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Carol Lickenbrock

University of Missouri-St. Louis, [carollickenbrock@gmail.com](mailto:carollickenbrock@gmail.com)

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**Engaging Middle School Emergent Bilinguals in Language Awareness:  
a Practitioner-Researcher Study**

Carol A. Lickenbrock

M.A.T., TESOL, School for International Training, 1998  
B.A., Psychology, Grinnell College, 1985

A Dissertation Submitted to The Graduate School at the University of Missouri-  
St. Louis  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education with an emphasis in Educational Leadership and  
Policy

August  
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Advisory Committee

Rebecca L. Rogers, Ph.D.  
Chairperson

Matthew Davis, Ph.D.

Lisa Dorner, Ph.D.

Kim Song, Ph.D.

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### **Abstract**

This practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) traced the journey toward critical literacy of a group of seven emergent bilinguals and me, their teacher, over the course of a four-month unit on argument as part of our English for Speakers of Other Languages 3 (ESOL3) class. Many of these students, like many emergent bilinguals in the United States, had been disempowered because they had not had access to the academic texts of school. As part of this research, students worked with tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyze the interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunctions of argumentation in lessons on consumerism, protest, debate and a project of their choice. Also in this study, I describe my own learning of critical SFL as it empowered me to more fully understand language choices and guided my lessons.

Using fieldnotes, my researcher's journal, transcripts, and student work samples, I explored the following research questions: (1) What transformations occurred when middle school emergent bilinguals were invited to critically analyze discourse practices as part of their ESOL 3 class? What patterns of interactions, discourses and stances emerged as salient? and (2) In what ways can this critical language awareness support their literacy development and mastery of academic language? Through inferential analysis guided by these research questions, the themes of power and choice at the individual, school and district level arose and proved key in creating an environment ripe for student learning. A critical approach, which draws on power, voice, and identity, supported my students' engagement with spoken and written texts. Often time, it is thought that students who struggle with English Language Arts, especially long-term

English learners, must learn the ‘basics’ before proceeding to ‘critical’ literacies. Yet, what I have shown is a critical genre approach was the gateway for my emerging bilinguals to advance their academic literacies, written argumentations, and agency as people. In addition, I have demonstrated the power of context-rich practitioner research. Throughout the study, using a critical SFL lens while teaching made possible the layers of analysis and adaptation both before and during each class necessary to more fully engage emergent bilinguals to construct, deconstruct, critique and reshape academic language in contexts they found meaningful.

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## **Chapter 1: Rationale**

*What is it that differentiates students who make it from those who do not? This list is long, but very prominent among the factors is mastery of academic language (Wong Fillmore, 2004, p.3).*

Emergent bilinguals are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. One of four children born in the United States is the child of an immigrant (Hernandez & Napierala, 2013). The United States Department of Education, Department of Educational Statistics (2020) classifies approximately 10 percent of all students as English learners (ELs). However, despite their great numbers, U.S. schools are failing these students.

Lack of academic language proficiency can take away a student's power. Take José. A few hours after José came into my school for the first time, I talked to the teacher at his old school. She told me José was a sweet boy, but just not too bright. In fact, he was so slow he once tried to put his ice cream in his locker, so he could take it home at the end of the day. She said I should not expect too much from him.

Then as days passed, I saw a different picture. He was often at the school office helping his mother navigate through multiple camp forms, field trip papers, and applications. I found out he is the maker of doctor's appointments, the reader of bills, and the writer of letters for his family. To his parents, he is a translator and scribe helping maneuver the multiple complexities of school and the community. I did see him put food

in his locker to take home to hungry family members but never ice cream. Months later I found out he had an IQ of 115. I still occasionally heard teachers talking about him, saying that he should go in the slower group for this or that activity. José was born in the United States, but somehow, he never reached the level of academic language proficiency necessary for his teachers to see his strengths. He was already transferring skills that he was learning in the classes that his more academically successful peers were not. As a teacher, it is my obligation to help him find ways to use and understand language and literacy critically to navigate school and show his brilliance.

Hiroshi, my own son, also felt disempowered in U.S. schools. In Japanese schools, from preschool to junior high, he was always one of the brightest, with the highest test scores and the fastest answers. He was steeped in academic language. It was just the wrong language, when at fourteen he switched to high school in the U.S.. Everything changed. In one of his college entrance application he wrote the following.

High school in America was a devastating place for those first months. Never before in my life had I ever been in such a hostile environment. My bad pronunciation and understanding of English made every conversation frustrating. When somebody talked to me, my first response was always “What?” Whenever I talked to anybody, their response was also, “What? I can’t understand you.” Soon, I stopped talking.

For a while, he lost the power and the confidence to show all that was within him. The language he needed to do so was beyond him.

In a country where emergent bilinguals are three times more likely to drop out of school than their English-only peers (Gebhard, 2012), there is a need to make academic

language more accessible and empowering. That academic language also needs to be more representative of the students in our schools. This study was an invitation to my students to become critical users of language and literacy and reach greater proficiency in academic English by drawing on the tools of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1996).

### **Background**

Considering that ten percent of students in U.S. schools are emergent bilinguals (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), teacher training and research concerning them seems sparse. In my Midwestern state, there are no requirements that teacher candidates receive any training in working specifically with emergent bilinguals. At the time of this study, approximately eight percent of the students in my school were emergent bilinguals, but only two of the 65 teachers had TESOL endorsements. Few of those teachers had taken a single college course on emergent bilinguals or strategies to instruct them. Even if teachers are trained and passionate about working with students on academic language, the materials available to them are limited. Many advances in the teaching of English as an additional language seem driven by legislation

My journey as a teacher of emergent bilinguals can perhaps illustrate what the information available to teachers includes and what is lacking. When I first started teaching English as an additional language in the U.S. in the 1990s, I only thought of students coming from outside the United States as emergent bilinguals. I found the difference between what Cummins (1979) termed basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) revelatory. Both are necessary for school. BICS are the language students would use for social interactions: to

borrow a pencil or make a friend. It took a while for me to understand that although students quickly develop basic social language and may initially sound fine, gaining the language they need to decipher and create academic text was a much more time-consuming project. I still find myself helping teachers in my building try to understand why some students sound so fluent initially, but really do not have access to CALP, the academic vocabulary, structures and discourses they need to grasp content and complete tasks assigned.

I cannot count the number of times I have heard, “I don’t think this is really a language problem,” because students have developed BICS but are still working toward CALP. Cummins’ distinction gave me the ability to know and explain that there is a difference between being able to sound good in everyday conversation and academic language proficiency. I have since developed a much more complex and critical understanding of academic language, but initially this distinction was key.

When I returned to the U.S. and began my work as an EL specialist in 2008, after teaching English in Japan, the climate had totally changed. No Child Left Behind had made districts accountable for subgroups including “LEPs,” a deficit-based term for emerging bilinguals, limited English proficient. Yearly testing of emergent bilinguals on the ACCESS, a standardized test to measure their proficiency in academic English, had begun. I could monitor student progress in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in the language of mathematics, science, and social studies. Though this by no means ensured quality instruction for emergent bilinguals, their tests results could no longer be ignored.

When the tests began to measure not only language in general, but language within the context of the different content areas, I began to see more research to support

emergent bilinguals in all their classes. Methods of instruction to make content comprehensible, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, SIOP, (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008) became popular. A whole list of strategies, the call to connect to students' background knowledge, and the idea that in order for students to express content knowledge they need academic language, came to light. The necessity of creating language goals and content goals for each class was recognized.

Programs like Content and Language Integration as a Means of Bridging Success (CLIMBS), which was created by WIDA (formerly the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium) - which also puts out the ACCESS, a yearly standardized test required in 40 U.S. states), and The Center for Applied Linguistics helped bring the focus of academic language development beyond the EB specialist's classroom. By facilitating CLIMBS sessions, I at least had a base to start for work with teachers in my building and district on how to better teach emergent bilinguals, by understanding their level of proficiency, the need for cultural sensitivity, strategies, and competencies. Both the composition of the participant groups, which included administrators, and teachers from varied subject areas, as well as being an EB specialist and the fact that I did not have to create all the materials on my own all the time, helped me reach out to more teachers and share the responsibility for the emergent bilinguals in my school. The notion that the teaching of language development and content knowledge could and should be intertwined helped make language learning a goal of every class.

Unfortunately, for me at least, these programs often were not holistic enough. In both SIOP and CLIMBS the need for teachers to create language goals was clear. However, what exactly those goals should be remained opaque. There have been many

lists of the academic vocabulary words most commonly used on tests or in academic writing, perhaps most notably (Coxhead, 2000). There are activities and strategies on how to help students engage with the words (Kinsella, 2010). In fact, sometimes I felt like I spent whole classes teaching one word and even then, I was not sure the students knew it in the end.

Goals at the sentence level initially seemed easy to grasp, such as the use of certain connecting words to move students from simple to compound or complex sentences. I had yet to discover Systemic Functional Linguistics and learn the insights this theoretical and pedagogical framework offered to understanding the difficult task of packing sentences with information. Some styles of writing, particularly those traditionally covered in English classes, are available. Frames about how to write a summary or a compare and contrast paragraph are popular. I still find a great difference in the broad range of texts students must understand and produce and the materials that break down how they are created and understood. For example, it is much easier to find ways to teach the word “describe,” or practice a sentence structure using an appositive, than it is to break down how to write a descriptive essay beyond the very elementary main idea, details, and conclusion framework. Moreover, resources that lead students to break down and question the assumptions and judgements that lie beneath the word choices one uses to, for example, describe, are needed to help students find the power in and be empowered by literacy. Teachers need ideas on how to help students develop a critical lens, especially when working with those students who are often left out of the texts of school.

Lesson plans to help emergent bilinguals become aware of language choices they and other authors were making were few. I always found that frustrating. However, with the coming of Common Core State Standards, benchmarks of academic achievement expectations for each grade level, that measure even math entwined with language, students were not be able to express their content knowledge divorced from complex text any longer. The ideas long held by many educators of emergent bilinguals would be made clear to all their teachers by these test results. Genre study, the deconstruction and construction of text, must become a bigger part of the work emergent bilinguals do in all their classes.

Within the Common Core State Standards, there is special note on ELs and the call for them to master the complex text of school. There is just very little guidance on how they should do so (Cummins, 2014). However, as with any other learning, it does not just magically happen, because one says it should or because it will be tested. Teaching students to use the tools of SFL provided a method to teach, rather than merely an aspiration that emergent bilinguals be able to comprehend and create complex texts.

In the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which went into effect at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, during which time these data were collected, “there is a huge shift that moves over more authority regarding the design of accountability and interventions from the federal level to states and districts” (TESOL Resource Kit, 2016, p. 6). States were mandated to test emergent bilinguals and create their own standards and consequences for low-performing schools as well as EL entry and exit standards. Emergent bilingual subgroups were further divided into “ELs with disabilities” and “long-term learners” vs. “newcomers.” Time limits for a student to

develop proficiency and penalties if a student is classified as EL too long were instituted. Again, there is a call for all students to master academic language, and again no guidance on how to do so. Only now students cannot be slow in their acquisition or their teachers and schools will be punished (TESOL Resource Kit, 2016).

The other thing I have found lacking in the literature is advice on how to make language a source of power, rather than disempowerment for emergent bilinguals. I have come across so many students who entered kindergarten not understanding the words said in their classes. Perhaps these students did not understand the letters others had already mastered or the type of questions asked in the classroom. Maybe their skills did not match what their teachers were emphasizing. They started out behind their classmates in terms of what is valued at school, stayed behind, and became further and further behind as the years passed. By the time I see these students in middle school, they have their strategies in place. Some are quiet and hope no one will notice when they do not understand and just sit in class without working. Others act out rather than admitting ignorance. What I need and hope for is a way for those students to turn around their notions about academic language, so they can strive to use it to facilitate the changes they would like to see in their communities, rather than be defeated by it, for them to come to find language as empowering.

Fairclough (1992) wrote, “Discourse is a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a form of representation” (p.7). I would like my students to share in the power of text for action.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) sheds light on a remedy for both problems. It helped me fill these gaps in materials to aid the learning of academic language, and provided tools to support emergent bilinguals' power through literacy. Systemic Functional Linguistics is based on the work of Halliday (1993, 2014). He looked at how language choices affect meaning at an ideational, interpersonal, and textual level. As Cummins (2014) explained, "SFL brings form and function together by focusing on the linguistic choices made by speakers or writers on the basis of their perception of the particular context, audience and purpose of the communication" (p. 140).

Gebhard (2010) extended this thinking to emergent bilinguals:

From an SFL perspective, teaching academic literacies involves critically apprenticing ELLs to using varieties of *school language*, or *registers*, by exploring how these registers (1) construct ideas (e.g., everyday versus disciplinary conceptions of phenomena and events); (2) manage and organize the flow of information depending on whether interactions take place orally, in writing, or through computer-mediated modes; and (3) enact relationships (e.g., differences of familiarity and status). These three functions, which Halliday calls *ideational*, *textual*, and *interpersonal*, operate simultaneously and offer teachers and students a contextual basis for critically analyzing how language varies.

