their interpretation of the events in the story. Joelle simply used the language tools we taught, such as sensing verbs and adverbials and combined them with her growing awareness of her purpose and audience to better accomplish her task.

Summary

The overall growth of the six students is remarkable. Students made significant and consistent progress in all areas including awareness of situation, purpose and audience, structure, and language. Even the lowest writers showed evidence of growth in nearly every category. Likewise the writers on the upper end of the spectrum maintained their repertoire of skills and developed them further. Student growth suggests that the SFL inspired instruction was influential in developing student writing.

Chapter 6

Portrait of Scientific Explanation Instruction

Several weeks after the MCAS personal narrative unit Mia and I moved on to

Scientific Explanation writing with the class. The students writing grew dramatically

in response to the SFL-influenced narrative unit, so we were eager to apply SFL to

the teaching of a different non-fiction genre. The students had written narratives in

every grade since kindergarten, but had few opportunities to write informational texts.

There was no evidence that their school ever taught scientific explanations before this

unit. We decided to first teach the structure of explanation with topics of the

students' choice, and then move on to scientific explanations. We wondered if the

students would demonstrate similar growth in structure and language with an

unfamiliar and informational genre.

It is important to note the context of this unit as it impacted the instruction and

student response dramatically. The scientific explanation unit was taught in the last

five weeks of the school year. There were the usual field trips and special events that

accompany the end of the school year. However, this classroom experienced several

remarkable events that impacted their classroom culture. During the unit, the teacher

Mia was out a full week, one of their beloved classmates left for a different school,

and a social leader in the classroom was removed from her foster home under very

difficult circumstances. The anecdotal notes from this unit are littered with

references to student anxiety, poor behavior, students distracted, and squabbling among the children. Nevertheless, the scientific explanation unit was offered to the students and they responded favorably to much of it.

As in Chapter 4 with the MCAS narrative unit, this chapter offers a rich description of instruction alongside student writing in response to the instruction. The reader will see that context, purpose, and tenor were woven into every lesson lending a sense of authenticity to the writing, as in the MCAS unit. This description shows how SFL theory allowed teachers to glean the structure and language elements present in successful scientific explanations and explain them succinctly with SFL metalanguage in mini-lessons, conferences, and student feedback. As in the MCAS unit, it appeared that the progression of lessons from situational context and purpose to structure, and finally to language allowed students to meaningfully access and apply instruction. The description of this scientific explanation unit suggests that content, structure, and language were interdependent and required frequent cycles through each element during instruction.

<center>Cycle 1: Immersion and Rubric Development</center>

As in the MCAS Personal Narrative Unit, we began this unit by immersing the children in the genre. The students spent three days reading a wide array of explanation units including fun explanation such as "Why people burp" and scientific explanations such as "What Causes Earthquakes". The goal for the immersion

portion of the unit was for students to identify the purpose, structural elements, and language tools of an explanation.

For the first two days of the immersion portion the students were given packets of copied explanations as well as several published texts of explanations such as the text "How Things Work." The students broke up into partnerships and read the texts. On this first day we labeled the texts as explanations and asked the students to read and enjoy them. At the end of the work time we discussed the purpose of explanations. The students quickly determined that the purposes of explanations are, "to explain how things work or why things are the way they are."

The next day the students read more explanations. This time they were asked to determine the text structure of an explanation. The students just completed a two-week unit with Mia, preparing them to write math explanations for MCAS. Through the unit, Mia introduced the students to the structure of a math explanation, temporal links, and diagrams. I reminded the students that they know the text structure of stories and math explanations. Then I explained their job for the day was to determine the text structure of these explanations. While the students read the explanations Mia and I walked around pointing out the similarities in purpose and structure between these explanations and the math ones they recently worked on. The students never noticed the connections between math explanations and text based explanations without a cue, but readily connected once it was pointed out.

On the final day of immersion, each student received an explanation on the water cycle (see appendix). In pairs they were asked to identify the structure of the text and language elements. Joelle, Adam, Amanda, and Carlos demonstrated an awareness of text structure in their responses. With their partners, they noticed the "title", "answer", and the body of the "explanation". Amanda, Adam, and Joelle went farther noting the "conclusion," or "clincher," that the "identifying statement answered the question", that the explanation "had details", and that it was "interesting". Amanda and her partner connected the structure to the purpose writing, "tells why something is happening." Aubrey and Tom were not able to recognize the embedded text structure instead noting the "title", indentation, and paragraph structure.

When searching for the language tools or elements present in the scientific explanation, Joelle and her partner found nearly every element we planned to teach writing the following list, "vocabulary, pronunciations, scientific language with definitions, details, pictures, and forever verbs." "Forever verbs was the term Mia and I used to describe the timeless present tense. Amanda, Carlos and Aubrey noted "scientific vocabulary", "details", and "temporal links". Adam and Tom circled the science vocabulary they saw in the explanation and listed those words in their chart. Adam could analyze the structure of the text but stumbled when asked to identify the language tools. Conversely, Aubrey did not see the text structure but was able to

discuss temporal links as a language tool. Tom struggled in identifying structure and language.

The students brought their work to the rug and using we created a class rubric of expectations for their scientific explanations using the water cycle explanation as an exemplar. SFL theory guided which elements we focused on. Figure 62 is the rubric the class developed.

Figure 62
Scientific Explanation Rubric

Scientific Explanation Rubric

Purpose:
4
- Explains how or why something is the way it is.
- Readable/clear

0
- Does not explain
- Unclear or unreadable

Structure	Language

4
- Title
- Identifying statement
   ○ Answer
   ○ Tells the components (parts)
- Sequential or List explanation
- Clincer/conclusion
	4
	- Scientific language with definition
	- Temporal links
	- Details- adjectivals and adverbials
	- Forever verbs
	- Pictures with labels

3 - Title - Identifying statement- answer - Sequential or List explanation	3 - Scientific language - Temporal links - Some details - Forever verbs - Pictures with labels
2 - Title - Sequential or List explanation	2 - Some scientific language - 1 or 2 temporal links - forever verbs
1 - Sequential or List explanation	1 - Forever verbs
0 - Nothing	0 Nothing

Cycle 2 "Fun Explanations"

We divided the remainder of the scientific explanation unit into two parts. For

the first eleven days we attempted to remove the demands of scientific content

knowledge in order to focus on the purpose, structure, and language tools of an

explanation. We asked the students to write an explanation, for their classmates,

about something they could explain from their life experience. Then we moved on to

scientific explanations for the last portion of the unit. During the final portion we

expected students to apply all they learned writing "fun explanations" to a scientific

question. The students were told these explanations would be used to help the fifth

graders study for their impending Science MCAS.

We began day one, of the "fun explanation" writing portion, asking students

to generate a list of topics. The topics were to be things they could explain easily

such as why baby brothers are so annoying or why babies cry. We reminded them

that the purpose of an explanation was to explain why something is the way it is or

how something happens. I modeled my list making process on the chart paper in

front of them citing my knowledge of dog training, napping, and why little sisters are

annoying. I asked them to turn and tell a partner some things they could explain well

to a peer. Then, the students were sent off to generate a list of things they could

explain to a friend.

Most students got right to work writing long lists of things they could explain.

Amanda and Joelle were among five students who were unable to generate a topic

list. Mia and I conferenced with these five students until they too had long lists of

ideas.   At the conclusion of the lesson, every student enthusiastically shared one

appropriate topic demonstrating their awareness of the purpose for explanations.

Day two was also a process lesson. I taught the students how to move from an

item on their list to a written explanation using verbal rehearsal with a partner. Each

student explained their phenomenon to their partner orally. The partner was to make

sure their friend's verbal explanation had an identifying statement, explanation, and

conclusion. Once each partner had shared their verbal explanation, the students were

told to write out the explanation they just rehearsed with their partner. Each student

wrote at least one explanation. The structure of student texts was not consistent but

students were beginning to approximate the configuration of an explanation.

The next day, we made our first attempt at teaching the students how to write

a quality identifying statement. As was our practice, I began the lesson with

extravagant praise for their explanations to date. I noted marveled at their vast

knowledge base. I also reminded them of the structure for explanation by praising

most students' inclusion of an identifying statement, explanation body, and summary

statement. I explained that this day I would be teaching them how to write an

identifying statement that provided a "general answer" to the question but, "did not

give away the whole answer." I said, "we want our readers to have to finish the
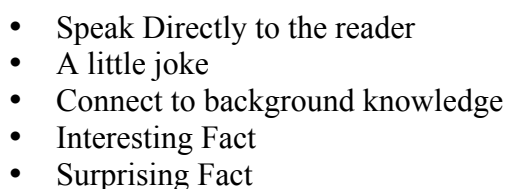
explanation to get the whole answer."

After posting a student's explanation that contained an excellent body and summary statement but a nondescript identifying statement, I modeled for the students how to revise the identifying statement. I showed the students how to make it a general answer to the question, getting the reader ready for the detailed explanation in the body of the text. Then I posted a second student's explanation with a similarly weak identifying statement. Students turned and told their partners how the beginning could be revised to make it a general answer to the question. Then, the students returned to their work to revise their identifying statements and write more explanations.

During the work time I conferenced with Tom. He struggled to understand that the identifying statement was separate and different from his actual step-by-step explanation. We revised his piece together and I decided that many of the students could benefit from seeing Tom's process. On day four of the cycle, I posted Tom's work and reviewed it with the class. We examined his identifying statement before and after revision, noting that now his readers would know the general answer, before they read on to the specifics of the explanation. Following this lesson I wrote, "Much clearer on indentifying statements now." I felt the lesson was well worth the additional time. Following this lesson however, Tom and Amanda still needed additional work in a small group setting. The students were still unclear about the

purpose of the identifying statement, often confusing it with the body of their

explanation.

The following day I returned to the identifying statement for the compliment

portion of the lesson. I praised the students' identifying statements because they

provide a general answer to the explanation question and prepare the reader for the

specific explanation. Then I moved into the second purpose for an explanation, to

grab the readers' attention so they want to read more. I decided to show the students

a wide range of published explanations that exemplified a number of strategies for

grabbing the readers' attention. We created the following chart of strategies we saw

writers using to accomplish this purpose. The students were charged with revising an

identifying statement to include one of these strategies to grab peers attention when

they begin reading their explanations.

Figure 63
Instructional Chart for Grabbing the Reader's Attention

- Speak Directly to the reader
- A little joke
- Connect to background knowledge
- Interesting Fact
- Surprising Fact

Mia led the share asking students to read their identifying statements and

identify the strategy employed to engage the reader. It was clear during the share that

Joelle was struggling with the purpose for identifying statements. Her identifying

statement continued to offer specific details best left for the body of her explanation.

Mia and I decided the students needed a review of the structure for explanations before we moved on to distinguish between a factorial and sequential explanation. The following day Mia posted an explanation and slowly highlighted each portion of it labeling the pieces. Then Mia presented an explanation that was cut up and out of order. Students were asked to turn and talk to determine the title, the identifying statement, the step-by-step explanation and the summary statement. The resulting poster with the labeled pieces of an explanation was posted on the wall. Mia explained that we expected students to ensure that every explanation they write included the required parts. Only the summary was optional.

Every student was able to write a title, identifying statement, explanation, and summary statement. Much like the published text they read during the immersion phase, the students' titles were always questions such as, "Why do dogs run away?" or "Why are baby hard work." Every student was able to write an explanation body to their piece following their identifying statement. Tom struggled to stretch out his explanation into detailed separate sentences. He combined all of his reasons into one sentence, "Dogs run away because there scared, hungry, chasing something or some one, or there not treated well by the owner." Every student wrote a summary statement that simply restated the title question as a statement such as, "Those are the reasons why . . . " or "That's why. . ."

Once every student could demonstrate the basic structure of an explanation, we moved on to study the body of explanations with the students. On day seven, I taught the children that there were two different kinds of explanations, sequential cause and effect explanations and list or factorial explanations. I showed the children how the sequential explanations have a causal relationship and list explanations are a record of reasons that are not necessarily related. I posted two explanations on the easel, both explaining why I was late to school. One was sequential: "My alarm clock broke > slept late>woke my kids up late>had to help them get ready> they missed the bus> had to drive them to school>which caused me to be late for work." The mental picture I drew for them of a sequential explanation was a timeline. One student said, "step by step like in our stories." I agreed that, "yes these were step by step, but it was more they actually caused the next thing in the timeline." So, I drew arrows from one to the next one to show the causal relationship.

The second type of explanation was simply a list of reasons: "my car broke down, there was traffic, couldn't find a parking space." Here I drew a web and showed them that each spoke caused the lateness but they were not necessarily interrelated. Next, I put up two more explanations and asked the students to determine the type of explanation with a peer. Each partnership seemed to be able to identify whether the explanation was a list or sequential readily. Following the lesson students were told to return to their explanations and continue writing. As Mia and I

conferenced with students we helped them identify the type of explanation they were

writing using the web or timeline with causal arrows as graphic organizers to help

them remember the two structures. Over the course of the unit these timelines

became our cue and reminder for the types of explanations thereby linking content

with structure. Students used those graphic organizers to plan. Figure 64 shows how

Carlos used a web to plan for an explanation on why basketball games are so long.

Figure 65 is Adam's timeline in preparation for his explanation of why we have to

brush our teeth.

Figure 64
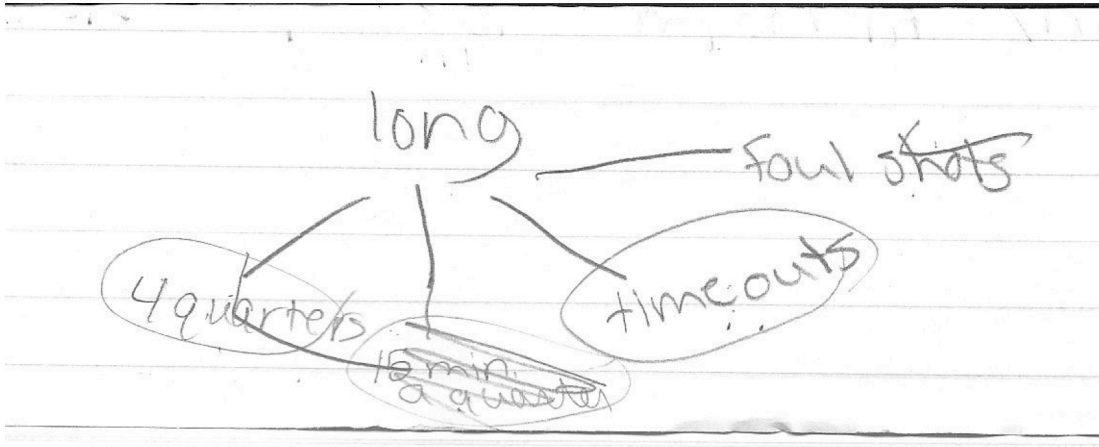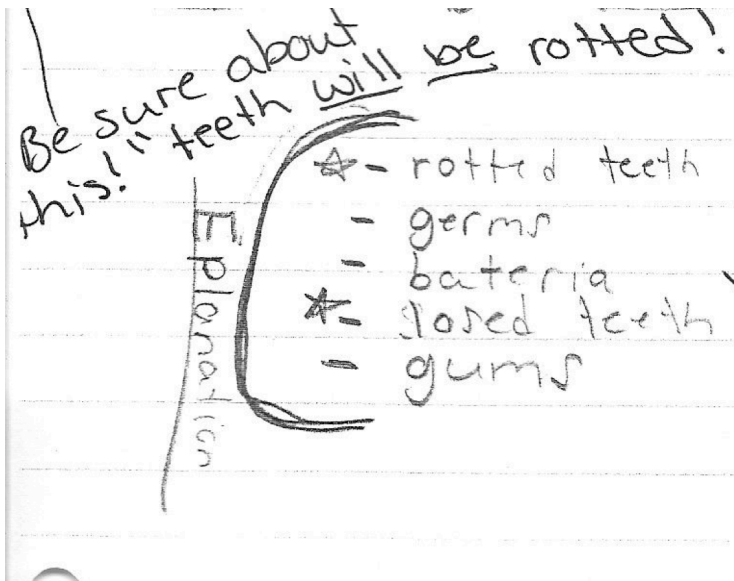Example of a Planning Web for a List Explanation

Figure 65
Example of a Planning Timeline for a Sequential Explanation

Day eight's lesson focused on the use of connectors or links in the text. Day

seven's lesson on list and sequential explanations served as an introduction to this

lesson because the type of explanation determines how the writer connects ideas together for the reader. On day eight I began by complimenting their ability to identify sequential and list explanations and then explained that the type of explanation they write will determine the type of link they should use.

I posted a word bank of links sorted by the type of explanation. Figure 66 shows the chart. Using a student's sequential explanation, I demonstrated how I could revise the explanation to include the links saying, "Do you see how it links this reason to the last one?" For the active engagement portion of the lesson I posted a list explanation from another student. I asked students to turn and talk to decide which links would best support the readers understanding of the explanation. Here I connected to audience, "Did you see how those links tell your reader this is all part of one big list?" The teacher remarked, "I think it helps to reinforce yesterday's lesson with the difference between list and sequential." Students were asked to return to their seats to revise for links based on the type of explanation they were writing. For the share I asked two students to share their pieces, one with a list and the other with a sequential explanation. Through their share I highlighted the appropriate links to support each type. We concluded the lesson by adding links to the rubric to clarify our expectations. The language instruction then reinforced previous instruction on content and structure.

Figure 66
Instructional Chart for Links

For Sequential Explanations	For List Explanations
• Next • Then • Ordinal numbers • If…then • Because of…	• One reason, • Another reason • Additionally • Finally

All the students chose to write list explanations. They used corresponding links to connect their ideas together. For example, Aubrey used, "first, next, after, furthermore," and Carlos included, "another reason," and "also." Joelle and Amanda used a list structure but also tucked in a few cause and effect reasons. For example Joelle wrote, "you won't get sick because the germs aren't there and it wont go in your body to make you sick. " Joelle's clause, "you won't get sick because," links to her previous sentence. Amanda used an if-then link to explain, "If we don't wash our cloths then we will be so stinky and we will smell like a skunk when they spray someone."

Day nine's lesson was meant to be a short review of adjectivals and adverbials with a focus on revision for specificity. The charts we created for adverbials and adjectivals from the MCAS personal narrative unit were resurrected for this lesson. We studied the charts together to determine which types of modifiers would be best suited for the purpose of explanations. We decided that opinion adjectivals most

likely would not be the most useful and informative for our explanations because we were supposed to be giving factual information. We studied adverbials and realized that they would all be useful in helping our reader better understand phenomenon. Using my previous explanation of why I was late for school, I revised adding adjectivals and adverbials to three sentences. I shared how I expected the adjectivals and adverbials to help my reader better understand my explanation. Then for the active engagement I asked students to revise a sentence in my explanation with a partner. Listening in I heard several adjectivals and adverbials that would further the readers understanding of the phenomenon. This was the last writing day for this portion of the unit, so I directed students to select their very best explanation, to revise. I asked them to revise based on adjectivals and adverbials as well as the links we reviewed the day before. Students returned to their seats and Mia and I conferenced for the remainder of the period to support their revisions.

Unfortunately, the students did not connect as readily as I anticipated to our previous instruction on adjectival and adverbials. They sat dutifully through the lesson and seemed to understand during the active engagement. Joelle used one adjectival to clarify in the sentence, "you have to wash your hands before touching a newborn baby." The adjective "newborn" is crucial to the understanding of the sentence. Only two students showed thoughtful inclusion of adverbials. Amanda wrote an adverbial phrase comparing stink to a skunk spraying as seen in the previous

example and Aubrey wrote, "and you get so tire like you feel like sleeping in a warm

bed." Both of these examples fit into a fun explanation but would not transfer well

into a more academic scientific explanation given the informality of the comparison.

This more figurative and informal use of the language tools matches my instruction as

I asked them to apply their learning from narratives in this context and purpose

without sufficiently explaining how they would be different.

The final two days of this portion of the unit were devoted to publishing. I

modeled for the class how to use diagrams or labeled illustrations to support their

readers' understanding. Applying my learning from the previous lesson, I compared

these drawings with those that accompany narratives describing how explanation

diagrams are to support understanding and should be tightly connected to the text. I

typed up every student's explanation and they added diagrams to support their

readers' understanding of the phenomenon. I expressly directed students to add a

diagram and allowed them a full period to comply. Therefore, every student included

a diagram, matched to their text, in their published book. Those diagrams included

labels and supported the readers' understanding of the content of the text. Only

Adam and Tom used diagrams before this directive. Adam's voluntary diagram, in

figure 67, included several pictures with detailed labeling well matched to the content

of his explanation. Tom's diagrams as seen in figure 68, were much more like those

used in narratives, pictures with no labels or details that support the content. The

explanations were assembled into a class book that was distributed to each student for

them to read and enjoy.

Figure 67
Example of an Effective Diagram
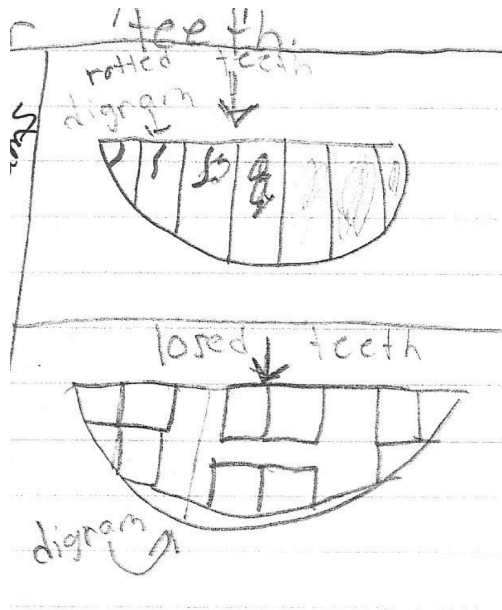
Figure 68
Example of a Picture Instead of a Diagram
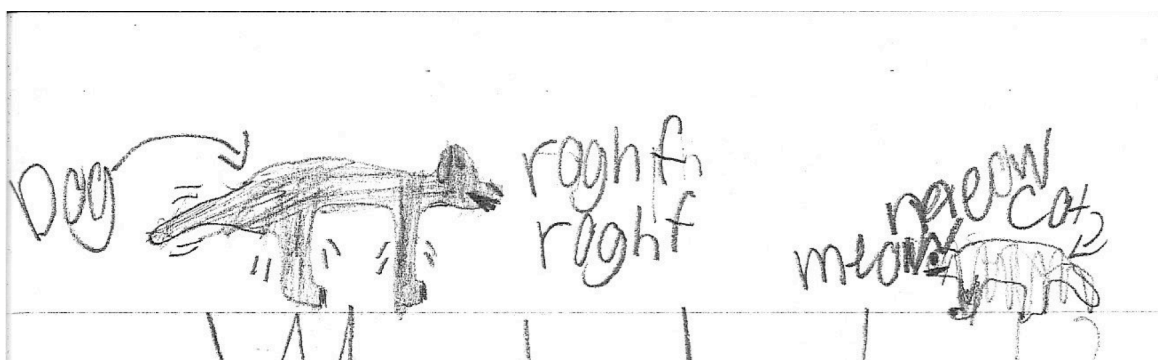
Cycle 3 Scientific Explanations

After publishing and sharing our fun explanations, we moved

immediately into Science Explanations. Mia offered the students several science

topics to explore for the remainder of the unit. She selected topics that aligned with

the fourth grade Science standards for Massachusetts and lent themselves well to

writing an explanation. The following chart shows the topics the students selected.

Figure 69
Student Topic Selections

Student	Question
Aubrey	How was the earth formed?
Adam	How do tornadoes form?
Joelle	Why do volcanoes erupt?
Carlos	Why is there no oxygen in space?
Amanda	Why is there no oxygen in space?
Tom	Why is there no oxygen in space?

Mia provided resources for the students to research their questions in the

classroom. The students spent four periods over the next several days researching

their topics in texts and on line. Students worked in pairs to read and decide how to

answer their questions. Mia taught researching earlier in the year and we incorrectly

assumed they would be able to research their topics independently. Mia and I found

they needed much support to find salient information. We decided to work with

groups of students by topic to support their science understanding while we were

helping them research. Early on I exclaimed in my notebook, "I should have had them do all the same one first – They are really struggling to understand the science and think about the writing."

Once Mia and I felt the students had a strong understanding of their topic, I decided to teach another lesson on writing identifying statements. I posted several scientific identifying statements and we studied them together as a class noticing how they grabbed the reader's attention and provided a general answer to the question. I sent students off to write their own identifying statements and then their explanations. The students however, were not ready to write their explanations. As Mia and I worked with students we could see that they were frustrated and struggling to organize their new scientific learning to write an explanation. Upon reflection, I decided to slow down and return to planning.

The next day I showed the students how to organize their planning to prepare for writing. I modeled how to organize research notes into a timeline. I demonstrated how they could use a word box on the bottom of their planning page to capture the science vocabulary needed in the explanation. They could write the words and their definitions there in preparation for their inclusion in the text. After I modeled for the class, I sent the students back to their seats to plan. I suggested they not try and write today but get a solid plan down on paper.

Mia and I met with small groups by topic again today. In the groups, we

determined the type of explanation, sequential or list. All the topics called for

sequential explanations. Orally we discussed what was first, next, then, and so on.

The students took notes as we talked through the scientific phenomenon. Throughout

the discussion we noted the science vocabulary the students were using to explain

their topic. We encouraged them to write the terms in the word box. When students

said they did not know what the word meant, we suggested they return to the source

materials to find the definition. Many of the students did so. By the end of the

extended work time, Mia and I had met with all of the groups and most of the

students were feeling confident about their understanding of the topic and their plan

for writing.