(p.798)

Teaching emergent bilinguals the tools of SFL, working together to explore the ideational, textual, and interpersonal functions of text, helped my students take command of language choices, rather than be oppressed by them.

Based on Halliday's work, Rose and Martin (2012) used genre-study in the Sydney School, connecting it to literacy instruction. First, students and teachers deconstructed the multiple genres used at school, then they learned to construct similar texts as a group and finally, gradually removed scaffolding until students could create texts individually. Their work was not limited to the basic few genres one commonly sees in ESOL textbooks. The expanse is broad and would apply in many academic contexts.

I used these methods to teach my students to deconstruct and construct arguments to help them get that last piece, that difficult-to-reach whole text comprehension. It is fine to say emergent bilinguals should be reading and authoring dense academic text. To ensure that happens is another challenge. My learning about SFL and teaching my students to analyze text using ideas from SFL provided a key to make that possible. I often feel urgency to help a student understand what he or she needs to know for tomorrow's test or today's homework. Deliberate and well-planned genre study helped me ensure that I did not forsake work to academic language development in order to make other lesson content accessible as quickly as possible.

Looking at the work of other researchers, such as Fairclough (1995) and Gee (2014), who also built on SFL, allowed me to support students' understanding of language as a tool for action. When students look closely at language, drawing on the tools of SFL, they learn to manipulate it as they wish. In his guide to doing discourse analysis, Gee (2014) advised researchers to ask themselves why a person uttered a statement in one way rather than another. I called upon my students to do the same. Kress (2010), in describing multimodal discourse analysis, looked at soap in different bottles and how that changed the viewer's perception of what was inside. Calling students into

this kind of analysis of the texts we shared in class lead to not only higher-level thinking and language awareness, but also the knowledge they too could control language for their own purposes. There are so many possibilities in developing awareness of aspects of language, such as why speakers tend to put verbs in passive voice when their group does something that could be perceived as bad, but will put the verbs in active case when an outside group does something bad, that could promote language proficiency and the empowerment of often disempowered students of academic English. Although my students never learned the names of the researchers or the metalanguage of SFL, they used its tools to step back and look at the word choices, to make their texts more powerful and to break apart texts crafted by others.

Research on the use of SFL in teaching emergent bilinguals is growing. However, most of the studies so far have been conducted by university professors instructing pre-service and in-service teachers. More are going into the classroom (Gebhard, 2011; Gebhard, et. al, 2007; Gebhard, et. al, 2014; O'Hallaron, et.al, 2015). Extremely rare are studies conducted by teachers whose students use SFL-inspired methods<sup>7</sup> (Graham, 2018; Simmons, 2018). The strong voices of the teachers and students need to come into the literature. As emergent bilinguals need academic language in order to achieve academic content goals, their words and discourses need a place in the academic literature as well.

I worked with my students to expand the theory. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) wrote,

The knowledge needed for teachers to teach well and to enhance students' learning opportunities and life chances could not be generated solely by

researchers who were centrally positioned outside of schools and the classroom and imported for implementation and use inside the school. (p. vii)

As a practitioner-researcher and a grassroots advocate for emergent bilinguals who is with them in the classroom every day, I was positioned not only to grow both my personal knowledge to apply to my own practice, but to expand knowledge in the field. I could see how the work affected my students immediately and let them participate in on-the-spot curricular decisions. In the same way, I would like my students to become critics of language, to start looking at literacy as a means of changing what they feel needs to change, and to participate in the creation of a new academic language that includes them. I don't think this would be possible from outside the classroom. I am in a better position to learn from them and with them, because I am so close to them relationally and physically.

Using many tools of SFL, over the course of three and a half months, my students and I analyzed language choices of many kinds. For example, we looked at the connotations and kinds of words and practiced using different modals and moods in different contexts. We talked about why it is important how one starts a sentence and mapped out the flow of information throughout texts. We deconstructed, constructed and challenged arguments of many kinds. Perhaps most importantly, the students then used those tools to question what they felt was unjust and used literacy to work for changes that were important to them. This work will follow our journey.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examined the effects of teaching emergent bilinguals techniques to breakdown, understand and make word choices using the tools of Systemic Functional

Linguistics. I developed a unit on argument based on SFL, taught the lessons in my middle school ESOL classes, revised the lesson plans as student needs became clear, and recorded what happened. The questions that guided my research were:

1. What transformations occur in emergent bilinguals as they critically analyze discourse practices? What patterns of interactions, discourses and stances emerge as salient?
2. In what ways does genre study and critical language awareness support emergent bilinguals' literacy development and mastery of academic language?

I engaged my students in a collaborative process of critically analyzing language practices drawing on the tools of SFL. Together, we deconstructed and constructed texts on their journey to academic language proficiency.

I returned to these data to further unpack the complexities of learning and transformation drawing on the tools of CDA. Like I taught my students, I examined language choices. I studied their work samples from the beginning, middle and end of the year to see how the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions of their writing changed. I transcribed and coded class transcripts, kept a researcher's journal, and took fieldnotes, to discover key themes in our work together. I used discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1996; Gee, 2014; Rogers & Mosley, 2014) to closely examine my own language and that of my students in ESOL class to ascertain what discourses and stances emerged as we analyzed language. From there, I dove more closely into power, choice, and scaffolding for a more delicate data analysis.

### **Delimitations**

Students came from a variety of contexts. They were of different grades and had other lessons for most of the day. Many factors affected their growth in reading and writing, not just our work together.

I have always found it very difficult to balance the demands of teaching and researching. Often the best course for the research and the best course a lesson should take to help students learn diverge. I always tried to choose to facilitate learning if a choice had to be made.

Also, I must note that although my school's total number of emergent bilinguals at the time of the study was around eight percent. In general, U.S. emergent bilinguals tend to cluster and comprise a much higher percent of their schools' populations. The vast majority of U.S. emergent bilinguals are Spanish speakers, but in the intermediate ESOL 3 class which is the focus of this study, only one of the students was a Spanish speaker. This year, eight of the twelve students are Spanish speakers. In beginning ESOL classes at my school, demographics constantly change. During the year of the study Arabic speakers far outnumbered speakers of Spanish at the beginning levels. With different students, I use different materials and lessons. Student use different language in class. During the year of this study, English was the common language of students. This year, with so many Spanish speakers, students switch between Spanish and English often in class. The richness of this was not as present in the year of this research.

### **Terminology**

Though I have no perfect term under which to group these learners, my choices are intentional. Until ESSA, they were called "Limited English Proficient" or "LEP" in

U.S. government publications. I abhor this term as it mirrors the notion held by many that English is the standard by which the speakers of all languages should be measured, emphasizing what the students do not have, rather than their gifts. I will use this term only in quotations.

The classes for such students in my district at the time of writing are called “English for Speakers of Other Languages” or “ESOL.” Again, this term very literally “others” all languages besides English. As it is the official title of the course I teach, I will use the term with reservation with the note that I find it indicative of linguistic hegemony.

The terms “English language learner” or “ELL” and “English learner” or “EL” are commonly used, although EL appears most frequently in government publications. The definition of the term EL varies by state (Education Commission of the States, 2014) and could provide fodder for a separate dissertation. Under ESSA, EL program entrance and exit standards became standardized by state though not across states. The connotation of the terms still lies in what students do not know rather than in their linguistic assets. However, in a way all students are learning English in U.S. schools, so it does not seem quite as offensive to me as LEP or ESOL. I use this term in reference the subgroup noted in ESSA.

The term most closely related to my aspirations for my students is “emergent bilingual” or “EB.” Although my thoughts on this term, pale in comparison to thoughtful, multi-angled discussion of in Garcia’s (2009) article, they are important to my work. I believe all the languages of our students should be fostered and their cultures honored. Emergent bilingual holds within it the notion that the goal of educating multi-lingual and

literate children should be to nurture and grow all their languages. In fact, since I added the “bilinguals” sign to the “ESOL” sign outside my classroom door, I have had multiple conversations with students sharing stories of their many languages with pride.

My reservation regarding the term emergent bilingual lies only in the fact that too few schools are nurturing multi-literacies and multilingualism. In fact, current educational practices and lack of teacher development seem to be fueling misplaced notions that speaking any language other than English would somehow detract from the acquisition of English. I shudder and then push back when I still occasionally hear teachers tell students that they should be speaking English because they are in America. When I still find myself giving lectures on the merits in developing home languages, and given there are still so few bilingual programs, it is hard to see how students will become balanced bilinguals or multilinguals. I will use this term as a recognition of what I feel should be.

### **Significance**

This study will have both practical and theoretical significance. Practically, it serves as a model and method to help emergent bilinguals, a group of students U.S. schools are underserving, to be able to use complex academic texts and become cognizant of ways to manipulate language to match their intention and audience.

Theoretically, even asking teachers about using the tools of SFL to critically engage with texts is still fairly rare. Asking middle school students to do so and recording their process from a teacher perspective is almost unheard of in the existent literature. The voices of teachers and their students need to be heard if we are to understand what may work to push emergent bilinguals to become balanced biliterate adults.

### **Summary**

There is a crisis of academic language in U.S. schools. Language is a gatekeeper to academic success. Emergent bilinguals need strategies and methods, not just to understand words as a vocabulary practice, but in all their complexities and to be fluent in the metafunctions of whole texts of academic discourse. Students need to develop strategies and competencies to turn language from taking away their power into making it a source of developing and crystallizing power. The genre study inspired by Systemic Functional Linguistics, along with critical literacy practices, could provide a key for students like Jose and Hiroshi to comprehend and create those texts and rediscover the power U.S. schools take away. This study includes their discourses and experiences.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

In my years of teaching, I have plodded to a number of realizations. Through this literature review, I share key pieces of my thinking that have framed this practitioner research study. My hope is this reflective review of ideas can aid fellow teachers in their journeys as practitioners and public intellectuals.

The language of dominant genres in school is what Christie (1985) called the “hidden curriculum” (p. 21). Mastery of academic language is necessary to learn and express content knowledge, but teachers do not teach it - even if we want to. Some students are surrounded by academic language from the cradle. Others grow up in environments with linguistic riches much different from that valued by their teachers. This makes access to the curriculum unequal. Systemic Functional Linguistics can make clearer exactly what the language of schools is. It can also equip students to challenge the texts they read, so that one day the languages of our schools may include all those we seek to serve.

### **Inequity in Early Exposure to Academic Language**

Some students learn academic language at home; some do not. This realization solidified as I was sitting in a coffee shop/bookstore in a suburb of Boston the summer after this research. My attention strayed from my reading to a man and a girl of about three sitting at the table next to me. They were reading a book about a boy and a dinosaur who were playing hide and seek. (Unlike later references of the recorded conversations of

my classes which I will cite later, here I have only my memory of the conversation as a record.) It went something like this:

Man: [*Reads text*]

Girl: [*Laughs*] The dinosaur is hiding.

Man: Um hum. That big, green dinosaur is hiding under the sink. How do you think he fit there?

Girl: The big dinosaur is hiding under the sink. He's too big

Man: Do you think he is going to be able to get out of there? Let's see. [*reads another page*]

A few moments later my own son, aged twenty-four at the time, came and sat down with a new book to read. After a couple of moments, he asked me what the word “interlocutor” meant, and we talked about the definition and his book for a while.

Both conversations stuck in my mind, because I had just been to my first SFL conference and had spent several days learning about academic language. The man expanded the girl's original statement about a “dinosaur” into a “big, green dinosaur.” He added the place to where the dinosaur was hiding. He asked the girl to note something that did not quite make sense in the text, how a huge dinosaur could get under a sink. Whether consciously or unconsciously, he was asking his charge to question the author's choices. He ended with asking for a prediction about what will happen later in the text.

When my son asked about the word interlocutor, he probably got more explanation than he wanted. I asked him to look at the first part of the word, “inter,” and we talked how it means between. Then I listed the other loc/loq words that I could recall that had to do with talking, like loquacious and circumlocution. Both the above conversations fostered the kind of language valued in schools. Both elders were giving lessons in academic language.

Not all people are exposed to these kinds of language lessons, and that disadvantages them in U.S. schools. As I mentioned in chapter one, Jose was translating for his family and neighbors, developing these skills from a very early age as the oldest child in his family. Many of my students cook or watch younger siblings far earlier than I and most of their teachers ever imagined possible. U.S. schools are full of teachers who trained their children and were trained to speak and write in this way. Most emergent bilinguals were not. They bring gifts many of their teachers never share. At the same time, many have not been exposed to the linguistic resources valued in schools.

### **The State of Emergent Bilinguals in Schools**

The number of emergent bilinguals (EBs) in schools is increasing, but the U.S. educational system is still not meeting their needs. Emergent bilinguals are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools today (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). While 20% of U.S. school children speak a language other than English at home, approximately 97% of U.S. teachers speak only English (Marx, 2009); 10% or nearly five million children are classified as “English Learners” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020). Though many think emergent bilinguals are primarily from outside the

U.S., they are wrong. Eighty-five percent of pre-kindergarten to fifth grade emergent bilinguals and 62% of sixth to twelfth grade EBs were born in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2018). 79% of teachers are white in a time when only 48% of students are white. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020).