All six focus students had detailed timelines by the end of the session. Our

most struggling student, Carlos, had a very detailed timeline full of scientific

language as seen in figure 70. He did not copy from his peers but used the small

group conversations well to organize his thinking. Tom required the most assistance.

He was so frustrated by the science content, I eventually scribed for him as he talked

through the content of his piece.

Figure 70
A Scientific Explanation Timeline
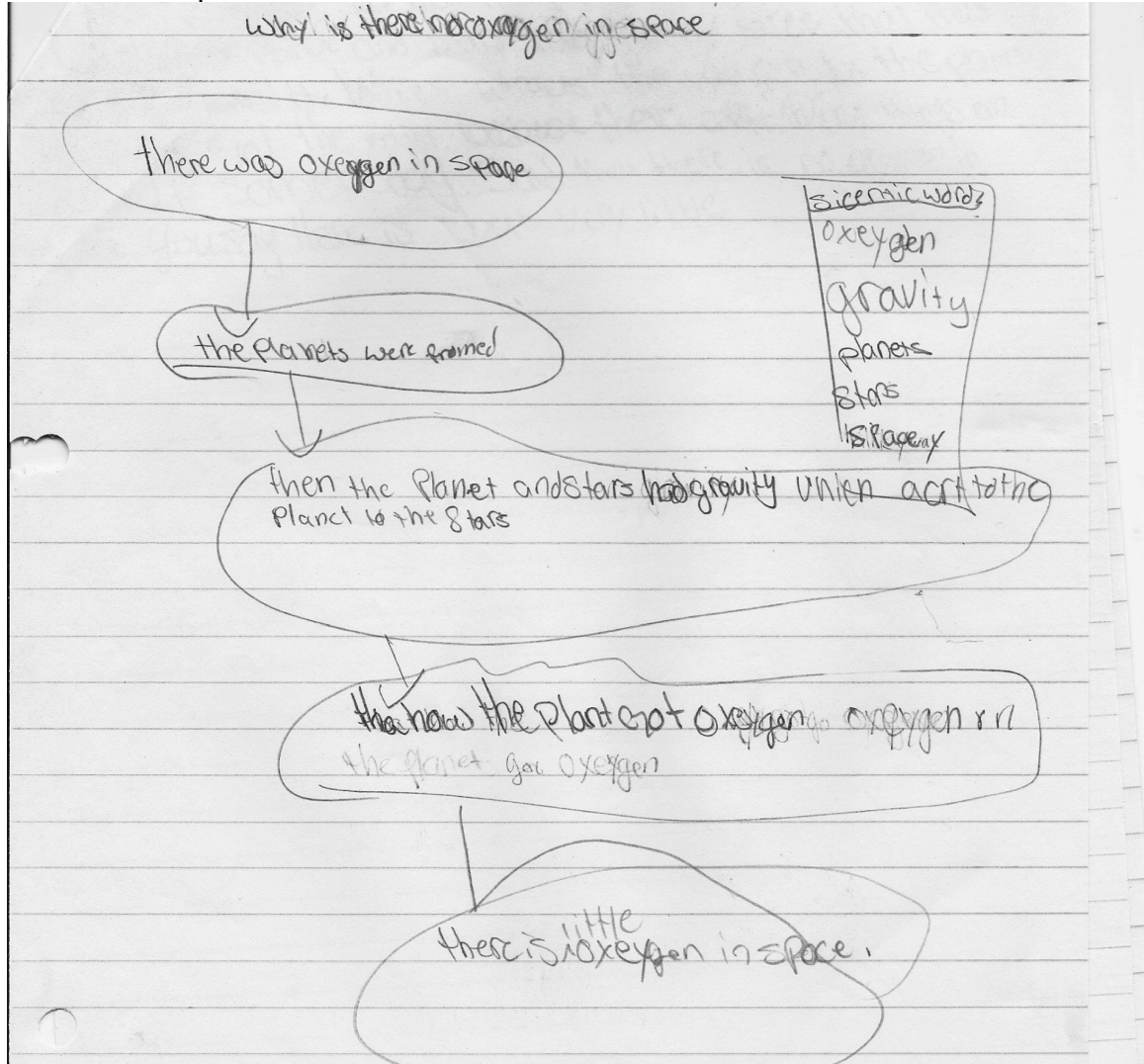
Each of the focus students then drafted an explanation based on the planning.

Aubrey, Tom, and Adam, were able to transfer the previous lesson on links to transfer

their timelines effectively into a paragraph. Figure 71 shows Aubrey's explanation

that includes links. All the students also used the word bank planning strategy

effectively to ensure they included technical vocabulary in their writing. Figure 72

shows Amanda's use of a planning word bank. The regimented planning strategy led

to much more clarity around the content, structure, and language.

Figure 71

Aubrey's Use of Links

Title ~ How was the Earth formed?

Katlyn Albernax   6/11/04
Have you ever wanted to know how
Earth was formed. Earth was formed by
gases, water and crust, the layer of covering
all mixed together. Frist it started with this
group of gases and dust. Next it tuse
into a big ^ ball. After the ball.
temperature was hot. When the ball
Cooled dawn. Then the ball starts spinning
As the ball spins the crust to get
on the botten of the ball. Then all
the particles in space mixed together
and thats how earth was formed.

How you ever wanted to know
how Earth was Formed. Earth was formed
By gases, water, and crust, the layer of
covering

Figure 72
Amanda's Use of the Science Term Word Bank
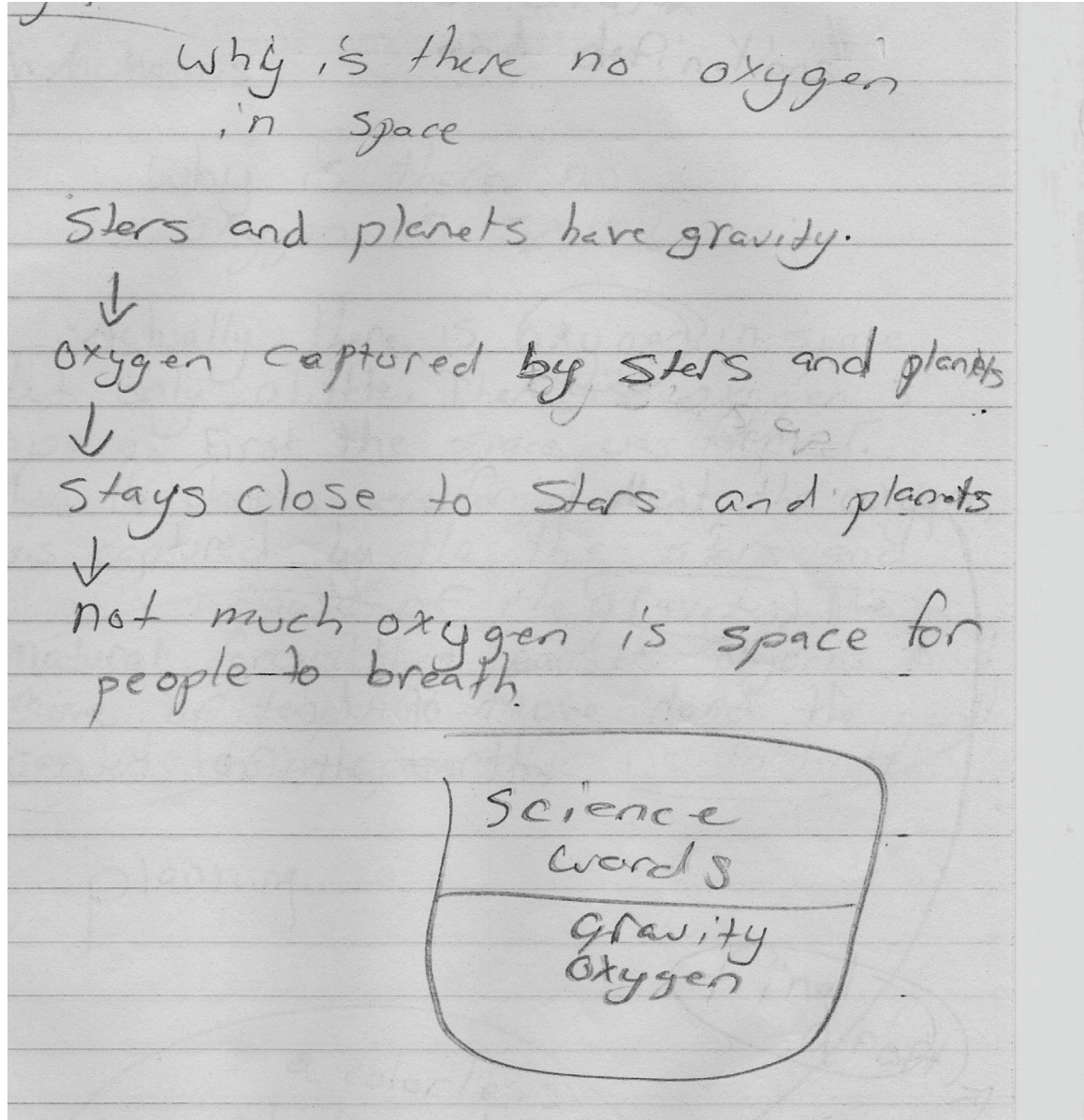
The following day we returned to identifying statements. Instead of studying

exemplars, we showed them how they could find their general answer to their

question in their planning. We noticed how the last bullet in a sequential timeline

could most likely become a strong identifying statement. For list explanations we taught the students that the general answer for the identifying statement could be found in the planning web. We showed the students how to study the web and determine what all the items on the list had in common. That commonality could then become the general answer for the identifying statement. For students who were baffled by the idea of coming up with a general answer to their question based on the research, this offered them a concrete strategy for beginning their explanations. Every single student wrote an identifying statement.

Adam and Joelle used the strategy of using the last thing in the timeline as their general answer. Aubrey, Carlos, Amanda, and Tom decided to use an interesting fact to begin their explanations. All the students attempted to grab the reader's attention before the identifying statement. Most used a direct question or comment to the reader. Carlos, Amanda and Tom used their interesting fact to suffice as their attention grabber. It was clear the three of them worked together to generate their identifying statement. Figure 73 lists students' identifying statements for four of the students.

Figure 73

Examples of Identifying Statements

Aubrey	Have you ever wanted to know how the Earth was formed. Earth was formed by gases, water and crust, the layer of covering all mixed together.
Carlos	There is oxgen in space but very little.
Tom	Do you think oxygen is in space? There is oxygen in space!
Adam	You might wonder how a tornadoes form why wouldn't you. Tornadoes forms by air in the funnel spins faster and faster and creates a funnel.
Amanda	Actually, there is oxygen, a colorless odorless tasteless gaseous element that forms about 1/5 of the atomousphere by volume in space but only a little.

On day five of this cycle, I taught the writers how to tuck the definition for new science terminology right in the sentence where they are introduced. I posted a students' explanation and her planning timeline and word box. I began by noticing how she used the timeline to write her identifying statement. I noticed how each of the bullets became a sentence in the body of her explanation. Then, I complimented the writer for her use of links to connect the sentences together, "Tells the reader that these things go in order." I explained that, "today I wanted to show them how to use an apposition to explain what a new word means, for the reader, right in the sentence." I modeled how to insert a definition for a word set apart with commas. As so many students needed to use the word gravity in their explanations, for active engagement I asked them to turn and discuss how they could revise the sentence, "The planets' and stars' gravity pulls the oxygen to them." We shared and I rewrote the sentence, "The planets' and stars' gravity, or force that causes things to move toward its center, pulls the oxygen to them." I encouraged the children to reread their

explanations and search for words they should define for their readers. I asked them

to revise for appositions.

Every student used at least two appositions correctly in their writing. For

example Adam wrote, "A tornado forms by a thunder storm called a super cell."

Aubrey wrote, "Earth was formed by gases, water, and crust, the layer of covering all

mixed together." Amanda's decision to include an apposition in the identifying

statement resulted in an awkward opening to her piece, "Actually, there is oxygen, a

colorless odorless tasteless gaseous element that forms about 1/5 of the atomousphere

by volume in space but only a little." The word bank planning strategy resulted in

consistent use of science vocabulary and the easy incorporation of appositions in

student writing.

Mia and I agreed there were many other things we would like to teach

including effective summary statements, titles, more on links, forever verbs, and

scientific verbs however, the school year was coming to an end and we were out of

instructional days. We spent the last writing day of the year reviewing the rubric and

asking students to revise their explanations based on the expectations. Tom was the

only student who did not revise his piece in any noticeable way. Aubrey and Joelle

chose to delete several confusing lines. They erased and rewrote several lines as well.

Aubrey added a second adjective to the line, "a big ball" making it more specifically,

"a big spinning ball." Adam added several appositions based on the previous days'

lesson and he added an clause to his identifying statement to capture the readers' attention, "You might wonder how a tornadoes form why wouldn't you?" Carlos and Amanda's only revisions were to add the appositions taught in the previous lesson.

Summary

During this abbreviated scientific explanation unit, Mia and I taught the structure for explanations including identifying statements and the body of explanations. We taught how the type of explanation they were writing dictated the planning strategy they would use. The content of the explanation was then linked to the structure. We did not have time to explicitly teach how to write strong titles and summary statements.

Figure 74 reviews the content of the instructional lessons in the unit and shows how Mia and I cycled between process, structure, and language throughout the unit. We taught several language tools during the unit using many SFL descriptors. In the immersion segment we noticed timeless present or "forever" verbs. During the fun explanation portion of the unit we reviewed adverbials and adjectivals. Students learned how to use links based on the type of explanation. Through our planning routine and modeling of appositions, we taught the students how to include scientific vocabulary in their explanation. As in the MCAS unit, nearly every focus student attempted every structure and language element taught with support. As a result of the SFL inspired instruction, their writing became more effective.

Figure 74
MCAS Unit Lesson Summary Chart

	Lesson Topic	Tenor	Structure	Language Tools
Cycle 1	Selecting a Topic *Process-generating topic*	Selecting a topic that the audience will appreciate.		
	Process to include id statement, body, and summary		To accomplish appropriate text structure.	
	ID statements	Prepares reader for the answer.	ID statements Answer the question in a general way.	
	Reteach -ID statements	Prepares reader for the answer.	ID statements Answer the question in a general way.	
	Grabbing the reader's attention in the ID statement	Engaging the reader		
	Overview of structure		To accomplish complete structure of explanation	
	Distinguishing between list and sequential explanations			
	Planning strategies for list and sequential explanations		Successfully planning for correct structure	
	Selecting appropriate links			Temporal and Cause and Effect Links
	Using Adverbial and Adjectivals.			Adverbials and Adjectivals.
	Creating Diagrams	To support reader's understanding		
	Publishing	Making the text readable for the audience.		

	Lesson Topic	Tenor	Structure	Language Tools
Cycle 2	Select a Topic and Research			To understand the phenomenon and build vocabulary
	Writing ID statements that provide a general explanation		Identifying statements	
	Planning for Links and Scientific Vocabulary			Links and Appositions
	Reteach- Identifying statements	Defining vocabulary in the text for the reader	Writing ID statements based on the text structure.	
	Editing bassed on the rubric	Making the text accessible for the reader.		

Chapter 7

Beginnings and Endings – Scientific Explanation

In order to see what impact the SFL influenced instruction had on student scientific explanation writing, every student was asked to write a scientific explanation at the beginning and conclusion of the unit. The questions were selected based on scientific units of study Mia recently completed with her class.   Before asking them to write Mia reviewed the necessary scientific concepts in the hopes that would eliminate disparities due to scientific understandings.

For the pre-assessment we asked the students to explain why it rains [see appendix]. The question was typed on the top of a sheet of paper and the students wrote their explanation right on that paper. For the post assessment, the prompt was to explain how a rock is formed. There was a class created chart posted in the classroom explaining the rock cycle. Students were free to refer to the chart as needed while writing their explanations. We gave students the prewriting tool we developed during the unit that contained a space for prewriting and a box to gather scientific data. Students were told to write their explanation on a new sheet of paper. Most students rewrote a final draft of that explanation. These pieces were analyzed to determine what explanation writing skills and understanding students possessed prior to the unit and what they developed and could independently apply following the unit. This chapter begins with an overview of focus student responses to instruction followed by detailed descriptions of each focus students' growth in response to the unit of instruction.

Overall Student Growth

All the students made strides in writing the appropriate structure for scientific explanations. There was terrific growth in student ability to write an identifying statement and step-by step body of an explanation. All but one student included a summary statement at the end of their final explanation. Unfortunately the vast majority of those summary statements were nothing more than a weak "That is how . . ."

There was strong growth in many of the specific language tools taught during the unit including scientific vocabulary, appositions, and temporal links. Even students who clearly did not understand what they were writing about such as Amanda and Carlos to used them in their writing. The impact of instruction on adverbials and adjectivals was less consistent. Amanda utilized adverbials in her pre-assessment and chose not to use them in her post assessment. Three students demonstrated appropriate adverbial use following instruction. Two students showed no difference between their pre and post writing samples in regards to adverbial phrases. Student use of appropriate adejctivals grew among four students and remained the same for two students. However, the instruction on verb tense led to little or no improvement in student writing. Before instruction, five students used the correct verb tense and following instruction only two used the correct tense and four used the correct tense intermittently.

The inclusion of the planning sheet encouraged the writers to consider the content and the audience at the outset. The structure of the sheet encouraged students

to consider the science concept in words, pictures, or chart form before writing. The inclusion of the space for scientific words was a strong reminder of that expectation in the report. Admittedly, the planning sheet for the post-assessment skewed the data dramatically because it forced students to complete some planning before moving on to drafting. It was clear at the end of the unit that the students had not yet internalized the process and we felt it was important to see what they could do with the supports.

What was most notable was the strongest explanations came from students who had a strong understanding of the content and the writing of explanations. Some students knew the science but could not organize it into a clear piece. Many students did not understand the science so even if they knew the structure and some of the language tools, they were not able to write a coherent explanation.

The figure 75 summarizes the student growth in scientific explanations. A zero indicates no evidence for the skill and an X indicates implementation of the attribute or language tool.

Figure 75
Summary Chart of Student Application of SFL Structure and Language

		Monolingual						Bilingual					
		Carlos Before	Carlos After	Amanda Before	Amanda After	Tom Before	Tom After	Adam Before	Adam After	Aubrey Before	Aubrey After	Joelle Before	Joelle After
Aware of Audience			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	_	X
Planning			X		X		X	X	X		X		X
Word Count		49	63	57	81	32	68	58	95	69	70	61	101
Structure	Title				X		X	X	X		X		X
	I.D. Statement	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Body of Explanation		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Summary Statement Optional	X	X		X			X	X		X	X	X
	Diagram			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Language	Temporal Links		X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X
	Cause/ Effect Links					X				X		X	
	Scientific Vocabulary		X		X		X	X	X		X		X
	Apposi-tions		X		X	X	X		X		X		X
	Factual and Specific Adverbials		X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X
	Qualitative, factual, type and compari-son Adjectivals	S	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
	Forever verbs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Tom – 10 year- old male - English only

When Tom received the pre-assessment, he read the question, "Why does it rain?" he thought for a few minutes and then wrote the following. He did not do any sort of planning on his paper.

Figure 76
Tom's Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

It rains because it's part of the water cicle[cycle], and part of

natcher[nature]. And if we don't have rain then plans won't able to live.

And we won't have plants to eat.

Word Count 32

The structure of Tom's explanation matches the explanation purpose. He began with an identifying statement that provides a general answer to the question. Tom in fact offers two reasons: it rains because of the water cycle and nature. Instead of explaining what causes the rain Tom decided to describe the impact of rain on the earth. Instead of a step-by-step explanation of water cycle Tom lists the impacts of rain. Therefore, Tom did not adequately explain the water cycle. He drew the following diagram of the water cycle on the bottom of his text indicating his understanding of the scientific content but that knowledge was not exhibited in the writing.

Figure 77

Tom's diagram of the water cycle demonstrating content knowledge

The language of Tom's piece did not reflect the language tools of scientific explanations. He used a mixture of past tense and forever verbs in the piece, "won't" and "it's." Tom does not use any temporal links opting to write "and" to connect his thoughts. Tom does incorporate a strong cause and effect link using "if . . . then" to connect two concepts. "Water cycle," is the only scientific term Tom used in the piece.

Tom exhibited much more confidence when writing the post assessment. When he received his prompt he quickly decided he would explain where Igneous Rocks came from. He wrote a timeline with temporal links already present in his text. Then, in the science vocabulary box he wrote three key scientific words he wanted to include in his piece.

Tom then set to work writing his explanation beginning with the title, "How do Igneous rocks form? Much like the published kid friendly exemplars Tom studied, he wrote a hook to engage his readers, "Do you like rocks? Then read with me."

This hook is appropriate for the established audience; which was the fifth graders in

Tom's school. Then Tom wrote his identifying statement, "They form by

magma/lava." In this sentence he was writing a general answer to his question. He

used a forever verb, "form." However, Tom failed to use a specific, scientific subject

to indicate that Igneous Rocks form by magma/lava. His decision to use the pronoun,

"They," leads to confusion for the reader. Tom does include an apposition in his

identifying statement providing an alternate word for magma.

Figure 78
Tom's Post-Assessment Scientific Explanation

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

How do Igneous rocks form?

   Do you like rocks? Then read with me. They form by magma/lava.
First there'r melted rock [lava or magma). Then the rock flow into area
with lower temp.
Next lava molten rock flowing from a volcano or fressure [fissure] in the
earth's crust! magma, the molten material beneath the earth's crust from
wich[which] Igneous rock is formed cools down and is a rock.

Word Count 68

</div>

In the step-by step explanation portion of his writing Tom used temporal links

to connect his ideas. As could already be seen in his identifying statement, Tom used

Scientific Terminology throughout his piece including the words, "fissure," "lava,"

and "magma." At each usage, Tom explained the new term to his readers using

appositions.

Tom used detailed adverbial phrases to support his readers' understanding of

the topic. For example he wrote, "Then the rock flow into area with lower temp."

The adverbial phrase informs the reader that the rocks flow to cooler areas and previews cooling process. Similarly, he wrote, "the molten rock flowing from a volcano or fressure[fissure] in the earth's crust." In this sentence you can see he is using an adverbial phrase to explain from where the lava flows.

Tom continues to exhibit confusion around verb tense. As can be seen in the last example, Tom wrote "flowing" when he meant flows. I believe he was attempting to use the forever tense but fell short. Tom included a very detailed diagram with appropriate labeling to further his readers' understanding of the content. The diagram demonstrates his strong understanding of the content. On his post assessment, Tom was able to include much more of his understanding into the writing itself.

Figure 79
Tom's diagram of the rock cycle
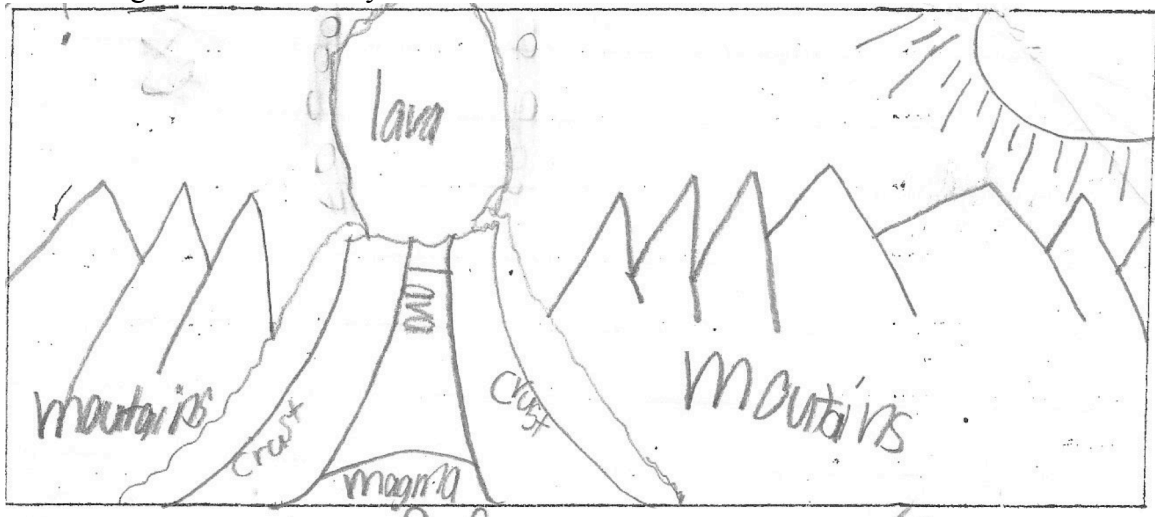
Aubrey – 10 year- old female bilingual – Portuguese and English

For the pre-assessment, Aubrey wrote the explanation in figure 66.

Figure 80
Aubrey's Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

It rains because the clouds get all gray and puffy and big and the clouds get altogether and the clouds cause water because the clouds have water inside of it. And when the clouds get very heavy the water comes down very little then when the clouds get very heavy the clouds cant hold that much water so then the water comes down very fast. And it becomes rain.

Word Count 69

There was no evidence that Aubrey used any kind of planning or organizing structure to prepare to write her explanation. What was clear is that Aubrey did not have the requisite scientific knowledge to answer the question. Aubrey drew a diagram at the conclusion of her piece with a drawing of two clouds with rain. She labeled the drawing, "The clouds overlap and it starts to rain. Because the clouds have water in it." Her diagram illustrates the small piece of the water cycle she understood.