With this tremendous gulf separating students and teachers, it is not surprising that the languages they speak are different. That disadvantages emergent bilinguals. These statistics must be interpreted with caution. Many EBs exit English as an additional language programs long before graduation. However, what is known is grim. Only 67% of emergent bilinguals graduate from high school, compared to the national overall rate of 85% for non-emergent bilinguals. In some states the graduation rate disparity is even worse. For example, in Arizona, 80.2% of non-EB students graduate high school while only 32% of emergent bilinguals graduate. In addition, only 2% of EBs are in gifted programs while the national average is 7.3% (Department of Education, 2019). The schools cannot see the ‘gifts’ of EBs. Schools are run by people who are not like emergent bilinguals. Schools are not meeting their needs.

### **Current Teaching Materials**

Most materials available to U.S. teachers are not specific enough regarding the nature and development of academic English. The phrase “academic English” gets bandied about regularly. What does it mean? Publishing companies and WIDA (formerly World Class Instructional Design and Assessment, now just WIDA) have been telling teachers to create language goals to help students express their content knowledge for years. WIDA is a consortium of 40 state departments of education, the District of

Columbia and federal territories. The WIDA website on its *About WIDA* page says, “Educators trust WIDA tools and resources to support their multilingual learners” (WIDA, 2020, para 1). Number six of the WIDA “Guiding Principles of Language Development” states, “Students use language in functional and communicative ways that vary according to context” (WIDA, 2020, para. 6). However, there are too few examples of language goals on the site, and they were so broad as to have no meaning. They do not adequately explain how language varies in context.

At the 2018 WIDA Conference, I met a staffer working on infusing SFL into WIDA’s publications. However, at the time in of writing in July 2020, the WIDA Standards still are vague. For example, for students at a five on a scale on which six is fully proficient in academic language, called the *Bridging* level, one sixth grade goal in the language of mathematics is, “Elaborate on choices based on rate calculations in real-life situations with partners” (WIDA, 2012, p.32). What language should students be using to elaborate? How is the language of math different than that of other content areas?

The eighth grade Bridging level listening goal is to “predict the evolution of literary characters, themes, and plots” (WIDA, 2012, p.36). Again, with what language elements present? Couldn’t a beginner just draw a comic to do that?

Before WIDA, it was hard to articulate that there are different levels in English language proficiency, and that different types of language are required for different subject areas. Through the CLIMBS training, I could help my colleagues get some idea that there was content-specific language and that there were different levels of English language

proficiency, and the same student might have higher proficiency in one domain like listening than another domain like reading. The WIDA materials also help teachers with ways to express content knowledge at different proficiency levels. However, it was not enough. I needed to add to the information like that given in the table below.

Table 2. 1 Excerpt from WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and Writing

<p>Level 5 – Bridging (<i>The most proficient EBs should be able to use...</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Complex sentences</li> <li>• Organized, cohesive and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of complex grammatical structures matched to purpose</li> <li>• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations.</li> <li>• Words and expressions with precise meaning across content areas</li> </ul>
<p>Level 1 – Entering (<i>Beginning learners should be able to use ...</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words, phrases of chunks of language</li> <li>• Single words used to express ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrase-level grammatical structures</li> <li>• Phrasal patterns associated with familiar social and instructional situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General content-related words</li> <li>• Everyday social and instructional words and expressions</li> </ul>

*Note.* Information in this table The WIDA Performance Definitions Speaking and

Writing, Grades K -12 for level five, Bridging/Advanced and level one,

Entering/Beginning Proficiency (WIDA, 2019, para 2 & para. 6).

Every year when my fellow specialists and I get together to grade writing samples we are puzzled. Trying to match writing samples to proficiency exemplars is quite challenging. How does one really measure the complexity of a sentence? What sentence patterns are characteristic of a given content area? Teachers cannot teach what we do not know.

Content specific vocabulary is relatively easy to identify. If a teacher is working on, say, the water cycle students will need to know words like condensation, evaporation, precipitation, etc. But what about the words to show causation or explain the connection between parts of the cycle. I used to teach my students words like “first,” “next,” “then,” and think that was enough. However, when I looked in their science books, I found that processes were explained using totally different language. The causation was sometimes contained in a clause like “when the water heats” or “as the amount of moisture increases.” Sometimes the connections were in the verbs like “cause” or “lead to.” When I tried to guide my students to more complex sentences, I would teach them about compound, simple and complex sentences. Often, I found they would write page-long sentences containing multiple “ands.” They certainly were writing longer sentences, but not those typical of academic texts.

What is “Organized, cohesive and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas?” What are the stages of writing about the water cycle? I needed the characteristic features of academic writing parsed. WIDA’s guidance just was not enough to guide my students and me in our exploration of academic language. What is the course of English language development? What are the elements of dominant school

genres? SFL theorists, as I will introduce, have broken down the nature of academic writing. Next, I will explain what I know of the basics of SFL in the hope it can fill in some of these gaps for other teachers as it has for me.

### **The Systemic Nature of Language**

Systemic Functional Linguistics, as its name would imply, is about systems and functions. It was developed by Halliday (1985/2014). The term *system* refers to as Christie (2018) put it, “the underlying system of choices in a language a speaker/writer uses to create meaning” (p.4). In every text, whether oral or written, the author makes choices to create meaning.

For example, I recently watched the Women’s World Cup final between the U.S. and the Netherlands. If I were talking to someone about the game, conversation would be different depending upon a vast number of factors. Does the person know about soccer? Should I even use the word “soccer,” or should I use “football”? Should I use technical language or not? Did the person also see the game, or do I have to fill in the details about what happened? Why am I talking about the game? Is it just a recount of what happened, do I want to assert which is the better team, or do I want to drum up a sponsorship for a certain player? Is my conversation partner from the U.S. or from the Netherlands? Underlying each text lie a myriad of choices, most of which are made unconsciously (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

All students and the authors to which they are exposed are making choices. If students and teachers become aware of this, they can create and understand the texts

required in school instead of trying to follow rules that they have never learned. Halliday, the developer SFL, and Matthissen (2014) explained,

Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures. Of course, structure is an essential part of the description; but it is interpreted as the outward form taken by systemic choices, not as the defining characteristic of language. A language is a resource for making meaning and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice. (p.23)

So, for example, students need to be able to use past tense, but that does not happen just by memorizing the spelling of irregular verbs for a test. It means they have to know that if I change from present to past in my story, the time has changed, and I am perhaps remembering an important event that could connect to the message of the story. The structures aid the function. They are not enough in and of themselves.

Inside the big system to which the name refers, are multiple grammatical systems from which authors simultaneously draw to make these meaningful choices. Beneath even the shortest utterance or writing, transitivity, person, mood, tense, number, polarity, and theme choices have been made. Words that could have been chosen were not, because they did not fit the meaning necessary in a given context. All people do this; some have just been more aware of the choices favored in school contexts than others.

Here is a simple example. If I want to say something, I express a mood. Am I asking a question, giving a command, making a wish, or describing a condition or fact? Other choices reflect how sure I am about what I am saying or my relationship to the listener. If the message is a question rather than a statement, is the question is a yes or no question or a WH question? All these choices matter and change given context. Grammar is not just filling in a blank. It is making choices to create meanings and serve the purposes one wants to achieve through language.

Again, why does this matter? Last year, in our ELA class, my eighth graders had to develop questions, interview someone at school, and then write a newspaper article about the school event that person sponsored. Several of them were puzzled, because they had written their minimum number of questions, but they still did not have enough information to write their articles after finishing the interview. They had all yes/no questions, so all they got were yeses and noes. They added WH questions to get longer answers with new information to provide fodder for their articles. We were working on getting them to match their language choices with the function they wished to serve, and we explicitly talked about the function.

Another example can be taken from this study. One of the students, Ravi, in the beginning of the year wrote to the principal, “I would like you to discuss with other teachers and principals about this.” At the end of the year he wrote, “I would be grateful if you consider adding a longer season to these sports.” Note how command-like form of the former seems inappropriate when addressing a person in authority. Though he was

trying to be polite, he was ordering her to act. By the end of the year, his choices more accurately reflected the level of politeness he intended.

### **Language Functions**

Language was developed to serve *functions*. The F in SFL stands for functional. Some might remember the Notional Functional Approach to language teaching of yesteryear when a function meant a specific task like asking the price when buying something in a shop. The functions of SFL are much more expansive, and thus called *metafunctions*. They are the basic human needs for which language evolved. People make different choices in systems, like the one described above, to meet different needs.

Halliday (1985/2014) described three metafunctions: *ideational*, *interpersonal*, and *textual*. Butt, et al. (2000) described their purpose (parentheses mine):

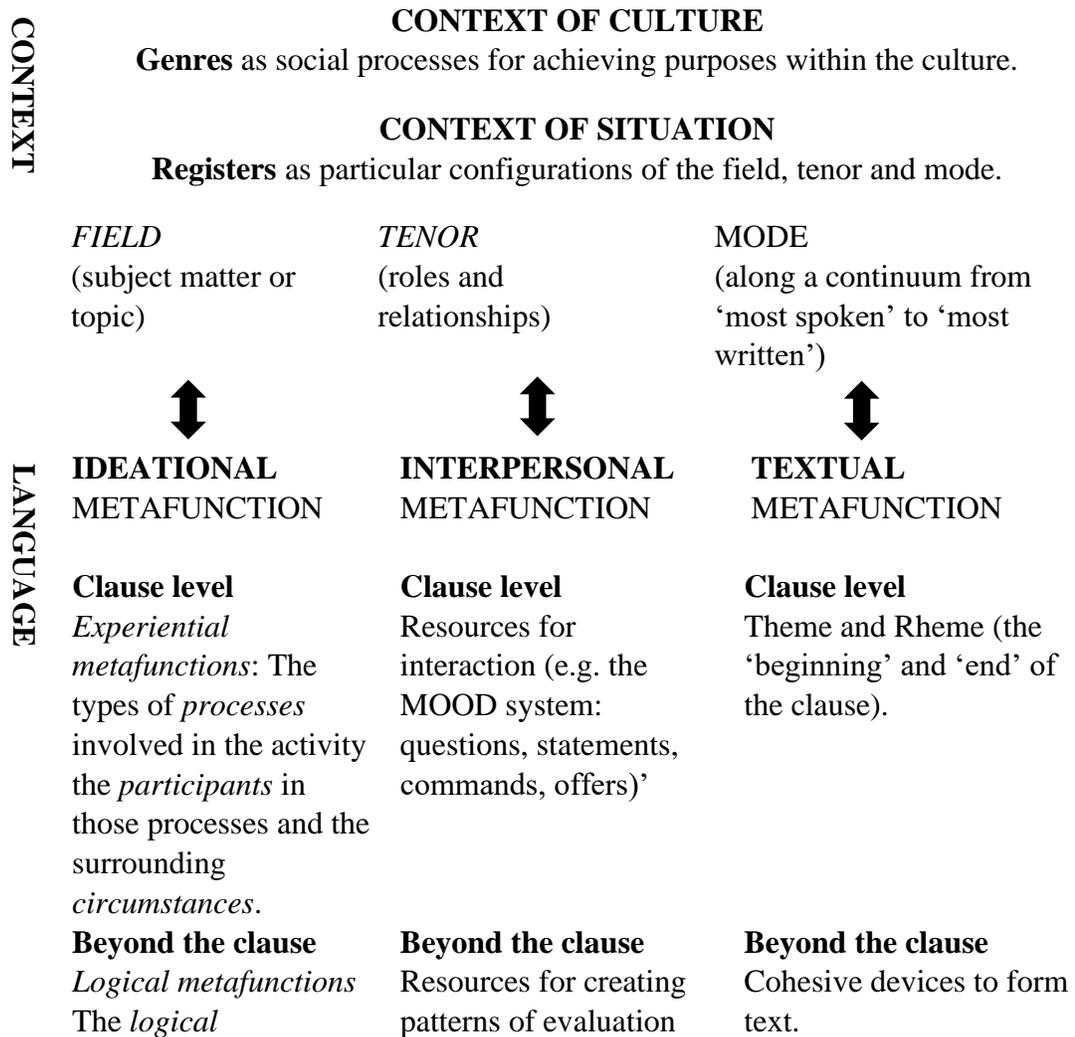
- (ideational) to talk about what is happening, what will happen, and what has happened
  - (interpersonal) to interact and/or to express a point of view
  - (textual) to turn the output of the previous two functions into a coherent whole.
- (p.5)

Understanding even a part of how language serves these functions has helped me determine next steps in developing academic language proficiency and to move from vague ideals to specific language goals. In other words, I am beginning to understand the difference between WIDA's goal of "Organized, cohesive and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas" and what my students are doing. More importantly, my students are too. Because I find the terms interpersonal, ideational and

textual metafunctions more accessible than tenor, field and mode, I have begun to use them with my students. I will use the three metafunctions to analyze student work in the findings chapters.

Christie and Derewianka (2010) put the functional model of language in a concise chart. The following was taken from their excellent resource on the description and stages of academic language development, *School Discourse*.

**Figure 2.1 Derewianka and Christie Chart on Context and Language**



*relationships* between events (e.g. where? when? how? why?) and engagement with the audience.