Aubrey began her explanation with an identifying statement, "It rains because the clouds get all gray and very puffy and big and the clouds get altogether and the clouds cause water because the clouds have water inside of it." Just before this scientific explanation unit, Mia and I taught a brief unit on answering MCAS math questions with an explanation structure. In that unit, we taught the students to write their answer at the beginning to make sure the readers could find their correct answer and then explain how they knew that was the answer. Aubrey applied that here and tried to put everything she knew about the water cycle into her first sentence.

The body of her explanation consisted of four steps in her effort to describe the water cycle. She used several temporal links to connect the steps in her explanation, "then," "so then," and "and when." Aubrey used an adverbial phrase, "when clouds get very heavy," to demonstrate cause and effect between two steps of her explanation. Throughout the piece Aubrey incorporated simple, singe word adjectives and adverbials such as, "very fast," "very little," and "gray," "puffy," and "big." The verbs Aubrey selected were the forever verbs appropriate for her purpose. Aubrey concluded her explanation with a summary statement, "And it becomes rain." There was no evidence that Aubrey revised edited her piece of writing for her audience or purpose. Interestingly, Aubrey has all the elements of explanation, it is just not scientifically accurate.

Aubrey began her post-instruction writing sample with a thoughtful plan. She created a timeline detailing how Metamorphic Rock is formed with three clear steps. She even used temporal links in her timeline, "then." Aubrey recorded three science vocabulary words she wanted to incorporate into her explanation with corresponding definitions. After completing this planning, Aubrey wrote the following explanation.

Figure 81
Aubrey's Post Assessment Scientific Explanation

How was meteamorsti[metamorphic] formed?
Have you ever wanted to know how metamorphic was formed?
Metamorphic rock is formed by Igneons[igneous] rock, hot rock and sedimentary, wet rock. Frist igneons[igneous] rock and sedimentary rock get together. Next heat and prussure[pressure] started to get with the sedimentary rock and igneons[igneous] rock. Then the heat and pressure started to changh[change]. After that it changhs[changes] into different rocks. Thats how metamorphic rock was formed.

Word Count 70

Aubrey chose to include an appropriate title for her explanation, "How was meteamorphic formed?" There was no specific instruction around writing a title for scientific explanations however during the immersion portion of the unit, the students noticed that most of the published exemplars they studied used a question for their title. She wrote a strong identifying statement that engaged the reader and provided a general answer to the question, "Have you ever wanted to know how metamorphic formed. Metamorphic is formed by igneons[igneous] rock, hot rock and sedimentary rock, wet rock."   Aubrey used appositions to define both types of rocks in her identifying statement. She went on to write an explicit step-by-step explanation of the steps rock goes through to become metamorphic using temporal links such as, "first," "next," and "after that."

Each step of her explanation included appropriate scientific vocabulary. For example Aubrey wrote, "Next heat and prussure[pressure] started to get with the sedimentary rock and igneon[igneous] rock." Aubrey used the scientific vocabulary as her factual adjectivals. She used several adverbial clauses and phrases to elaborate such as, "changes into different rocks," where she used the phrase to tell the reader that the lava changes into rock. Her explanation exhibits both past tense and forever verbs showing continued confusion about verb tense. Aubrey ends the explanation with a summary statement, "That's how metamorphic rock was formed." Aubrey supported her readers understanding with the labeled diagram in figure 81. Aubrey's post explanation demonstrates appropriate structural and language elements and is more scientifically accurate.

Figure 82
Aubrey's Diagram of the Rock Cycle
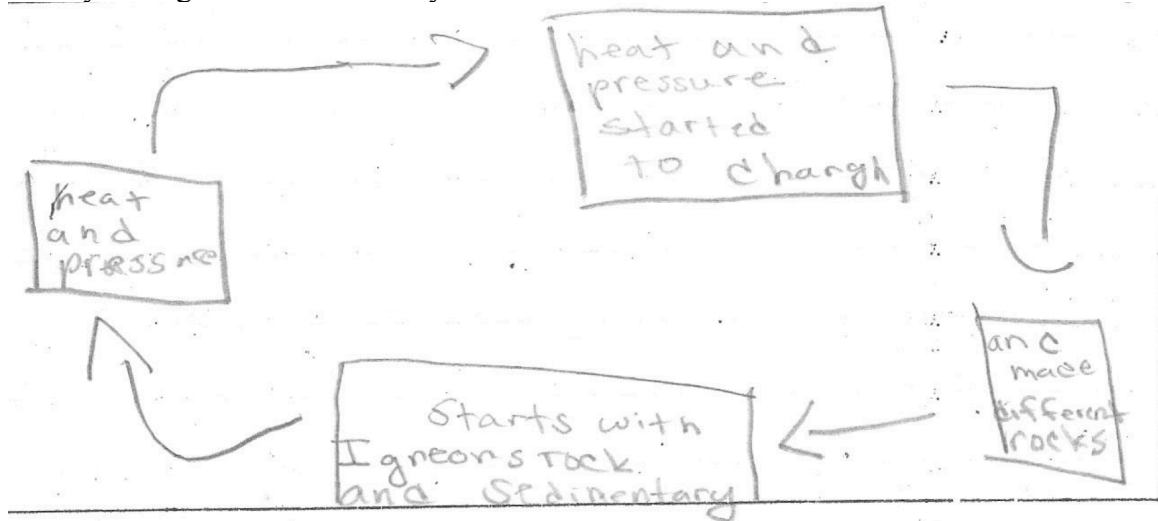
Carlos 11 year old Male – English Only

When Carlos sat down to write his first scientific explanation he was very

frustrated and confused. He sat with a blank paper for a long time. After several

minutes he began writing, "To Help[help] the Grass and the tree's Grow and because

it can hlep use over and over agin[again] that's why we can water."   There were

many students in the class who were struggling with the content of the explanation.

In an effort to better assess their writing I stopped the class and told them explicitly

that we were looking for them to explain the water cycle. Carlos erased his entire

paper and wrote the following scientific explanation on a new sheet of paper.

Figure 83
Carlos' Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

Why does it rain beause[because] it rains a new water sychol[cycle]
begins and some other reduce and start there life over agin[again] but no
human can do that wishever[whichever] one die and come reborn. So that
way the water sychol[cycle] is such a big thing. that why it rains.

Word count 49

It is evident in his explanation that he did not have the necessary content knowledge to write an explanation about the water cycle. His explanation consisted of two sentences. The first is a very long and confusing identifying statement. Much like Aubrey he attempted to put his entire explanation into the first sentence. In this first sentence he names the water cycle and goes on to connect it with birth and death. There is no explicit explanation of the water cycle despite my specific request that he include one. Carlos ends his piece with a surprising clear summary statement, "So that why the water sychol[cycle] is such a big thing. that why it rains." This summary statement accomplishes the purpose of a summary statement but he does not use academic language to do it.

The only scientific vocabulary Carlos included in his explanation were the words I expressly told him to include, "water cycle," therefore he had no use for appositions. He only used vague adjectivals such as "big," and "new." There was no explanation to warrant the use of links. Carlos does use the correct verb formation for scientific explanations, "is," and "reduce."

Carlos' final scientific explanation was markedly better. It was evident from the beginning of the work that Carlos had a much firmer understanding of the rock cycle. When given the question, Carlos began by writing a timeline of the rock cycle that included complete sentences that appear copied from a class chart. On the corner of his pre-writing paper he has another flow chart with key words from each part of the cycle. His final explanation most closely aligns with the first copied timeline.
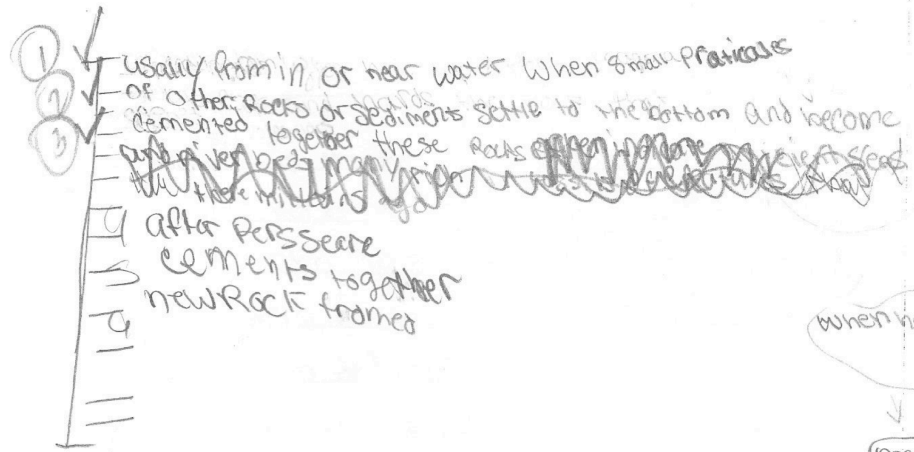
Carlos selected the word "sedimentary" as the scientific word he wanted to be sure to

include in his explanation.

Figure 84
Carlos' Planning for Rock Cycle Explanation
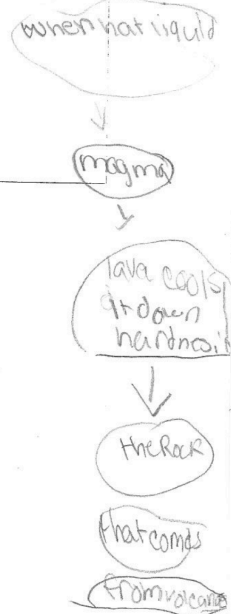
After Carlos planned his piece, he wrote his explanation. There is no

evidence that Carlos went back to his writing to revise his piece or edit. Much of the

piece is confusing to read with limited punctuation and confusing sentences. Figure

85

Carlos' Post-Assessement Scientific Explanation

How is a Sedimentary Rock fromed[formed]?   Usally[Usually] it is fromed in or near by water. When smaller praticales[particles] of other Rocks or sedimentary settle to the bottom and become cemented together. These Rocks after the persseare[pressure] cements together which makes a new Rock called. Sedimentary of like or derived from Sedment[Sediment] deposited in water and this is How a sedimentary Rock is fromed. Word Count 63

Carlos began his explanation with a question title, a very appropriate way to

begin a scientific explanation for students. Unlike his pre-writing, Carlos did not start

with an identifying statement. He launched right into his step by step explanation.

He tells where sedimentary rock is formed and then provides two steps in the rock

cycle. Carlos ends his explanation with a simple summary statement, "this is How a

sedimentary Rock is fromed[formed].

Carlos used many of the langauge features taught in the unit. Carlos used

time related adverbial phrases to connect his ideas temporally. For example he

wrote, "after the persseare[pressure] cements together. . . " Despite our focus on

science vocabulary, Carlos used the word "it" to refer to sedimentary rock in the first

sentence. He added a phrase to the end of his explanation that defined sedimentary

rock indicating an attempt to use an appostion but confusion about how and where to

situate it in the explanation. It is clear that Carlos copied the definition out of a

dictionary.   Carlos utilized several scientific verbs and nouns in his piece including,

"cemented," "Sedimentary," and "settle." This inclusion of scientific vocabulary is

most likeley due to his copying the bulk of the explanation from a class made chart.

This also helps to explain the confusion structure of his sentences. It is likely Carlos

could not read what he was copying so he was not able to revise for meaning.

Similarly, it is possible that Carlos' use of "forever" verbs was the result of copying.

Carlos did not utilize any sort of picture or diagram to support the meaning of his

text.

Adam – 9 year- old male bilingual – Portuguese and English

For the pre assessment, Adam was already approximating the process Mia and

I planned on teaching the students. He wrote a brief explanation on his planning

sheet to prepare for writing. After I cued the water cycle for the struggling students,

Adam revised the content of his explanation including his text and diagram.   He then

added a diagram to his text. The analysis of Adam's pre and post scientific

explanations will be done simultaneously.

Figure 86
Adam's Pre-Assessement Scientific Explanation

<u>Why does it rain?</u>
It rains because of the water cycle and because of the sun because the sun can make clouds rain because they get dryed and the sun cant just make a regular cloud and the sun can make the clouds worm and that why it rain by the water cycle but mosliy[mostly] from the sun.

Word count 58

Figure 87
Adam's Post-Assessement Scientific Explanation

How do Igneous Rocks form?

You might wonder how <u>Igneous rocks</u> form well if you want to find our thene read along.

How do <u>Igneous Rocks</u> form? First rocks get melted which is called melted rocks. Then it forms [Magma or lava]

Also a melted rock is a rock that melts and creates [Magma or lava]. Next the Magma & Lava starts to cool and thene it starts to harden the [Magma or lava] and creates a <u>Igneous Rock</u>.

That's what creates a Igneous Rock. Also Rocks that come from volcanos are called <u>Hot Rocks</u>.

Word count 95

Similar to his pre-assessment, Adam utilized the process taught well. Adam used a timeline to plan for his post assessment. He also included many science vocabulary words in his word bank including, "Igneous," "magma," and "volcano." After writing his first draft, Adam drew a diagram and added the apposition, " Also a volcano is a big moutain with a big hole in the middle that has mastive[massive] heat in it that can burn you." This added sentence never made it into his final draft. It is unclear if this was an accident or a decision.   He also wrote himself a note to "Grab readers attechen [attention]," and "Tells the answer." These notes did not result in any change in his text.

Adam's pre and post assessments demonstrated many of the structural skills Mia and I taught in the unit. He included a strong question title in both pieces. Both pieces include clear step-by-step explanations and summary statements.

Interestingly, Adam's pre-assessment had a stronger identifying statement then his post assessment. In the pre-assessment Adam specifically provides the answer for why it rains, "It rains because of the water cycle and because of the sun. " In his post assessment, Adam works very hard to grab the readers attention with personal questions such as, "You might wonder how Igneous rocks form well if you want to find out thene read along." Unfortunately, Adam neglects to provide readers with a specific answer for how igneous rocks are formed writing instead, "How do Igneous Rocks form?"

It was in the area of language that Adam demonstrated the most growth. In his pre-assessment Adam used "and," several times to link his ideas. In his post assessment Adam used temporal links such as, "first," "next," and "thene." In his first piece the only scientific vocabulary Adam incorporated was "water cycle." Adam carefully included several scientific words in his piece including, "magma," "lava," and "volcano." When he used the word "magma," he followed it with a brief apposition, "or lava." The quality and detail of Adam's final diagram demonstrated a much stronger understanding of the purpose of the diagram.

Figure 88
Adam's Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation
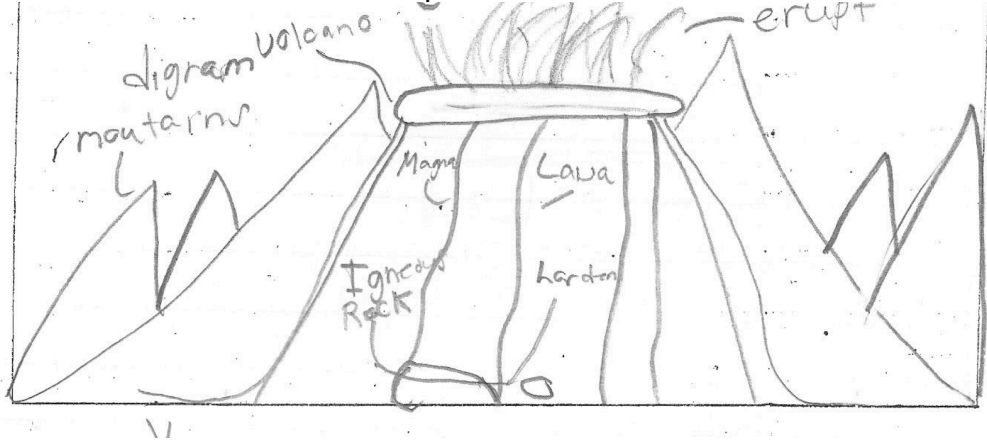
Some areas of language use showed no change through the unit. Adam used the correct verb formation before and after the unit. Adam showed no change in his use of specific or factual adverbials or appropriate adverbials, being weak in both.

Amanda – 9 year- old female –English only

In the pre-assessment Amanda demonstrated more content knowledge about the water cycle than her peers. For the pre-assessment, Amanda began writing without any prewriting. She wrote the following piece.

Figure 89
Aubrey's Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

It rains because the clouds pick up water from oceans, Rivers, and pons, and the clouds get so heavy that the rain falls. But you cant see the rain when the clouds pick up the water. Its like the water is invisable. When the clouds pick up the water its like a big magnet sucking up water.

Word Count 57

Amanda wrote the bulk of the explanation in the first sentence, "It rains because the clouds pick up water from oceans, Rivers, and pons, and the clouds get so

heavy that the rain falls." She spends the remaining three sentences explaining evaporation. The explanation just ends there with no summary statement. Amanda added a diagram on the bottom with two pictures with corresponding labels, one of rain and the other evaporation.

The language elements Amanda used in her pre-assessment were those taught in the long composition unit. Amanda used a few adjectivals to support reader understanding including, "big," and "heavy." She used a few adverbial phrases to support her verbs including, "from oceans, Rivers, and pons." Amanda used the figurative language structure we taught with adjectivals and adverbials, "Its like a big magnet sucking up water." Conversely, Amanda used the correct forever verb formation for explanation.

For the post-assessment Amanda's weak understanding of the rock cycle is evident in her planning. She has two bullets with a connecting arrow, "How rock depending where it is its rather lava or magma," and "gets cooled and formed into igneous." She planned to use the scientific words, magma and lava in her explanation. Amanda wrote the following explanation.

Figure 90
Aubrey's Post-Assessment Scientific Explanation

How is the Igneous Rock formed?
    Most people think rocks were just there but that's not exactly what happened. The Igneous rock, also called Hot Rock that forms from lava or magma were mostly formed from Heat sand and Rocks pushed together. The Igneous rock was formed by hot Rock depending where it is getting so hot that it forms into a shape. Lastly it gets cooled and turns into the Igneous rock. That is how the Igneous Rock is formed.

Word Count 81

For the final explanation, Amanda chose to add a title to her piece, in the form of a question. Amanda began her explanation with a sentence to grab the readers' attention. This may point to her awareness that she needs to capture the attention of her young intended audience. Then, Amanda added her identifying statement, "The Igneous rock, also called Hot Rock that forms from lava or magma were mostly formed from Heat sand and Rocks pushed together." Once again Amanda tucked her entire explanation into the identifying statement. She includes a brief two part step-by-step explanation in the body of her piece explaining it forms a shape when it is hot and that when it cools it is igneous rock. Amanda ends her piece with a summary statement, "That is how the Igneous Rock is formed." Instead of a diagram as she used in the pre-assessment, Amanda drew a picture of a rock and labeled it "igneous rock." The picture did not illustrate the rock cycle.

The identifying statement contains several of the language tools taught in the explanation unit. Amanda used an apposition, "Igneous Rock, also called Hot Rock," to explain what igneous rock is. Both of the Science words she planned to include in her piece were included in this identifying statement. In her identifying statement, "The Igneous rock, also called Hot Rock that forms from lava or magma were mostly formed from Heat sand and Rocks pushed together. She used the correct forever verb tense in the first half of the sentence writing, "forms," but switches to the past tense form when she writes "were" for the second half of the sentence. This verb confusion is indicative of the entire piece. Amanda inserts a temporal link, "lastly," in the end of her explanation.

Joelle – 12 year- old female bilingual – Spanish and English

The following text is Joelle' scientific explanation pre-assessment.

Figure 91
Joelle's Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

> It rains because the clouds gets to heavy because theres water in them and then the clouds lets the water go, and it rains. How the clouds gets the water? They get it by the puddles. The water raises up and gos into the clouds and when the clouds get heavy full of water it rain.
> And that's why it rains.
>
> Word Count 61

Joelle began writing upon receiving the prompt with no visible planning. When she completed the writing she saw that many students were drawing sketches of the water cycle on the bottom of their papers so she sketched a diagram of a cloud, rain, and a puddle with arrows connecting the images into a circle. Interestingly she did one sketch and labeled the parts, a strong support for a scientific explanation, but scribbled that sketch out. Her second diagram was only the pictures and arrows with no words. Perhaps Joelle did not realize that labeling diagrams would support her readers.

Joelle's pre-assessment exhibits the necessary structure for a scientific explanation. She begins with a Identifying Statement, "It rains because the clouds gets to heavy because theres water in them and then the clouds lets the water go, and it rains." Then, she moves on to write three sentences explaining how the water cycles from rain back to the clouds. "And that's why it rains," serves as Joelle's

summary statement. Joelle's identifying statement is confusing to the reader because she launches into specifics about the water cycle without first explaining that in general it rains because of the water cycle. Too quickly Joelle jumps to the scientific explanation.

Joelle uses temporal links and adverbial phrases in her pre-assessment. Joelle uses temporal links to connect ideas within sentences such as, "*and then* the clouds lets the water go, and it rains," or "and when the clouds get heavy full of water it rain." This second phrase illustrates an adverbial phrase Joelle used to explain that the cloud was full, "of water." Joelle uses "it," and "They," instead of scientific vocabulary as the subjects of her sentences leading to confusion for the reader. Like in her long composition narrative she addresses the reader directly, "How the clouds gets water?" in the middle of her piece making her writing look oral like.

The following piece is Joelle's post-assessment for scientific explanations.   In her planning box Joelle wrote many notes with arrows connecting her thoughts together. The first thing on her list was, "Heat causes." She listed five words for scientific vocabulary she wanted to include in her piece as well. Joelle then wrote a first draft as follows.

Figure 92
Joelle's Planning for Pre-Assessment Scientific Explanation

Explain how a rock is formed?
Plan on this page and write on lined paper.

Planning

Igneous

Heat causese

hot liquid → (magma or lava)

Magma or lava + Ions thren

cools and hardend

starts to form into a

Igneous rock then

Forms more and turns.

a rock.

Science Vocabulary:

Magma
lava
Form
Heat
liquid

particales

Figure 93
Joelle's First Draft of Post-Assessment Scientific Explanation

How is the Igneous rock formed?
    Heat had formed the Igneous rock. Well any rock but Im talking about the Igneous rock and how its formed Its formed by the heat and the heat causes hot liquid that's magma or lava wich [which] flows threw[through] the volacono. Then hot liquid like Magma or lava cools and hardends.

At the bottom of her first draft Joelle wrote herself the following notes,

"Questions and thing to make my explanation better:

1-how dose [does] it hardened

2- how do heat form the Igneous rock

3- make a different ID

4- need a clincher

5-exsplain every part of the explanation."

These notes indicate her ability to describe the structure of a scientific explanation with the meta-language we taught. It also shows that Joelle was thinking about her reader. She wrote, "exsplain every part of the explanation." She wanted to make sure that her reader clearly understood her message.

After thinking through her revisions, Joelle wrote the following draft.

Figure 94
Aubrey's Final Draft of Post-Assessment Scientific Explanation

<div style="border: 1px solid black;">

How was the Igneous rock form?

Did you know that the Igneous rock was Formed by Heat well all the rocks are basaclly formed by heat but Im talking about how the Igneous rock was formed.
Heat had formed the Igneous rock, the heat had formed the rock by making the lava or magma burning hot and the magma or lava is a hot liquid. The hot liquid flows threw a volacano. Then the burning hot liquid that flows threw the volacano gets hardened, it hardend by getting cooler and forming into a Igneous rock.
That's how the Igneous was formed.

Word count 101

</div>

In Joelle's final scientific explanation she writes, "Did you know that Igneous rock was Formed by Heat well all the rocks are basaclly formed by heat but Im talking about how the Igneous rock was formed. " Here Joelle wrote a general answer to the question, "How are igneous rocks formed?" as her identifying statement. Note she changes the voice to first person, this is not expected in explanations. She then proceeds to explain how the heat forms the rock more specifically in the body of her explanation. Joelle used her revision notes to spruce up her identifying statement for the intended audience. After writing herself a note to add a clincher, Joelle wrote "That's how the Igneous was formed," to end her piece

She revised sentences in the body of her explanation to "exsplain" using many of the language elements we taught in the unit. For example, she revised the sentence "Then hot liquid like Magma or lava cools and hardends," to " Then the burning hot

liquid that flows threw the volacano gets hardened, it hardend by getting cooler and forming into a Igneous rock." In this sentence alone she used an apposition, "like Magma or lava," factual adjectivals such as "burning hot", scientific vocabulary like "volcano", and a how adverbial phrase, "by getting cooler," to elaborate for her reader. This sentence is representative of Joelle's explanation. She used adjectivals, adverbials, science vocabulary, and appositions throughout her piece. Joelle's sentences were seamlessly connected with temporal links. Joelle adds a detailed diagram with pictures arrows and captions to further assist her reader in understanding the concepts.

Joelle demonstrated substantial confusion around the appropriate verb tense in her final explanation. Interestingly, her first piece shows the correct forever verb tense, "raises," "there's," and "gets." Our instruction on forever verbs clearly confused Joelle. She wrote present perfect verbs in the beginning of her final explanation, "had formed."   In the body of her explanation she returns to the correct form for explanations, "flows," "gets," and, "That's. " At the end Joelle uses a past tense verb, "hardened." Clearly, she was more confused than helped by our instruction on verb tense.

Summary

Student scientific explanations grew dramatically throughout this SFL inspired writing unit. Students wrote longer pieces utilizing appropriate text structure and several new language tools to accomplish more effective explanations. These

findings suggest that students benefit when they experience writing instruction

framed and inspired by SFL.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study is to answer the question: What happens when teachers incorporate Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of language into their writing instruction? The classroom teacher and I applied SFL to two writing instructional units. SFL was not applied in it's entirely but up to the level of our understanding including ideas about context, tenor, purpose, structure, and some language tools.