(Derewianka & Christie, 2010, p.7)

Appendix A contains a list of resources on SFL especially aimed toward teachers. Many researchers have spent their lives furthering the field and going about the business of understanding and describing text. As a teacher and one who works with other teachers, I will share what I know about SFL and genre pedagogy, and how they actually work in the classroom. There are volumes written on the ideas in Christie and Derewianka's (2010) chart.

### **Context**

First, all language occurs within a context, actually within two contexts, one within the other. The *context of culture* describes the discourse community within which the text is located. Derewianka and Jones (2018) elaborated, "language evolves within a context of a certain culture (including beliefs, values, and behaviors) to meet the needs of a culture" (p.7). A culture could be based on nationality, but it could be communities, subcultures or social institutions. In this case a culture could be a soccer team, a group of friends or a school. Different cultures have different needs and thus the language develops to meet those needs.

Perhaps this can be illustrated with another anecdotal sidebar. When my son was perhaps eight or nine, I was shocked to find out that he did not know the word for comb

in Japanese though he already knew so many more Japanese words than I did from his school. When I stepped back, it made perfect sense. In his school community no one was telling him to comb his hair, so in that culture he had no need of that word. In his home culture, whether he brushed his teeth, took a shower and combed his hair was a nightly topic of conversation for a few years. Therefore, at home the words, structures, and discourses surrounding grooming were quite developed. On the other hand, when he moved from a Japanese junior high school to a U.S. high schools, he only had the words, sentences and text structures to describe things like cell division in Japanese and had to relearn those academic genres in English. The language of the school culture is very specialized and needs to be taught. Most of this dissertation is aimed at the language of school cultures. Within the context of culture, lies the context of situation.

The *context of situation* was defined by Derewianka and Jones (2016) as “a specific situation within a culture that gives rise to a particular register” (p.6). One example of the context of culture could be a family. An example of context of situation, could be a child explaining to his mother why a shower is not necessary that evening.

Why is context important? Many students have not been taught the genres of school culture, so they do not have the linguistic awareness they need to succeed in that culture. The essence of the criticality I wish to teach my students lies in exploring the context behind and within language. Freire (1970/2000) wrote, “language is never neutral.” Language is always ideological, never neutral. Fairclough (1992) added that critical language study

highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of. It criticizes mainstream language study for taking conventions and practices at face value, as objects to be described, in a way which obscures their political and ideological investment. (p.7)

The contexts of language are both social and political in nature. Contexts are infused with power relations. School contexts need to stop disempowering emerging bilinguals. Criticality involves examining not rules of language, but how language choices are ripe with social and political context. I want my students to become critics and designers of text rather than its victims.

### **Register**

The register is composed of three elements that make it possible to successfully carry out metafunctions in context. The *register* is the *field*, *tenor* and *mode* of the text. In Christie and Derewianka's (2010) chart above, *field* is the "subject matter or topic" of the text, *tenor* is the "roles and relationships" established by the text, and *mode* is "along a continuum from 'most spoken' to 'most written'" text. If any one part of the register changes, the whole text changes. Staying with the previous shower example, the language a mother would use is likely different from that a child would use because adults generally have more power in parent-young child relationships (tenor). The conversation might flow something like this:

A: It is shower time.

B: Do I have to?

A: You didn't take a shower last night.

It is not hard to figure out the parent is A and the child is B, because of the tenor, the interpersonal relationship played out in the language choices. If a student were writing an essay on wasting water through excessive showering for school, the mode would change from spoken to written and the tenor would change too. A student might write, "The average American spends \_\_\_ minutes each day in the shower using \_\_\_ gallons of water." These changes or choices are key to academic language proficiency. For example, in spoken text, one does not have to make as many connections through words, because there is more context. In speaking one usually connects between clauses, in written text the connection often lies within the clause. When my students are writing page-long sentences connected with multiple "ands," they are producing written text that has the characteristics of spoken text. Awareness of what choices they are making could make them sound more "academic." In the following sections and in my analysis, I will pair these elements of register with the metafunctions they serve in text. Depending on which branch of SFL one follows the terms vary. For purposes of clarity, I will use the terms field, tenor and mode and their respective metafunctions ideational, interpersonal and textual.

### ***Field and the Ideational Metafunction***

The field is the content of the text. Getting specific about some of the elements of field can make vague writing instructions clear. Field is linked to the ideational metafunction. It is sort of like the "what" of the text. Butt et al (2000) put it in terms of

the question, “Who does what to whom under what circumstances?” (p.46). This function serves to relay that message. It can further be divided again into the *experiential* (content) and *logical* (conjunctive) metafunctions. For example, in the sentence, “I went and ate dinner,” the “and” is logical and the rest is experiential.

The parts of the text serving the ideational function are the *process* which involves the verbal group, *participant* which involves a nominal group which *participates* in the process, and *circumstance* surrounding the process. Again, drawing students’ attention to the choice’s authors make to construe experience can give them a broader toolbox for understanding what different kinds of words do to create meaning, rather than just traditional grammatical terms like ‘noun’ or ‘adjective’. For example, processes can be divided as follows:

Table 2. 2 Kinds of Processes

Type of process	Student friendly definition	Examples
Material	Action verbs	run, walk, throw
Mental	Thinking verbs, feeling, sensing, perceiving	know, like, wonder, think
Behavioral	This is in between mental and material process, physiological or psychological behavior (not student friendly, so skip this one usually)	sleep, see
Verbal	Saying and writing verbs	shout, whisper, write
Relational	Relating verbs, not an action, used to describe, usually being verbs or having verbs	A dog <i>is</i> man’s best friend. <i>I am</i> tired

		John <i>has</i> a cat  symbolizes, represents, means
Existential	Showing something exists or is. I usually just group this with relational.	There <i>are</i> three trees.

The reason I choose to write about the kinds of processes as an example of a tool of SFL is that as soon as I learned about them and taught my students about them, we could use them in the classroom. I have heard the expression, “Show. Don’t tell,” in many ELA classrooms I have entered. Telling usually involves the overuse of relational processes. A student can easily take a highlighter and color code processes to see what kind of processes they are using and then make decisions about where to revise. To me, that is a lot more concrete than just telling them to “show.”

Even just sticking with relational verbs, one could model for students how the definitive element that follows a relational verb could also be moved to create sentences packed with more information. For example:

Mount Everest is the highest mountain. It is in Nepal.

Mount Everest, the highest mountain, is in Nepal.

The highest mountain in Nepal, Mount Everest, attracts many visitors to Nepal.

There is much more to the ideational metafunction. Here I would like to give an alternate idea for instruction, because I am worried that I might be giving the impression

that as old grammarians, I am encouraging my students to follow a “correct” pattern of writing. On the contrary, I want my students to have a fuller repertoire of choices.

I also want my students to see how power plays out in writing. This ability can be facilitated through awareness of elements of the field. For example, different kinds of processes have different kinds of participants. Material processes have an actor. Skilled authors sometimes intentionally leave out actors or put the actor later in the sentence. Look at these examples; better yet, have your students look at these examples.

Table 2. 3 Application of Ideational Metafunction

John	made	an error
Actor	Process	Goal

An error	was made	
Goal	Process	(no actor)

The police	shot	Michael Brown.
Actor	Process	Goal

Michael Brown	was shot	
Goal	Process	(no actor)

Does the author not know who made the error in the second example? Is the author trying to avoid blame? In example four is the author trying to avoid controversy. Does the author not know who shot Michael Brown? Is the author assuming everyone knows the

shooter? Choices in language can provoke or avoid strong feelings. None of the examples is wrong, I just want my students to have the power of choice.

Field specific words also fit under the ideational metafunction. There is a common activity for teacher development with those working with emergent bilinguals. Think of a rose. Now describe it as a scientist. Now as a poet. Now as a historian. What different words did you use? Each field has its own language. Students need to develop that technical, field specific language to join the academic discourses.

### ***Tenor and the Interpersonal Metafunction***

The tenor of the text is how the author creates a relationship with the listener or reader. Mistakes in tenor can cause trips to the principal's office. The tenor of the text is how one negotiates relationships, appraises situations, and expresses certainty. It serves the interpersonal metafunction. Butt et al. (2000) defined tenor as, "language to encode interaction, to show how defensible we find our propositions, to encode ideas about obligation and inclination and to express our attitudes" (p.5).

Once again, a person who came across my path will serve as an example, in this case of tenor and the interpersonal metafunction. This morning a construction worker was finishing off the concrete for a new driveway in my yard. He said the following to my husband and me, "The window is open. [long pause] It is dusty out here. [pause] The dust might come in. [long pause] You may want to close the window."

It is very difficult to ask someone who is employing you and about twenty years older to do anything. He could not just say, "Close the window," but he also probably

would have gotten in trouble if our living room became covered in dust. He kept pausing for us to recognize that he wanted us to close the window, but it was early and apparently the morning caffeine had not yet kicked in, so he had to keep trying for us to get the hint. Even in the end, he never told us to close the window, he just suggested it as something we “may want” to do.

The interpersonal function involves the roles and status of the speaker and listener or the writer and reader. Are they intimate or strangers? Is the conversation formal or causal? Language choices are made according to the nature of that relationship. These choices include modality and modulation, which Christie (2018) defined as “the degree of probability or usuality” and “degrees of obligation” (conference handout). The mood: whether we are commanding, stating information, or asking a question, also has a huge effect on tenor. If say, students were fighting, I could use high modality, probability and a command saying something like, “You MUST stop now!” I could ask a family member to do me a favor by using medium modality and a question instead of a command like, “Could you close the window while you are over there?” This morning’s construction worker was using low modality.

I often hear my students make tenor choices that get them in trouble at school. In the unit I will describe in later chapters, I come back to the interpersonal function and tenor in our class activities. If my students give a command to a teacher or administrator or say the teacher “can’t” do something or “has to” do something, I want those students to know the role they are creating for themselves vis a vis that language. In the protest

unit, the subject of Chapter 5, students discussed such choices in tenor regarding how they should write to President Trump.

### ***Mode and the Textual Metafunction***

The ***mode*** is the channel of communication that people use to make our meanings known. As student fluency in academic text develops, they have to learn the characteristics of the written mode. According to Butt et al. (2000), the third or ***textual metafunction*** “uses language to organize our experiential, logical and interpersonal meanings into a coherent and, in the case of written and spoken language, linear whole” (p.6). The textual metafunction has to do with the organized flow of information through a text. It is the structure the author puts in place to express themselves coherently.

The part of the register serving the textual metafunction is the mode. Derewianka & Jones (2018) call the mode “channel of communication being used in a particular situation” (p.330) and “channel of communication / organizing coherent texts” (p.326). Young children start with spoken text. In spoken text, the conversations move quickly; authors skip around to various topics. One can ask for repetition or clarification if things get too fuzzy.

In written text, subjects are more abstract, and clarity must come from text clues. Have you ever had a student who assumes the reader understands great bits of information that he or she has never explained? This is the student who throws in pronouns without referents. There may be thirty its, but the reader is never quite sure what “it” is. That student has only to better understand the textual metafunction. Perhaps first an author writes, “an old, red truck.” Then it becomes an “it.” Then it might be a

“gas-guzzling monster.” Students can take out highlighters and draw lines to follow a word or subject throughout a text. It is also important for students to see where lines of connection break down in the text.

One of the few other practitioner researchers in SFL, Graham (2018), wrote about her students’ work. What she relayed them saying captured an important part of the textual metafunction. They critiqued “how the paragraphs talk to one another.” That could be expanded to saying the textual metafunction is how all parts of the text talk to one another to communicate human experience and relationships.

Topics also need to be developed in the text. When working with the textual metafunction, theme and rheme become quite important. The *theme* is what comes at the beginning of a sentence, or the information that the author assumes is already known. Christie and Derewianka (2010) call it “a cue to the reader: ‘This is what I’m talking about’” (p.20). The *rheme* is the new information.

<i>Theme</i> An old, red truck	<i>Rheme</i> showed up at Mary’s house.
<i>Theme</i> It	<i>Rheme</i> was a present from her grandpa
<i>Theme</i> He	<i>Rheme</i> wanted her to be able to visit him

Students need to be able to assess whether the information flow is sensible, whether there any missing pieces. Author assumptions about common knowledge that is

not so common cause meaning to get lost for students of academic language. This affects students both when they create and when they read text.

In addition, students need to look at what the author places in the theme position. If it is not the subject, that is called a *marked theme* and the author put it there for a reason. For example, instead of starting with the truck in the sentences above, I could have set up a scene, by starting with the words “On a cold winter’s morning,” or hinted at a coming conflict by using “Without her parents’ knowledge.” Choices about how sentences begin, what is the marked theme position, change the emphasis.

The typical stages of the dominant school genres have also been studied and you will see our class work breaking down the parts of arguments in the Chapter 4. The stages of genres also fall under the textual metafunction.

### **Genre Studies**

There are dominant forms of writing in schools, and their structure and language elements are not a mystery. They have been broken down and analyzed. Members of the Sydney School, beginning with students of Halliday at the University of Sydney, began to design a way of teaching writing so that every student could meet the writing demands of schools. They looked at the privileged school genres, the language of textbooks and written assignments to study the structure and language elements.

According to Rose & Martin (2012), *genre* is a “staged goal-oriented social process” (p.1). In 2001, Martin further described genre as “how you accomplish things, on a day-to-day basis, in a culturally specific way” (in Humphrey, 2017, p.5). The genre

of SFL are similar to what I learned as “text structures” but more descriptive and specific.

The *stages* are the structural elements required for a text to be included in that genre. For example, if you do not have a problem (complication) in your narrative, it is not a narrative.

These genres are used all the time in school but are seldom taught. I have begun to learn what academic language is, how to break down the parts of common school genre, so other teachers can too. Here is a list of the dominant genres in schools from Rose & Martin (2012).

Table 2. 4 Rose & Martin List of genre, Purpose and Stage, and Researcher Example

	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Stages</b>	<b>Researcher example</b>
<b>Stories</b>	Recount	Recounting events	Orientation Record of events	<i>Write what you did last weekend.</i>
	Narrative	Resolving a complication in a story	Orientation Complication Resolution	<i>Write about a time you faced a challenge and how you solved your problem.</i>
	Exemplum	Judging a character or behavior in a story	Orientation Incident Interpretation	<i>In Lions of Little Rock, do you think Marlee was a good friend to Liz? Use text evidence to support your answer.</i>
	Anecdote	Sharing an emotional reaction in a story	Orientation Remarkable event Reaction	<i>Write about your best or worst day ever.</i>
<b>Histories</b>	Autobiographical recount	recording life events	Orientation Record of stages	<i>Write your autobiography.</i>

	Biographical I recount	recounting life stages	Orientation Record of stages	<i>Write a biography of one of the Little Rock Nine.</i>
	Historical recount	recounting historical events	Background Record of stages	<i>Describe the events in Battle of Gettysburg?</i>
	Historical account	explaining historical events	Background Record of stages	<i>Describe the series of events that led to the tragic loss of life on The Titanic?</i>
	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Stages</b>	<b>Researcher example</b>
Explanations	Sequential explanations	explaining a sequence	Phenomenon Explanation	<i>What are the stages of the water cycle?</i>
	Conditional explanations	alternative causes and effects	Phenomenon Explanation	<i>What would happen if global warming, continues at its current pace?</i>
	Factorial explanations	explaining multiple causes	Phenomenon: outcome Explanation: factors	<i>Explain the causes of The U.S. Civil War</i>
	Consequenti al explanations	explaining multiple effects	Phenomenon: cause Explanation: consequence	<i>What are the effects of the sale of cocoa beans on the people of the Ivory Coast?</i>
Procedures	Procedure	how to do experiments and observations	Purpose Equipment Steps	<i>Design a science experiment to test Newton's first law.</i>
	Procedural recount	recounting experiments and observations	Purpose Method Results	<i>How did you solve the math problem?</i>

Reports	Descriptive reports	classifying a describing a phenomenon	Classification Description	<i>Write a report about an endangered animal.</i>
	Classifying report	classifying and describing types of phenomena	Classification Description: types	<i>Compare weight and mass. Compare a civil rights movement of the past with a current social justice movement.</i>
	Compositional report	describing parts of a whole	Classification Description: parts	<i>What are the parts of a food web?</i>
	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Stages</b>	<b>Researcher example</b>
Arguments	Exposition	arguing for a point of view	Thesis Arguments Reiteration	<i>Should middle schoolers have recess?</i>
	Discussion	discussing two or more points of view	Issue Sides Resolution	<i>Discuss the pros and cons of teacher strikes.</i>
Text Responses	Review	Evaluating a literary visual or musical text	Context Description of text Judgement	<i>Book review</i>
	Interpretation	Interpreting the message of a text	Evaluation Synopsis of text Reaffirmation	<i>Look at this picture from a newspaper published during the U.S. Revolution. Do you think it was in an American or English newspaper? Why?</i>
	Critical response	Challenging the message of a text	Evaluation Deconstruction Challenge	<i>This text was taken from a history book in 1943. Do you think it fairly portrays Japanese Americans?</i>

*Note.* The first three columns were taken from Rose & Martin (2012,p.130). The examples in italics are mine

As they develop academic language proficiency, student texts gradually move from the general to the specialized. Here are a couple of great charts on the spectrum of language describing stages of development toward proficiency in written, academic text. The first is from the California English Language Development Standards (2012).

**Figure 2.2 California English Language Develop Standards: Everyday v. Academic Registers**

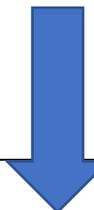
Everyday English Registers	Academic English Registers
"Polluting the air is wrong, and I think people should really stop polluting."	"Although many countries are addressing pollution, environmental degradation continues to create devastating human health problems each year."
<i>Register:</i> More typical of spoken (informal) English	<i>Register:</i> More typical of written (formal) English
<i>Background knowledge:</i> More typical of everyday interactions about common-sense things in the world	<i>Background knowledge:</i> Specialized or content-rich knowledge about topics, particularly developed through school experiences and wide reading
<i>Vocabulary:</i> Fewer general academic and domain-specific words (pollute, pollution)	<i>Vocabulary:</i> More general academic words (address, although, devastating) and domain-specific words/phrases (environmental degradation, pollution)
<i>Sentence structure:</i> Compound sentence	<i>Sentence structure:</i> Complex sentence
<i>Clauses:</i> Two independent clauses connected with a coordinating conjunction (and)	<i>Clauses:</i> One independent clause and one dependent clause connected with a subordinating conjunction (although) to show concession

(California State Board of Education, English Language Development Standards, 2012, p.168)

The above table shows some of the differences between written and spoken language in broad terms. The samples give a feel for the kind of text typical of both every day and academic English.

Next is table is an adaptation of Christie and Derewianka’s (2010, 2018) charts on the development of academic language moving from beginning to advanced. Follow the stages of language development as you move down the chart.

Table 2. 5 Adaptation of Christie & Derewianka on the Development of Academic Language

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple grammar and basic literacy tools</li> <li>• Simple ‘commonsense experience</li> <li>• Limited attitude</li> </ul>	Spoken mode	<p><b>CONGRUENT GRAMMAR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbs express doings</li> <li>• Nouns identify things, phenomena, people</li> <li>• Conjunctions make connections between clauses</li> <li>• Adjectives describe</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar of written language extended</li> <li>• Commonsense experience elaborated</li> <li>• Attitude enhanced</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar of abstraction emerges, ‘uncommonsense’ experience</li> <li>• Attitude and opinion extended</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar of abstraction, (For example, “This lack of plants may be one of the sources of the lack of stability in the creek bank and the large amount of erosion,” instead of “Because there aren’t many plants the creek bank is very stable and there is a lot of erosion”p.26)</li> <li>• consolidated: judgement, opinion, attitudes, values expressed (as in italicized examples <i>plagues of disease-carrying flies</i>, <i>Winters were cold and muddy</i>. Hygiene</li> </ul>	Written mode	<p><b>INCONGRUENT GRAMMAR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergence of nominal group (replace ‘there aren’t many plants’ with ‘lack of plants’ The nominal group now serves the function of the verb)</li> <li>• Loss of conjunction (we lose the ‘because’)</li> </ul> <p>Re-expression of conjunction in verb (be a source)</p>

<p>conditions were <i>abominable, toilets were open pits</i>” p.19.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘uncommonsense’ experience foregrounded</li> </ul>		
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Note. This adaptation of Christie and Derewianka’s (2010, 2018) charts the development of academic language. Their examples in parentheses were not included in the original chart (Christie and Derewianka, 2010, p. 218).

The aforementioned researchers have taken SFL and used it to work to break down the dominant genres in schools. Through their efforts, students can be taught genres rather than be expected to magically absorb them. The teaching strategies that are designed to teach students to write in these dominant genres became known as ‘genre-based pedagogy’ (Rose & Martin, 2012). The method to teach genre, using the tools of SFL, is called the ‘teaching and learning cycle’ (TLC).

In later chapters, I will show how I used genre theory and SFL frameworks to guide me, and then put them into practice with my students— analyzing texts, choices, functions. I moved from practice to theory and theory to practice; helping my students to develop theories about how texts and language work. I attempted to ground the work in the contexts of my students, organically and cyclically. As I was practicing these ideas, so were they. It was not as if they had to master the terminology and then practice by using rote, formulaic grammar. I wanted them to see the choices in language.

### **The Sociocultural Nature of Language**

Children need modelling from their peers and adults to learn. Children learn in a sociocultural context, so learning is not just contingent on that child’s developmental stage. Learning occurs with the help of other people. Vygotsky (1978) wrote,

Every function in a child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level; first *between* people (*interpsychological*) and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. (p.57)

What a child can do independently is different than what they can do with someone's help. For example, a parent does not usually just point at a bike and say, "Go to it." Depending on the child, the parent might have to steady the bike with a hand until the child can do it by themselves. Then the training wheels or hands are gradually removed, and the child is able to ride.

That difference between what a child can do independently and what the same child can do with a peer or adult more skilled in that area is what Vygotsky (1978) called the *Zone of Proximal Development*. Vygotsky defined it as, "The distance between the actual developmental as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Children need to have the language of school scaffolded. It would appear unreasonable for a teacher to expect a child to master long division without going through problems step by step, talking through different methods, breaking them down, and understanding why one should want to divide anything in the first place. The language of math and other subjects requires the same care. Here is an example of a parent of a three-

year-old scaffolding language, from the work of Painter (1966, p. 65 in Rose & Martin 2012):

(Mother asks Stephen if he knows the word dog, which is in the book they are looking at)

Stephen: No

Mother: It's an animal

Stephen: Rabbit?

Mother: No, it's 'dog'

Stephen: Dog's not an animal!

Mother: Yes, it is.

Stephen: It's, it's just a dog.

Mother: Yes, but dogs are animals.

Stephen: No, they aren't.

Mother: Well, what's an animal then?

Stephen: Um (?) a giraffe's an animal.

Mother: Oh, I see, you think animals is only for zoo animals.

Stephen: Yeh

Mother: Dogs are animals too, they're tame animals. And cats, cats are animals too. Did you know

Hal [Chipping in]: And people, we're animals.

Stephen: We're not.

(p. 87)

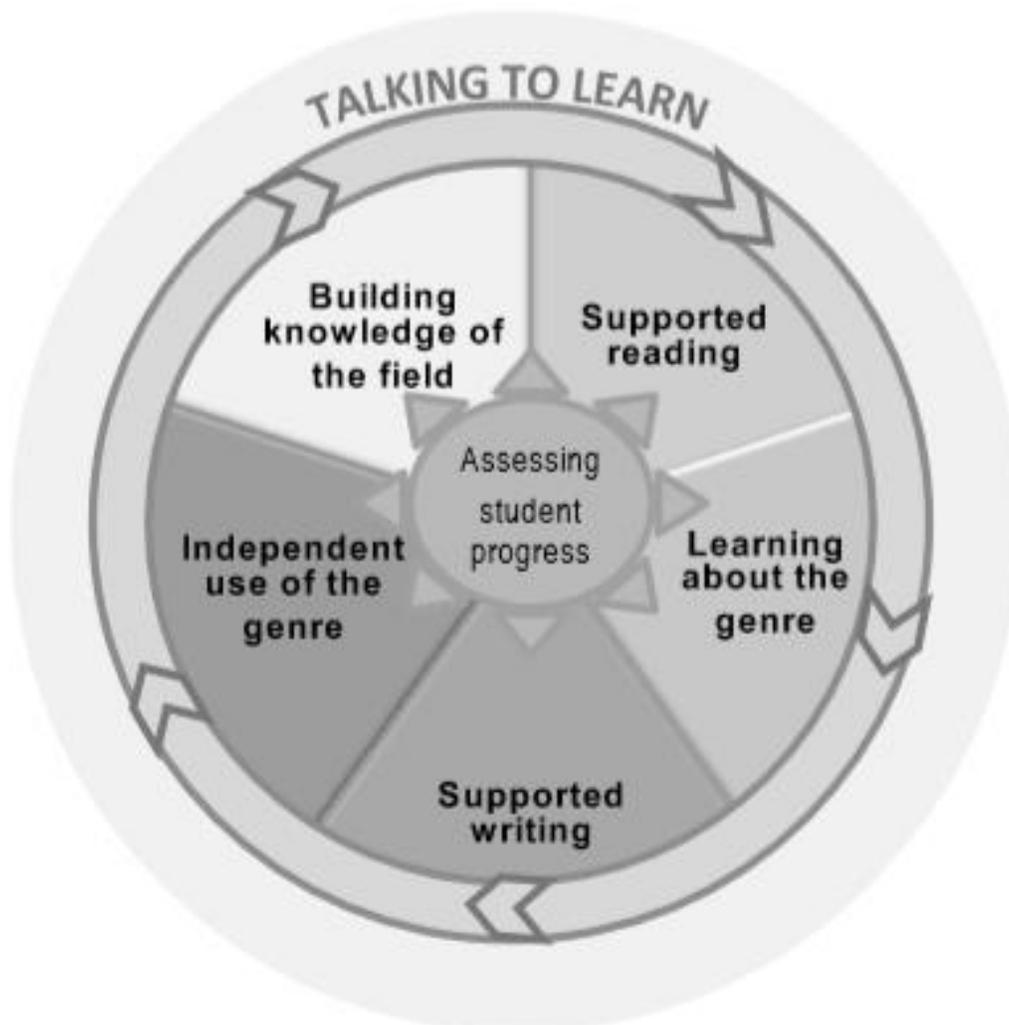
When Stephen goes to school, he will have to classify objects into groups. Every year my sixth graders study living versus non-living things and have to answer essay

questions about why one thing is living and another is not. At age three, Stephen's mother is prepping him for such a task. His brother even jumped into the conversation to add a broader meaning to the category of animals.