The findings in this study suggest, SFL theory of language can provide a useful framework to support linguistically diverse students' writing development. SFL theory provided the teacher and I with an awareness of language that made the structure and language features of personal narratives and scientific explanations visible. SFL also supplied the teacher and I with the meta-language to identify and describe structural and language elements in relation to the context, purpose, and tenor of the text. The students' writing in response to the SFL influenced instruction suggests a positive interaction.

This chapter begins with a review of the focus student growth resulting from the SFL influenced instruction. Then I explore more specifically how SFL impacted instruction. The chapter concludes with implications for instruction and questions for further research.

Impact on Student Learning

Students demonstrated growth in a range of areas during the two SFL based writing units. They showed greater awareness of the situational context and meta-language. Their writing reveals terrific growth in the areas of structure and language. The differences in student performance were more related to student starting points than language classification. In fact, all students applied nearly every lesson taught regardless of their language classification. Furthermore, the students' behaviors indicate growth in their confidence as a writer.

Regardless of language background, students demonstrated a strong awareness of tenor in their writing. The topic selection was appropriate for their audience and students worked to use the structure and language tools offered to better serve the reader. In the students' scientific explanations, all the students attempted to use an apposition to support their readers' understanding of new science terms. During conferences, students would comment about the "ladies up in Boston," indicating a consciousness about their readers.

During the immersion portion of the units, Mia and I introduced meta-language to describe the structure and language tools of the texts. Those terms were used throughout instruction to establish expectations in rubrics, describe the learning objective during mini-lessons, and in conferences. Students used the meta-language introduced through the units to plan, discuss, and critique their writing. Just as Williams (1999c) claims, the meta-language became a tool to help students understand the grammar of the text. Students employed terms such as orientation and identifying statements to describe the structure of their pieces while planning, in

conferences, and revising. Language terms such as adverbial phrases or links helped

students articulate plans for revisions and evaluate their writing. Students were able

to engage with staff during conferences using the meta-language correctly. The SFL

meta-linguistic terms became a working part of the classroom vocabulary.

As has been seen in the previous chapters, SFL influenced writing instruction

led to strong growth in student writing. Figures 95 and 96 illustrate focus student

growth in the areas of structure and language. For each structural or language

element taught, the top bar represents the number of students able to apply the skill in

the pre-assessment, and the bottom bar represents the number of focus students able

to apply the skill in the post assessment. The graphs make clear the growth students

made in nearly every area they received instruction.

Figure 95
Student Growth: MCAS Personal Narrative

Student Growth: MCAS Personal Narrative

Structure	Before Instruction	After Instruction
Orientation	2	6
Step by Step	3	6
Closing	2	5

Language	Before Instruction	After Instruction
Participants	4	6
Action Verbs	3	6
Sensing Verbs	4	4
Adjectivals	0	2
Adverbials	4	6
Linking Words	4	5

Before Instruction
After Instruction

Figure 96
Student Growth: Scientific Explanation

Student Growth: Scientific Explanation

Structure	
Title	1 / 5
I.D. Statement	3 / 6
Summary Statement	3 / 5
Diagram	5 / 5

Language	
Temporal Links	2 / 6
Cause/Effect Links	3 / 0
Scientific Vocabulary	1 / 6
Appositions	1 / 6
Factual and Specific Adverbials	3 / 5
Qualitative, Factual, Type and Comparison Adjectivals	3 / 6
Forever Verbs	6 / 6

Before Instruction
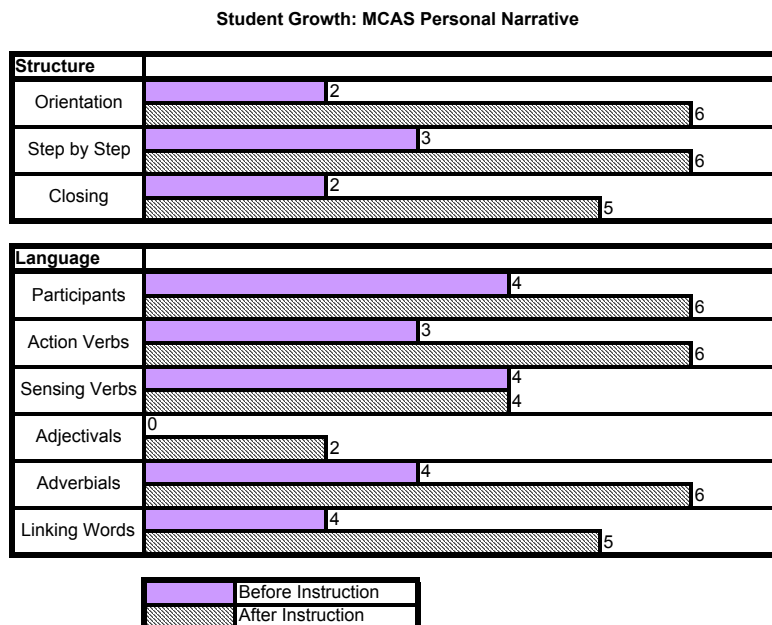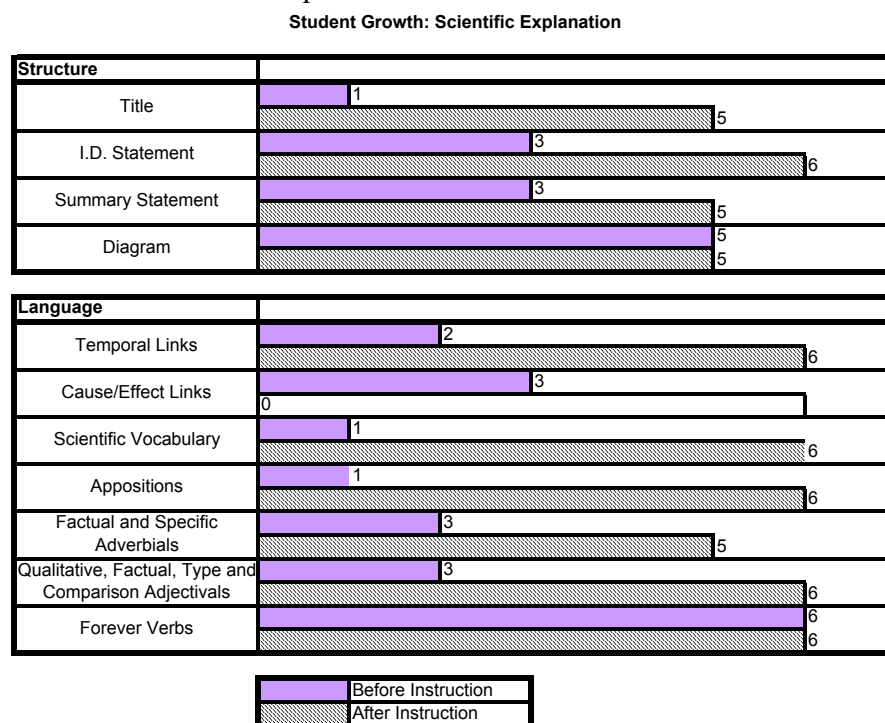After Instruction

In both units much instruction focused on the structure of the desired text. As a result the structure of all the students' personal narratives and scientific explanations grew significantly during the units. The results of the MCAS Long Composition Unit show dramatic growth in narrative structure. Before instruction, only two students utilized the correct structure for their compositions. After instruction every student began their piece with an orientation followed by a clear sequential step-by-step body. All but one student had a closing for their narrative that somehow summarized or ended their piece. The focused instruction and graphic organizers shifted the students understanding and awareness of the structure of narrative text so that they could apply it independently.

The final independent scientific explanation samples exhibited similar skills in appropriate text structure. The teachers' understanding of the text structure grew during the unit to include a list and sequential structure and a more nuanced understanding of identifying statement. Mia and I also discovered the critical importance of a firm content knowledge understanding to accurately plan an explanation. Several times we were forced to return to the content before moving forward with structure. Despite the teachers' initial confusions about scientific explanation structural elements and their link to content, all but one of the students included all the required structural elements in their piece. They included a title, an identifying statement, and the body of the explanation. Only Carlos was missing two elements, the title and identifying statement.

Once student had a firm grasp of structure Mia and I explicitly taught useful language elements for the genre. As seen in figures 95 and 96, students made similar gains in the area of appropriate language use. On the pre-assessment for the MCAS long composition the students demonstrated major gaps in their ability to apply language tools useful in narrative text including action, sensing, and saying verbs, adverbial phrases, adjectival phrases, and linking words. On the actual MCAS writing assessment, students independently applied the vast majority of language tools taught during the unit. Every student applied their knowledge of participants, action and saying verbs, adverbial phrases, and linking words to their final piece. Most students incorporated sensing verbs but those that chose not to, utilized other language tools to show characters' feelings instead. Adjectivals, the first language

tool introduced, was only used by two students. It appears that adjectivals were not taught well, not taught at the right time, or not useful for students in writing their narratives. Otherwise the students' use of language tools rose dramatically through the unit.

Despite a shorter instructional unit and many interruptions, the students demonstrated considerable growth as a result of the scientific explanation unit. Mia and I introduced language tools to the students after they demonstrated an understanding of the structure and the scientific content. Once the structure and content were in place, the students demonstrated similar growth in their application of scientific explanation language tools as is evident in figure 96. Before instruction there was little use of links to connect ideas, scientific vocabulary with appositions, or specific and factual adverbials or adjectivals. After instruction, the students again demonstrated growth across all areas. Despite the shortened teaching time, all the students, even the most linguistically challenged students applied the new language tools into their scientific explanations.

Scientific content knowledge was inextricably linked to the students' ability to organize and write explanations. Students were not able to plan and write scientific explanations until they had an adequate understanding of the phenomenon. Then, writing the explanation seemed to strengthen and develop their understanding. Many researchers and theorists have commented on this correlation between scientific writing and science content knowledge (Bruna et. al., 2007; Chambliss et. al.2003; Halliday & Martin, 1993)

Prior to this study, I assumed that the scientific explanation language elements would be more difficult to apply due to the content requirements of an informational text. It turned out that the students who were more challenged with language such as Carlos actually performed better during the explanation unit. Perhaps the research done in groups during the unit supported his language. It was assumed that Carlos would have the requisite funds of language to write narrative and that I would need to supplement his scientific vocabulary. Perhaps he needed the similar support to develop his vocabulary and content knowledge related to the topic of his narrative texts.

When bilingual student responses to the un-coached writing prompts are compared with their monolingual peers there are no noteworthy differences in performance in either the narrative or explanation genres. This finding is similar to the conclusion Fitzgerald (2006) draws saying the monolingual and bilingual writers demonstrate similar development patterns. All of the students in the class have limited access to academic English outside of school. All but Joelle struggled to accomplish the appropriate genre structure and language elements prior to instruction. Joelle was one of the most skilled writers at the beginning of the unit series. It leads me to believe that given sufficient time to develop, more writers would begin applying the learning more strategically as their writing developed. Despite large gaps in the quality of application, following instruction, all of the students were able to write each genre, using the correct structure, with many of the language skills

taught. It appears that SFL inspired instruction supports language learning for both monolingual and bilingual students.

What are worth noting are the differences in student performance based on the students' starting points. For example, Joelle began the MCAS Narrative unit with a firm understanding of the structure of narrative and all the included language tools except adjectivals, saying verbs, and sensing verbs. On the contrary, Carlos began the unit with no demonstrated awareness of the structure and limited use of only two language tools, adverbials and sensing verbs. Both students' writings reveal dramatic growth. At the conclusion of the unit, Carlos was able to write a correctly structured narrative complete with many appropriately used language tools. Joelle was able to apply the instruction on language and audience to allow for more sophisticated application of linguistic tools. The difference was not their status as a second language learner but their starting point.

The sum of these units was greater than the parts. Students demonstrated new confidence as writers. Students were able to transfer their knowledge between genres showing an ownership of their new learning. The fact that the students so readily applied the learning about structure and language to a new piece of writing without teacher coaching indicates an ownership of the learning that extends beyond the classroom.

Perhaps most importantly, SFL influenced writing instruction led to a surprising level of student confidence and efficacy as writers. On the day of the MCAS assessment students walked in smiling and excited to take the test. They

reported they were nervous but ready. Their results were the best the school had ever

seen, scoring above the state mean for the first time in the school's history. Similarly,

when asked to do a final un-coached scientific explanation the students got right to

work and independently produced stronger pieces structurally and linguistically.

It appeared that in this case student efficacy was the result of authentic student

choice, regular teacher feedback and resulting writing success. From the topic

selection to the language tools used, students had choice. The students were not

reliant on the teacher to tell them if they were successful. They acquired the meta-

language and awareness to identify the structural and language attributes of a quality

text and evaluate their own work. Finally, with the scaffolds the teacher and I put in

place, students experienced success early on in the units leading to increased efficacy.