### **The Teaching and Learning Cycle**

The *Teaching and Learning Cycle, TLC*, is a teaching framework to scaffold knowledge of curricular areas AND the language and literacy in those areas. Literacy no longer has to be what Christie (1985) called "the hidden curriculum" (p.1).

The first TLC model was developed by Rothery (1994) and Martin (1986). The following is an illustration of the cycle described by Derewianka and Jones (2016).

**Figure 2. 3 The Teaching and Learning Cycle**

(p.52)

The TLC has five stages and gradually moves from teacher-led activities to independent student work. As in the examples of language development earlier, much of the scaffolding is done through talk. In stage one, *building field*, students connect to and grow knowledge of the subject they are studying. This is often through spoken language. This could involve videos, guest speakers, experiments, or interactive activities. Students,

especially those with little prior experience need interactive experiences and opportunities to talk to become experts in the field of study. Returning to context, not all students share the same background as their teachers. Emergent bilinguals have varied experiences to share, but they do not all necessary know who, say, Benjamin Franklin is, and many have not had exposure to much historical text. Making connections between what students know and will learn is vital.

The next stage is called *supported reading*. In this stage, students read texts chosen by the teacher in the field of study. At first the reading is done as a group with the teacher guiding the class through strategy work in a field-related text. For example, back to the water cycle example, students could read about the water cycle while discussing and practicing how to use diagrams to help understand the text. Students move from group reading, to small group reading aimed at a certain need, and then to individual reading.

In the third stage, ‘modelling’ or ‘*deconstruction*,’ the teacher selects a text that has all the stages indicative of the genre being studied and projects it up in front of the class. Before this happens, the teacher must study the stages and language features indicative of the text. I will discuss what I was looking for in the argument genre later in this report. Derewianka and Jones (2016), Brisk (2015), Christie and Derewianka (2010) and Rose and Martin (2012) can help teachers dissect the language features and stages in various genre. Hopefully, my experiences noted later will help illustrate how this can work. Just because teachers can write in those genre does not mean that we can break them apart enough to explain.

At this stage, students need words to talk about the language features or a metalanguage. Derewianka and Jones (2016) asserted, “[s]uch a metalanguage continuity throughout school and across contexts as well as being meaningful to the students” (p.61). To foreshadow an example, my students and I developed an overall graphic organizer for the structure of the text. We did not complete the deconstruction in one setting; for example, we just did the introduction paragraph the first day. Another day, we went to the body paragraphs. On other days, we looked at words that showed appraisal. We developed a common language to point out what we found as the necessary parts of an argument.

The fourth stage is *joint construction*. As a group, the students write a text with the teacher’s guidance. The students volunteer, and the teacher pushes them to fine tune. For example, if a student said that, “homework is good,” the teacher might ask the class to think of more precise word than “good.” Together students think through how to design a text in the genre. Again, in this stage, the teacher could create small groups to meet individual needs.

Finally, in *independent use of genre*, students create their own texts in the genre. Using the graphic organizers and language points the class has already noted in the deconstruction stage is important. Teachers should give feedback based on the explicit goals for that genre. Schleppegrell (2004) described the current situation, “Learning in school is done primarily through language, yet the language of school tasks is seldom explicitly discussed or taught in schools” (p.19). The TLC makes what it is expected explicit; it is a framework to actually teach the language students use in school.

Honestly, I did not know as much about the TLC when I conducted the research noted in later chapters. In looking at my field notes, I found I did it anyway. I think cycles like this are common in teaching. Teachers just have to do what we have been doing in other content areas for language and become more aware of the elements of the dominant school genres.

### **Pushing Back Against Academic Language**

Just learning the dominant school genres is not enough. Students and teachers need to learn to push against texts, to question, and recreate them to facilitate change.

When my son was a toddler, I remember holding his hand on the way into the post office in Fukuyama, Japan. He whispered to me that I should not speak English out in public, because if I did people would know I was not Japanese. At the time, it made me laugh, because I am blondish and biggish, totally unlike what anyone would mistake for one of Japanese descent. It also made me sad. A three-year-old was telling me that my language, my way of being (Gee, 2014) was an object of shame.

I struggle with the fear that my teaching the dominate, school genres could be making my students feel like I did that day. I fear my students have it much worse, because many of them did not grow up in white privilege, economic privilege, or surrounded with all those privileges I was too ignorant to question. Is it okay to be just another teacher inflicting her cultural expectations on them as if that were the natural way of things?

As a teacher, I wonder what exactly academic language should be. Why is it better to be the student whose parents read to them and asked them questions mimicking what they will hear in school? Is that more valuable than say, taking care of a sibling? Playing outside? Because I have learned about the *macrogenre* of science reports which is a combination of genres, is that how science reports always must be? Is nominalization really all that great? Do all my students have to write like me? By teaching students the way things *are*, am I taking away the chance to make schools more reflective of all the students they serve? Apparently, I am not alone in this struggle. Janks (2010) described this 'access paradox,'

How does one provide access to dominant forms, while at the same time valuing and promoting the diverse languages and literacies of our students and in the broader society? If we provide students with access to dominant forms, this contributes to maintaining their dominance. If, on the other hand, we deny students access, we perpetuate their marginalisation in a society that continues to recognise the value and importance of these forms. (p.24)

Some criticize genre pedagogy, because through teaching the dominant school genres, they say that genre instruction reinforces the very dominance of those structures. Luke (1996), voiced this,

A salient criticism of the "genre model" is that its emphasis on the direct transmission of text types does not necessarily lead on to a critical reappraisal of that disciplinary corpus, its field or its related institutions, but rather may lend itself to an uncritical reproduction of discipline. (p. 314)

Every year I have students who have been called slow because they do not write or speak as expected in school. Worse yet, they often begin to think they are “dumb” or they “can’t do it.” To hide this, perhaps they keep their heads down in class. Perhaps they act out. Students are getting tested on their language skills every day at school. I cannot help but make salient that curriculum.

But is this as much of a binary as some might suggest? Luke said that genre study does not “necessarily” lead to a critical stance toward text. I found that while my students were analyzing text, they could and should take the process one step further to critical literacy. In fact, it was my interest in critical literacy and critical discourse analysis that led me to SFL.

I face the access paradox in two ways. One way is to think the alternative is worse. Children are being judged as lesser than and have been denied learning opportunities, because they have not had access to these forms in the past. If these forms are expected anyway, then I should teach them and help their other instructors realize they need to be taught.

At the same time, I should not just teach these scholars to understand the dominant forms, I should teach them to be critics of the elements of those forms, so they can see how power plays out in text, and then eventually harness that power in their own writing. I want them to understand that no text is neutral. As my students and I look at word choice, we talk about why authors have made the choices in the text. We talk about the choices they can make to use their written and spoken text to change what they think needs changing, to fight the fights that are important to them.

I took the argumentative genre as my study's focus, not only because it is one of the most privileged genres in middle school, but because it is a great place to see how authors can change their world through literacy. In argumentative writing, audience is quite important. One tries to manipulate the reader. What better place to start to show learners the power in their words?

I own it. I am teaching students my language with not nearly enough attention to their languages and their ways, particularly in the year of the study when my students did not have a common language of strength besides English. I just hope that by doing so, they can graduate high school, and then they can be the ones to decide what gets taught in schools. By taking their analysis one step further, perhaps we can continue to create more and more space for their cultural assets. In their final project, each chose an issue connected to something they listed as a piece of their identity. Perhaps that is a start.

### **Critical Literacy**

My ultimate goal is for students to use language and literacy to change what they think needs changing. Students need to be critically aware to be able to look at the power in text and to use it.

Rogers and Wetzel (2014) wrote, "Critical literacy refers to approaches to literacy education that seek to both disrupt unjust texts and social practices and use literacy to reimagine and redesign new possibilities" (p. ix). Critical literacy asks students to investigate text choices, and examine how those choices show and maintain power, and how they and others use literacy to create and change their worlds. Foucault (1984) put it, "Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but it

is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized” (p.110).

Much of the work on critical literacy began with Freire (1976), a Brazilian educator and philosopher. He rejected the *banking model* which positions students as mere depositories of information to be filled by their teachers. Freire wrote of a *liberating* education which “consists in acts of cognition, not transferals of information” (p.60). In literacy, he saw a chance for liberation. His ideas about *problem-posing* education reflect the essence of critical literacy.

Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves the constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and critical intervention in reality (p.62).

There is nothing liberatory in the current practices of working with the dominant genres in school. Students are just supposed to know them. They are seldom deconstructed, examined, or challenged.

Freire’s call to consciousness could perhaps be answered in another branch of SFL. Just as genre pedagogy came from Halliday’s ground-breaking work on SFL, so did critical discourse analysis (Foucault, 1984; Fairclough, 1990; Janks, 2010). Critical discourse analysis is explicitly political. Fairclough (1996) saw the need for students to develop critical awareness, saying that critical language study

highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of. It criticizes mainstream language study for taking conventions and practices at face value, as objects to be described, in a way which obscures their political and ideological investment. (p.7)

I attempted to intertwine ideas of critical literacy and genre pedagogy. The TLC is all about asking students to look at language choices. An argument is no longer just a paper to write, but a series of choices designed to make meaning. My class chose topics central to them, areas of their worlds they wished to change. In class discussions, I attempted to engage with my students in the “process of naming and renaming the world, seeing its patterns, designs, and complexities, and developing the capacity to redesign and reshape it,” as Luke (2012, p.9) called critical literacy.

Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) asserted that studying language and its functions,

helps students see written texts as constructs that can be discussed in quite precise and explicit ways and that can therefore be analysed, compared, criticised, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Awareness of what writers have chosen to include, as well as what they have chosen to exclude, assists students in focusing on the kinds of assumptions that writers make and how, as readers, they are positioned by these assumptions. (p.541)

## **My Study**

Since people much smarter than I have been working on how to break down and teach the dominant discourses of schools for so long, I sometimes wonder if there is anything I can add to the conversation. What follows are my ideas on what I can bring to the discussion.

First, even though these ideas seem so obvious, not very many people in the U.S. have even heard of SFL or genre pedagogy. Even in Australia, where the Sydney School started, successful programs have lost funding. Language needs to be taught. These ideas need talking about.

The books and articles that are available are very seldom written by teachers. (There are some wonderful ones. Remember to look in the teacher reference list in Appendix A.) A basic tenet of SFL is that language occurs within a context. Who can better understand the classroom context than the teacher and students? Their/Our thoughts and words need to be shared. At academic conferences, there is sometimes the feeling that all knowledge must come from outside: we want teachers to do this, or if teachers would only get it. I would assert that teachers are in many ways better positioned to develop classroom practice. We are there, and we can get to know our students and ask them their needs. We can share our own thoughts and the words of our students as they invite us into their worlds. I attempted to create a picture of our class, using their words, as we tried out some of these ideas.

Finally, in the pages of this dissertation, I will share my discoveries of how critical literacy and genre pedagogy work together. I am interested, foremost, in my students

finding power in text after many of them had been defeated by it for so long. I hope the educators who read this can learn from my experience to unhide the hidden curriculum of language and help their students become its master.

In Chapter 3, I will explore the design and rationale behind my research. You will meet my students and me and learn about our school. My data sources and methods of analysis will be explained along with the study's limitations and measures to ensure trustworthiness.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

My students are powerful. However, as discussed in the previous chapters, schools often chip away at the power, bit by bit, day by day, by testing them on language that they have never been taught. Some children have been primed with bits and pieces of academic genres through interactions with caretakers throughout their lives. Since most teachers and their children are among those who have been exposed to language valued in schools throughout their lives, they take that knowledge as innate. Those whose experiences do not match that pattern are considered lacking. They are not lacking. Teachers and students need to explore the nature of academic language.

To improve my teaching practice, so that students like mine would become more empowered with knowledge of the academic discourses of middle school rather than disempowered by them, I designed this practitioner research study. I used a combination of SFL and critical discourse analysis tools to answer the following questions: 1.) What transformations occur in emergent bilinguals as they critically analyze discourse practices? What patterns of interactions, discourses and stances emerge as salient? 2.) In what ways can this critical language awareness support their literacy, development, and mastery of academic language?

This chapter begins with the research design and rationale. I will then introduce my school, my ESOL class, the individual students, and then myself. My data collection procedures and method of analysis will follow. I will discuss the measures I took toward trustworthiness and rigor, and then finally the limitations of the study.

## **Research Design**

### ***Practitioner Research***

This is a practitioner research study. I studied the work and transformations that occurred within my own class of emergent bilinguals. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) called practitioners “deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as a part of practice itself” (p.2).

The voice of the practitioner-researcher is vital and still too rare. There are exceptions and these examples have informed and inspired my work as a practitioner researcher. Vasquez (2003), herself an immigrant, taught her pre-kindergarten class to discuss and challenge the texts in their school with a critical lens. The 3 to 5-year-olds not only dealt with topics such as the environment, gender, and media, they also helped direct the flow of the class. For example, while the students were talking about the rainforest, they noticed how boys and girls were treated differently in a picture book that they read. That led to their work on gender. She covered her classroom walls with the class’s work to create an audit trail, a tool for students not only to see what they had done, but to circle back and make connection and deepen their critical work. Her pre-school class became so critically aware that by the end of the year they were able to school incoming students on the power of words. They wrote, “You should know that McDonalds and the newspaper and books and schools can make you think their way” (Vasquez, 2003, p.26).

Christensen (2000) attempted to help her high school students “use words as a passage into interrogating society” (p. vii). She drew on stories from her own life and

those of her students not just to outline challenging, social justice lessons, but to illustrate the power of students connecting to each other and their world through literacy. She shared the beautiful work of her students alongside stories of other teachers' disparaging remarks regarding those same students.

Campano (2007) recorded his own story along with those some of his fifth grade immigrant students, not only to dispel the deficit-based notions of immigrants and migrants, but to show how connecting to and honoring the lives of students outside the classroom as a means of empowerment, self-determination, and growth.

Finally, before writing up my research, I found the work of two other practitioner researchers whose students use ideas from SFL, Graham (2018) and Simmons (2018). Looking at Graham's work teaching her seventh grade English class tools of SFL as they wrote about the plight of bats helped me think of ways that I could describe what happened in my class. Simmons (2018) taught her AP English students about elements of the interpersonal metafunction to examine author biases to facilitate their critical awareness. Through my work, I wanted to join the voices of other practitioner researchers.

Practitioner research lends itself to both critique of current systems and to involving students as fellow researchers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) explained that subject matter knowledge is fluid and dynamic, constructed in the interactions of all participants within learning communities; part of what it means to learn subject matter, then is to critique its meanings and sources, including whose knowledge is left out of the subject matter. (p.2)

The design of the research and teaching was emergent and followed the students' needs. As this project unfolded, my students and I learned about language and power together. More specifically, the design of my practitioner research study included several phases that spanned from part of January through May with a few weeks lost to standardized testing and end of the year activities. It included four series of lessons: consumerism, protest, debate, and an independent project. (See Table 3.1 below which includes a table of the argument unit including the four lesson sequences and side by side description of the data generated during each part of the unit.)

In this study, I was a teacher, a participant, and a researcher. As a teacher, I not only saw these students for their 90-minute ESOL class, but designed their schedules, sometimes helped them access curriculum in their other classes, and was the go-to person when they needed help with many things from academics, to understanding how to fill out a form, to finding black socks for the choir concert or arranging an interpreter and ride for their parents for parent-teacher conferences.

As a researcher, I was thrilled to have time to dive more deeply into the nature of academic language and explore choices to express power in language. The research did not eliminate the tightrope walk of balancing what students need to do today's assignments and demands to develop skills and awareness which would make them independent. However, it forced me to take a wider view of what I did in the classroom. As a participant, I was changing and adapting to a view of language as choices, not prescriptions. When I studied grammar, it involved filling in the "right" answer in the "right" box. Now I was learning there are a whole range of answers, depending on the

meaning. I was learning about the functions of language as the students learned. The teaching and research activities were interconnected and cyclical in nature. By this, I mean the research informed how I taught. Then the teaching and what the students shared led me to new insights and challenges. These insights led me to new avenues in my research.

Appendix B is a timeline that illustrates the connected research and teaching activities. Here, I narrate the student-led and emergent nature of this research design as it unfolded across the unit. At the beginning of the year, most ESOL 3 students walk into my class convinced that they hate reading and writing. The class that participated in this project was no different. In August and September, I focus on language tasks in which students can learn about each other to create a safe community of scholars where it is easier to take risks. As you will read later, students ranged in age from 11 to 14 and had widely varying academic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Getting each of us comfortable working in the class, in a subject difficult for most students, was a goal we sometimes reached and sometimes missed. The misses were far fewer in January than they had been in September. Early in the year, we read and wrote our stories through poetry, narratives, and biographies. By January, we were ready to argue.

The unit on argument began in January, with the collection of baseline data that fell naturally into already established school procedures. In line with district policy, I already had initial reading tests including the Fountas and Pinnell and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. I had multiple writing samples from each student. Each wrote an argumentative essay as a pre-test before the unit began.

The study of argument is included in the district curriculum for all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The English language arts (ELA) teachers in my district have been instructed to follow the Calkins' curriculum (Calkins, Hohne, & Taranto, 2014). Argument is also featured prominently in the Common Core State Standards and the standards for the state in which I teach. I wanted the parents and students to know that they were not missing anything or being denied access to the education all students receive.

My class that year loved to argue. They were interested in politics. They seemed to enjoy feeling in control. I needed to teach them how to form an argument, one of the most privileged genres in secondary schools (Humphrey, 2017). They will be required to write arguments in many forms throughout their academic career. In addition, the genre of argument seemed especially appropriate to teach that words have immense power, to establish that the students can recognize how authors wield that power, and to ask emergent bilinguals to use their power of linguistic choices to affect change.

In my lesson design I looked at the Calkins units, and argumentative units in textbooks designed specifically for emergent bilinguals to get an idea of the standard content of argument instruction. I studied the work in critical awareness of Christensen (2000, 2009) and Janks (2010). I started with SFL scholars Rose and Martin (2012) and Brisk (2016) to find examples of lessons that emphasize the elements of the argument genre while teaching critical literacy.

In my class students read and created various texts meant to persuade, starting with the labels, color, and design of different bottles of shampoo, to commercials, written advertisements, protest posters, political debates, argumentative essays, and ultimately a project of their choice. Starting with the obvious and moving toward the subtle, students

considered the choices authors made to persuade through skillfully using the argumentative strategies of ethos, pathos, and logos. We then connected those strategies with language choices: strong verbs, gradation of meaning, modals, the order in which information is relayed, passive voice, and what is included in the text and what is left out. In every sequence of lessons, I integrated different tools of critical language awareness. I modeled them, talked about them, engaged my students in using these tools, and then also paused to look more closely at artifacts of their work using these tools. Then I planned the next lessons.

I created an SFL curriculum, building on that used at the Sydney School. There, Rose & Martin (2012), used genre pedagogy “to make the knowledge in school more equitable” (p.6). Like them, I hoped to guide my students to comprehend, deconstruct and create the complex, varied forms of argument, so they could achieve at the same academic levels of other students. Next, I will provide information on my school and students. Please note that all the school, student, and staff names throughout this dissertation, except my own, are pseudonyms.

### **The School**

Norton Middle School at the time of the study was and remains the most ethnically diverse of the five middle schools in a district of 17,500 students in the suburbs of a large Midwestern U.S. city. Of the approximately 860 students at Norton, one out of five speaks a language other than English at home: Spanish, Hindi, Chinese, and Arabic are the most common languages spoken.

Of the Norton students, 70 were classified as English language learners at the time of the study. About one fourth were newcomers, students with three years or less in the U.S. Most were born in the U.S. or had been in U.S. schools since early elementary grades. As opposed to most schools in the district, which tended to average 75% white and are located in affluent areas, Norton Middle School was 48% students of color and 52% white.

Students' socio-economic backgrounds varied greatly. This was particularly true of the emergent bilingual population. More than 50% of the emergent bilinguals at Norton were on free and reduced lunch at the time of the study as opposed to the 25% of students overall. This difference in the level of economic resources enjoyed by the majority of the students in the school and many emergent bilinguals is key, because often teachers assume emergent bilinguals and their families have access to resources and technology that they do not. For example, I hear advice that students and parents should just check the online grading program, but not everyone knows how or has a computer. Sixth grade camp costs \$240 dollars with a \$100 scholarship and a payment plan available. Often teachers cannot understand why the remaining \$140 cost is still prohibitive for some. Conversely, some emergent bilingual students come from very affluent families. Each year we get groups of students in the U.S. with parents studying at local universities or working for international companies who tend to stay a year or two.

Of the 65 teachers who taught at the school that year, 11% identify as black, and 5% as Asian. 9% of those teachers are bilingual. The remaining 75% identify as white and are English only. Most are women.

## **Participants**

### *The Class*

Student participants were seven of the members of my ESOL 3 class. A total of 12 students joined the class for some part of the year. Of those 12, eight of the members remained in the class in May, the other four left the school midyear. Of the eight remaining students, one chose not to participate in the study.

ESOL 3 is a mixed grade level, ELA replacement class for sixth through eighth graders. The class is intended to be a bridge class between the ESOL program and the ELA classes. In ESOL 3, emergent bilinguals practice the same competencies as their peers in ELA, but in smaller groups with more opportunities for scaffolding and support and more attention to literacy across the content areas. Their former teachers believed they needed more support than could be had in the ELA classroom in order to improve their reading and writing skills. The class met for two, 45-minute periods each day.

The ACCESS is the high-stakes, standardized test of English language proficiency in my state given once a year in January or February. ESOL 3 student overall ACCESS scores of English language proficiency generally fall in the 3.0 to 4.0 range on a scale where 6.0 indicates students have the proficiency to handle academic language necessary to access classroom content without assistance, and 4.7 is used as a cutoff to show they can exit the EL program. This was true of all the student participants except Ravi whose screener placed him that range in September, but his February ACCESS score was 5.1. In general, the students in ESOL 3 score lower in the language domains of reading and writing than speaking or listening. The scores of these students on the

Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) ranged from 191 to 653 which is from first to fourth grade level. Again, our new student, Ravi, entered the U.S. in September, so instead of the SRI he took the state-mandated screener for emergent bilinguals, the WAP-T. His reading score was 1.9 on a scale of 1.0 to 6.0.

Students shift in and out of the class at the beginning of the school year. As teachers find students who seem unable to handle class content, they send them to my class. Such was the case one sixth grader, Tala. Conversely, as I get to know students beyond their test scores, I often push them into the ELA/ESOL co-teach where an ELA teacher and I teach the general education classes together and generally about one third of the students are emergent bilinguals. This probably would have been the case with Ravi had his screener proved a more accurate reflective of his proficiency and he had not had a long absence midyear.

As opposed to the ESOL 1 class, most of the ESOL 3 students are not new to the U.S. Most of them start the year saying they hate reading and writing English. They are the ones that write whole pages with just one long sentence containing the word “and” 27 times. They are the ones that, when asked to read a passage silently with no preparation, will just sit there or hit the student next to them or draw pictures of flowers or Animal Crossing figures. These are the kids who are often called slow learners, or unfocused by many of my colleagues. They are neither.

None of these statements is true for all the students. In fact, I teach some students that will succeed no matter what I do. However, in general, this is the class of students who avoid reading and writing if possible. In the class participating in this study, four of the students would be referred to as long-term learners in the literature and ESSA. They

had gone through most of elementary school in my district or one like it but had never gained full access to the academic English. One had just arrived in the U.S., one arrived two years before and another moved from Puerto Rico three years before.

Some of the students seem to move toward English language proficiency quickly, using strong literacy skills in their first language, organizational skills, and study skills. Most of the students in this class are still developing those skills. Two of the students in this class had been very successful academically in terms of test scores and grades throughout their school career; the majority have seen little such success.

Often the emergent bilinguals I work with in ESOL 3, have developed strategies to mask their lack of understanding, rather than to remedy it. They have been defeated by their literacy skills. Thus, these students could most benefit from the awareness and tools to turn language into an expression of their power, rather than defeat.

### ***The Students***

I will begin the introduction of the seven students in this study as they identified themselves on identity charts they created in class. In the following, the words in italics are their own.

**Aanush** is a *Brown, trilingual, Indian, student* who is also a *Hindu, basketball player* and *PS4 Gamer*. He came to the U.S. from India two years before this research when he was in fifth grade. He speaks Telugu, Hindi and English. Aanush was a pleaser. He always asked a lot of questions, so he could get everything just right. This helped the other students clarify unclear directions. He exited the ESOL program in ninth grade and is doing well academically in high school.

**Ahmed** is an *Egyptian, bilingual, boy/teen and funny, Muslim, gamer*. Ahmed was born in the U.S. to an Egyptian father and U.S. mother. For his first and second grade years he and his sister were taken by his father to Egypt and Syria. Ahmed's early schooling was in Arabic and sometimes interrupted. He returned to live with his mother in third grade. By his own report and grades, he was not very successful in school. Ahmed would often joke in class and try to get his classmates to react. For example, someone on a video would say something about girls being slobs and he would loudly agree. This would encourage us to have a discussion about sexist ideas associated with words. In eighth grade, he entered a co-taught ELA class. His grades remained uneven. He moved to another state after graduating middle school.

**Beatriz** was not in class on the day of the identity charts, so her story is through the first lines of her "I am from" poem. *I'm from Puerto Rico/Brick and wood houses/With pantries full of beans and rice/Spicy, not sweet./I am from having lots of parties that lasted till midnight/ I am from eating lots of candy very sweet ones.* Beatriz was a sixth grader full of laughter. She had come from Puerto Rico two years before and seemed to be enjoying sixth grade a great deal. She did not enjoy homework. She liked drawing and was not afraid to show her love for her family. Her mother was pregnant during the year of this study, and Beatriz would want to call and check on her often. Her grandmother was the one that came to school and was always concerned Beatriz was not working as hard as she should. Beatriz was playful and sometimes also led the class conversations into topics that amused her more than what I had planned. Her attempts at diversion sometimes turned into quite interesting conversations, like the one she started

about what to call the president. Beatriz left the school the following year when her family bought a house in another district.