Bandura (1994) and Margolis and McCabe (2006) would agree suggesting that

success, student choice, and regular feedback are key factors contributing to a

students' sense of efficacy.

SFL's Impact on Instruction

Student writing skill developed considerably during these two instructional

units. While it is true that the researcher and classroom teacher are dedicated, caring

professionals who worked hard, it was clear to both that SFL played a major role in

the students' success. As a researcher and a teacher I wondered what about SFL

supported the teaching and learning of writing in this unit. I reflected on the teaching

and learning in the units and found that SFL enabled specific teaching maneuvers,

meta-language, and understandings about text that supported student learning in this

context. I believe it was the express focus on purpose, tenor, structure, and language

as tools that led to student growth. The findings of this study point to a model of

writing instruction that includes key concepts and meta-language from SFL. Figure

97 provides a conceptual map showing how SFL successfully guided instruction in

this study.

Figure 97
SFL-Inspired Writing Instruction
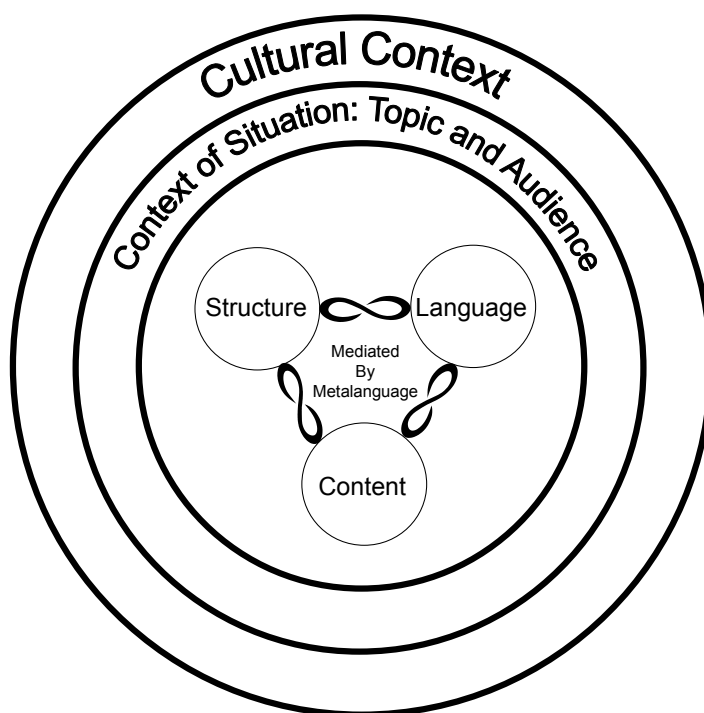
With an SFL theoretical framework, writing is understood within a cultural

context. A growing awareness of the cultural context allowed Mia and I to be

respectful of the students' personal cultural background while specifically teaching

them how access and function within the school culture. Framing writing instruction with a focus on purpose and tenor proved useful for the students providing a clear meaningful purpose for their work. Structure, language, and content understanding supported student-writing development and were interrelated. Structure was the most accessible aspect of the triad for students in this study indicating the efficacy of beginning instruction with structure. Meta-language mediated the teachers' instruction and student understanding of structure, language, and content knowledge.

SFL theory focused the writers' and therefore the teacher's attention on the audience and purpose of the text. I found that when I began each lesson and conference with a clear reference to who the text was for, and for what purpose, students were highly focused and more apt to apply the new learning. This finding is similar to those of Purcell, Duke and Martineau (2007) and Tower (2005), who found that an authentic purpose for writing was crucial for writing development. Students are astute consumers of learning. When the utility of the new learning was evident from the beginning, the students listened intently and applied it immediately. The willingness of the students to attempt nearly every new learning objective in their writing supports the idea that situating the learning with purpose and audience early on leads to more application.

Another useful SFL concept was that language is a series of choices or a meaning-making resource, to communicate purposes to intended audiences (Bernhardt, 1986; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2007). The teachers were able to frame every new concept in purpose and audience. Then we could offer

structural and language tools that would help students accomplish a specific purpose in their text. Much like Gebhard, Harman, and Seger (2007), our goal was to make students conscious of the connection between language choices and their writing purposes. During lessons students were given language choices that accomplish different purposes and students were able to apply nearly all the skills.

SFL provided the lens through which to see the language choices and it also provides teachers with purposeful meta-language to describe it to students. This allowed for terrific specificity and clarity of instruction. Engler et. al, (2006) and Hillocks (1987) suggest that explicit writing instruction is the most beneficial to student development. Bernhardt (1999) says that if teachers can understand the linguistic choices of a text they can better explain it to their students. She goes on to explain that SFL defines categories, making it easier for teachers to describe it to students. My experience as a teacher in this study confirmed her theory. My lessons often were framed as, "If you want to say or do this, then you could use this . . . " Similarly, conferences became discussions that helped students determine what they wanted to say and then providing tools that would help them accomplish that. Again, this allowed teachers to teach explicit tools for authentic purposes using clear meta-language. Most writers appeared to simply apply the new tool or structure to their piece. However, some students such as Joelle in her final narrative piece, showed calculated decisions to connect to the audience or express something in the text.

Beginning the instruction with immersion in the genre supported students understanding of structure and introduced the upcoming meta-language. We filled

the classroom with exemplars of the genre and students read and discussed them with peers and teachers. Teachers used this time to help students discover the structure of the text and how that relates to purpose. The texts studied then became touchstone mentor texts throughout the unit. Martin (2009) describes this immersion period as deconstruction of the text and recommends it at the beginning of instruction.

Interestingly, during the immersion portion of the explanation unit, the students only needed brief cues to look for structure in order to identify the structure themselves. Students misapplied the meta-language from narrative to explanation, calling the identifying statement the lead and the summary statement the closing. When the teachers provided the correct meta-language for the identifying statement and summary and connected their labels with their purpose, the students quickly added the terminology to their vocabulary.

In this study, SFL supported the introduction of a genre using a deconstruction or immersion period with clear meta-language that connects the term to the function of the structural element (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Immersion gave teachers a chance to introduce the meta-language to describe language features of the text. The functional nature of SFL meta-language allowed the teachers to be more specific in instruction during immersion and throughout the unit. Gebhard and Martin (2010) agree that functional grammar can support students understanding of language with functional labels.

While immersing students in a text it seemed that noticing structure was an easier task. While it was useful to point out the language tools writers use as a way to

introduce the meta-language, it seemed students did not internalize the learning until they had a structure to apply it to for their own purposes. Students did not apply the language tools introduced in the immersion portion of the unit until they had a strong structure and I modeled exactly how it could be applied to their writing.

SFL theory of language made the structure and language elements of the texts visible and provided the meta-language to describe those features meaningfully to students. This allowed the teachers to demonstrate specific and discrete concepts with clear language and purpose that, over time, came together to help students create a quality text. Throughout the instructional process, the teachers' role in this SFL inspired writers' workshop was crucial. The teachers helped the writers see what was possible, what was most useful. We provided the meta-language to talk about the structure and language to assist students in making calculated decisions that would accomplish their purposes.

The meta-language of SFL allowed teachers to provide explicit feedback to students regarding their writing. Explicit feedback is crucial to writing development (Black & William (1998); Marzano et. al., 2001). The specificity created with SFL meta-language allowed teachers to create rubrics and provide student feedback that was targeted and clear. Teachers could quickly cue students to incorporate useful language elements with single word reminders. Eventually, children began using the meta-language to cue themselves during planning and revision.

Just as structure came first for the immersion portion of instruction, structure came first for writing as well. Graphic organizers were effective scaffolds of student

structural understandings. When students were given a graphic organizer that facilitated the desired structure and were taught how to use, it they were able to accomplish the most useful structure independently. As writers gained more experience, they internalized the structure of the text. This finding supports Wells (1999) statement that tools used to scaffold language learners will eventually lead to internalization of the processes.

It is during the pre-writing with the graphic organizer that revisions to structure needed to happen. Young writers who had a completed draft and determined that the structure was wrong had to practically begin again. For a young writer this is demoralizing. The teacher had a crucial role during the graphic organizer phase of the writing process to study the students' plans and provide corrective feedback to students who were not working toward the desired structure before drafting. The graphic organizer served two roles, it supported the students' structure and allowed the teacher to correct inappropriately structured pieces before the students begin the hard work of drafting.   It is worth noting that in both genres, the students were able to independently accomplish the desired structure using the teacher designed graphic organizer.

What was clear during this study was the interdependence of structure and language, as illustrated in figure 97. During the units, Mia and I noticed that the lessons on language supported and clarified the structure of the genre. Likewise, the structure of the genre supported and allowed for the necessary language tools. This phenomenon played out in narrative texts when students struggled to apply language

tools to all about texts. However, the best example of this symbiotic relationship between the structure and the language can be found in the scientific explanation unit when we taught the students that the structure of the explanation, sequential or factorial, determined the identifying statement and link. Students were not able to write identifying statements or connect concepts with links until they understood the exact structure of their explanation.

The students' understanding of the language tools connected to the genres under study began with simple noticing, then moved to labeling once the teachers provided the meta-language. When students began writing and teachers taught specific tools, they began to apply them in their text. Sometimes the students over-applied or under-applied language tools taught or observed but they all tried language tools. For students like Joelle who acquired the language tools quickly, they were able to apply the tools in novel ways throughout their pieces. Others finished the unit applying the language tools in basic ways.

It was in the drafting stage of writing that conferencing was particularly powerful in developing language. When I sat with a student and studied their piece together I could show them how small changes in verb tense or word order could lead to dramatic shifts in effectiveness. The one on one conference allowed the teacher to focus specifically on the child's intended meaning and provide specific strategies to accomplish their goals.

The exemplars used for instruction and immersion impacted the language tool decisions young writers make. During the scientific explanation unit, every student

titled their explanation with a question. This was because nearly all the examples used were from texts for children explaining various phenomena and titled their pieces with a question. While students did not express this observation during the immersion portion of the unit, they certainly applied this language tool to their own writing.

Implications for Instruction

While the purpose of this study was not to discover a prescriptive writing pedagogy, there were several findings in the data analysis that suggest useful instructional practices.

- SFL is an important and useful approach because it develops a sense of efficacy and independence as writers.

- SFL meta-lanague can be used with all students to describe and improve student writing.

- Students will progress relative to their starting point so teachers need to plan extra instruction for students who start behind.

- Prior to every unit, take instructional time to develop student content knowledge. This applies to narrative units as well as informational genres.

- Provide explicit instruction to support student progress. SFL can provide the lens and meta-language to determine and describe the content of explicit lessons.

- Provide students with guided choices as writers.

- Use immersion or text deconstruction to teach text structure and introduce meta-language.

- It is critical for writing teachers to explicitly teach both text structure and language elements.

- Use Graphic organizers tailored to the text structure as a tool to develop student understanding of text structure.

- Begin with purpose and tenor, move to structure, and then to language.

- SFL is a large and complicated theory of language. Teachers can apply SFL to the level of their understanding and achieve positive student results.

Conclusion

The students in this study did not come to school with a strong awareness or knowledge of academic English. They were reliant on the school to offer them access to the culture of power. Academic language is one entry point into that culture. Like many schools across America, the students' school struggled to support their academic language skills.

In this study, SFL theory of language helped teachers know what to teach and provided the meta-language to talk about writing in meaningful ways to children. It offered a practical and authentic focus on purpose and audience that undergirded all instruction making it more meaningful to students. SFL helped teachers and eventually students understand that language is a series of decisions to accomplish a particular purpose. This concept allowed teachers to show students the choices they have and how to select language tools based on their purpose.

At the beginning of a unit, SFL provided the focus for the immersion into the genre so teachers could focus student attention on the structure and language elements. SFL provided meaningful meta-language to talk about text in ways that were connected to its purpose. When the teaching portion of the writing unit was underway, SFL provided clarity regarding the structure of a piece allowing teachers to create graphic organizers that would support student understanding of a text structure. SFL helped teachers connect the structure to the language for students so that they could make skilled language choices within the needed structure.

Schools must provide students with regular explicit access to academic language. Writing instruction with SFL theory can provide students a window into the inner workings of academic language. Like a magnifying lens, SFL exposes how structure and grammar support meaning in school based genres. The meta-language of SFL provides a vocabulary to describe academic language in explicit meaningful ways. The results of this study support the growing body of literature suggesting SFL theory of language is a promising tool to support linguistically diverse students' access to academic languages (Martin, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2004; Williams, 1999).

The promising findings of this study call for further exploration of SFL within literacy instruction. The following list suggests areas for future research:

- How can SFL influence writing instruction and student learning of other genres? With other grade levels? In other settings?
- How might SFL theory support new teacher understanding of Culturally Responsive Instruction?

- How can SFL meta-language inform our understanding of student writing development?

- How might SFL theory positively impact reading instruction?

- What impact does SFL inspired writing instruction have within other writing instruction paradigms?

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