**Ibrahim** is a *Black, You Tuber, and brother and an African, boy/teen who loves games and basketball*. Ibrahim came to the U.S. from Gambia at the age of three. When he was very young, he spoke Fula, also known as Fulani, but even his parents only occasionally use it in the home now. He and his siblings exclusively use English. Ibrahim was very emotional. His mother had a baby boy, and Ibrahim was one of his primary caregivers and always spoke of him with great love. He also angered quickly and had some disciplinary problems at school in seventh grade. In our class, he often served as a peacemaker. By eighth grade he was a little less quick to anger. I continued to work with him in the co-teach ELA class. He is currently a ninth grader in my district and is not yet on track with the credits he needs to graduate.

**Noora** is a *girl, who likes to shop, facetime, and text and a bilingual, aunt, and sister*. Noora came to the U.S. three and a half years before the year of the research. She was a sixth grader at the time of the research. Her father was on a joint project with the Saudi Arabian military and a large aircraft corporation. She is a speaker of Arabic. Noora loved to share her opinion especially when it was opposed to another student's opinion or something we read. She often spurred new discussion with her divergent thinking. Noora is currently an eighth grader and in the ELA co-teach. Her family has been separated because of visa issues and this is difficult for her.

**Ravi** is an *Indian, trilingual student who is also a tall, animal-lover, athlete*. Ravi was the newest to the U.S. having come from Gujarat, India in September of the school

year during which this research took place. He speaks Gujarati and Hindi in addition to English. Although his English proficiency screener test placed him in the middle of our class proficiency-wise, at 3.1 out of 6.0 with only a 1.9 in reading. His reading and writing skills were by far the strongest in the group by January. In fact, as mentioned earlier, I would have switched him to the ELA co-teach had I realized his true level sooner and had he not been gone for a month midyear. He had previously studied in an English-medium school. Ravi was very competitive and would sometimes give his classmates a little push to work, especially if they were on his team. By the end of eighth grade, Ravi exited the EL program and is currently in honors classes with excellent grades in high school.

**Tala** is a *Mix, sassy, sister and Te-Te and a strong for my rights, girl*. Tala is the daughter of an Arabic speaking father from Jordan and an African American mother. During the time of the research, her parents went through a difficult divorce that caused Tala to be absent from school often. She is currently in eighth grade and doing well at school when she attends, but often misses so often it has greatly affected her grades. Tala is an athlete and knows a lot about social media. She could provide information on any current event and helped us with research.

Now that I have presented my students in their words, I show their test scores. I believe such scores are too often the sole piece of information by which these students are judged and sometimes sentence them to uninteresting, work inappropriate to their age. The ACCESS scores are from February 2018 and February 2019. This research took

place from January through May 2018. Table 3.1 is a snapshot of their required testing data, as well the Fountas and Pinnell reading test.

Table 3. 1 Test Scores

Name	Fall SRI <sup>1</sup>	Spring SRI	Fall F&P <sup>2</sup>	Spring F&P	ACCESS <sup>3</sup> overall at start of research	ACCESS overall one year later
Aanush	287	524	H	N	4.0	4.8
Ahmed	597	728	O	T	3.3	3.8
Beatriz	653	866	O	U	4.3	4.1
Ibrahim	461	579	L	O	3.1	3.5
Noora	191	293	F	L	3.6	3.7
Ravi	* <sup>4</sup>	939	1.9 on WAPT	V	5.1	6.0
Tala	378	627	*	*	3.4	3.7

### *The Researcher*

As researcher and participant, my own background plays an important role in this investigation. Though I share some space with my students and their families, vast

<sup>1</sup> SRI is Scholastic Reading Inventory, The preferred reading test in our district at the middle school level. The “at grade level” range for each grade follows: 6<sup>th</sup> (800 -1050), 7<sup>th</sup> (850-1100), 8<sup>th</sup> (900 –1150)

<sup>2</sup> Fountas and Pinnell preferred district test in elementary. The “meets expectations” score at each grade level is 6<sup>th</sup> (V/W), 7<sup>th</sup> (Y), 8<sup>th</sup> (Z)

<sup>3</sup> ACCESS is the state-mandated, yearly test for all English learners with a maximum score of 6.0.

<sup>4</sup> Student was not tested, because they had not yet joined the class at time of testing.

differences in economic security, education, and culture persist. I am both insider and outsider, my views both emic and etic.

I am a white American woman. I raised a bicultural Japanese and American son in Japan from when he was one-and-a-half until he was fourteen. In Japan, I dealt with cultural mismatches daily, always feeling like I was not quite doing enough to support him in his Japanese schools. When he returned to the U.S., leaving family, friends, and school, he studied in the ESOL program in the same district where I currently teach. Even though we had returned to my home country, I still felt like he was not getting equal access to information and curricula, because he his academic language strengths were in Japanese. I had to push for him to get advantages like placement into advanced math classes though he could handle the content with ease. I taught in a school in the same district, but we were still missing deadlines and opportunities. In his U.S. school, these information gaps were because he could not understand the announcements and routines. Twelve years after returning to the U.S., he has successfully graduated college, has a high-tech job in which he is thriving, and is working toward his master's degree. I often wonder if my son's life would have been if he had not benefitted from the privileges I enjoy as a U.S. educated, white, native speaker parent with economic stability.

Returning to my work background, in my current position, I see myself as an advocate for - as well as a teacher of – the emergent bilinguals in my school and district. I have spearheaded a drive to train all stakeholders who work with emergent bilinguals in our district in ways to make the curriculum more accessible with both school and districtwide professional development. I have done research on empowering parents of emergent bilinguals and their legal rights. The reason I add the above information is that I

wonder if all the time I spend in these other roles takes away from my effectiveness as a teacher of language. For example, one day I spent hours creating an alternative way for parents of emergent bilinguals to sign up for conferences, because only two of seventy had signed up after an e-mail blurb. After passing forms out to students, tracking down who signed up and who needed translators, and arranging translators, by the time I got to my classes, I was exhausted. These too filled days seem the rule rather than the exception. I am not at all sure that I was being intentional enough in creating and implementing a plan to facilitate my students' language awareness. I needed time to reflect and research on the most effective methods for my practice. That was another reason for this research.

Please note that my name used to be Carol Lickenbrock Fujii, so the students address me as Ms. Fujii.

## **Data Sources**

### ***Fieldnotes***

After lessons, I typed fieldnotes (Emerson & Shaw, 1995) at the end of the Google Slides I used to guide the day's class. I wrote what I remembered seeing or hearing, especially those things that had not been completely captured through other data sources. Often the phone seemed to be recording on the left side of the room when someone said something interesting on the right, or a student's actions or facial expression seemed key when I only had audio. Other times I noted my own thoughts during lessons and what inspired those thoughts, as I too was a participant. Sometimes,

the notes involved ideas for next steps. Other times, I wrote my thoughts on what seemed to spark student interest and growth, and what did not.

Beginning in February and continuing through April, I followed this practice, writing brief notes. Obviously, I could not write fieldnotes and teach at the same time, so I wrote as soon as possible after classes. Since lessons were not always limited to one day, I often combined two or three days of lesson materials into one series of Google Slides. I added my fieldnotes to the end of these slides. I collected 12 such sets of lesson outlines and directions followed by my observations after 21 classes. As well as serving as an additional record of class happenings, these fieldnotes serve as a planning artifact. They helped me recall the content of each class, track changes in plan, trace the decisions I made regarding lessons, and how those decisions changed based my growing knowledge of what my students shared, needed and wanted. According to Montgomery and Bailey (2007), “The descriptive language in field notes grounds the emerging theory development” (p.76).

Long before I had time to transcribe and analyze the audio recordings of classes, my fieldnotes helped me start looking for trends and themes in my students’ learning. I wish I could have written after every class but demands on my time at school made this impossible. In May, most of the work was on individual projects, and students were in and out at different times because of end of the year activities. I was also busier, so my field note writing decreased. I tracked most of the work in May through audio recording of conferences and Google Classroom.

***Researcher’s Journal***

My researcher's journal is comprised of handwritten jots over four years that started from the conception of this study and to which I still add. It presents a broad picture of my thinking before, during and after research. It reflects the emerging and adaptive nature of practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lyle, 2009). This is the place where plans for a year-long study on various genres became the study of a four-month unit on argument, where the broad strokes of the unit plan were first recorded and then changed. Notes about my ongoing observations and analysis, questions that occurred to me in the middle of the night about how to help this or that student grow, and names of researchers that could help me grow are inscribed here. It is full of circles and arrows and brainstorming that led to the observations I share in this dissertation.

I visited the journal when I needed to solve a problem or find a next step. Cochran-Smith and Lyle (2009) wrote of the practitioner researchers, "Practitioners are the deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as a part of practice" (p.2). My researcher's journal documents those deliberations as well as what I noticed about student learning.

### ***Video and Audio-Recordings of Classroom Interactions.***

Initially, I intended video recordings with audio to be my primary data source to capture what happened in our ESOL 3 class. I wanted to be able to look at our work through a multimodal lens (Kress, 2010). However, some of my students objected and others began acting for the camera. Ibrahim and Ahmed spent time making faces and doing dances. Aanush just said he could not concentrate on class when being filmed. Creswell (2012) in describing procedures for critical ethnography wrote, "Collect

multiple forms of data that individuals are willing to provide” (p. 478). My students and I decided to stop filming everyday classes and only film their presentations. The students used the video to create an audience. Three students asked me to send the presentation recordings to their parents. I also used the recording while conferencing with students to help them think about their own language choices. Thus, I have video recordings of students’ commercial analysis presentations and their debates, along with 45 minutes of February class video. I transcribed one video recording, the students’ commercial analysis.

Audio was recorded on my phone and did not cause any distress. I recorded a total of 680 minutes of audio between February 26<sup>th</sup> and May 18<sup>th</sup>. I placed the phone in various locations within the classroom depending upon where the talk was occurring. During whole group discussions, I placed it in the center of the group. When I was conferencing with students, I carried my phone with me. Finally, during group work, I attempted to get the conversations of different groups on different days, so, for example, if I recorded the boys’ debate group talking about their introduction paragraph, I would record the girls’ group discussing their evidence. I created transcripts of ten classes.

### *Artifacts of Students’ Learning*

Throughout the study, I collected artifacts of student work. Students kept a notebook. I retained three of the students’ notebooks and have pictures of individual notebook entries for all the participants. They made posters and charts as a group and individually. I have approximately 250 pictures of these two data sources. In addition, I

collected the annotations each member of the class made of five of articles that our class read. individually or in groups.

By far, the biggest collection of student artifacts is our Google Classroom. I have every electronic document, survey, chart and slideshow the students created for my class. In addition, by looking at the version history, I could see what each student did at specific times during specific classes. Although students had the option to write by hand, the overwhelming majority of their classwork ended up in Google Classroom.

### ***Student Achievement Data***

Per district policy, I administered the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to all the students who were in my class at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. In addition, I administered the Fountas and Pinnell reading test, before and at the end of the study. I find the SRI to be quite heavily weighted toward vocabulary. I wanted the information on the Fountas and Pinnell reading test to understand more about the students' level of reading comprehension. According to state mandates, emergent bilinguals must take the ACCESS test of English proficiency. My students took the ACCESS in February when our work on argument was beginning and the following February, eight months after they left my class. I include a chart of these data, because they are commonly taken as indicators of student achievement and are familiar to many teachers.

### ***Publicly Available Data***

During the unit, there was a mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. The shootings spurred a nationwide series of protests, many organized

by the student survivors. My class's work regarding the protest is the subject of Chapter 5. The school and district policy played an important part in the class activities. I collected two letters from my principal which had been sent to all the families at my school and one letter from my district superintendent addressed to all the parents and guardians in the district. I would later critically analyze those letters (Rogers & Wetzel, 2014).

Data included multiple student writing samples and annotations from each student, as well as audio and video recordings. I also kept field notes and a researcher's journal. In addition, I collected school and district communications I felt linked to my study. Appendix B is a visual illustration of the kinds of data sources collected during each class.

### **Analytic Procedures**

My analysis of the data occurred in cycles of activity across the course of the practitioner-research study. The research design was emergent and hinged on my analysis of teaching and learning throughout the study. The analysis that occurred during the study informed my teaching. Chapter 4 and 5, show critical changes in the design of the study based on student interests and needs. Student self and group analyses such as those pictured in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, helped me and them pick avenues for further study.

Fairclough (1995) asserts moments of change, tension or crisis, which he refers to as "cruces" or tension points, are particularly useful in examining power, language, learning, and transformation. This idea helped me understand which teaching and learning episodes and artifacts to spend more time analyzing, both during teaching and

after the data collection ended. I chose those recordings that seemed particularly relevant to my research questions, or particularly rich, or problematic to transcribe and analyze more closely. For example, if there was a moment during class when a student connected power to a language choice, I reviewed the tape or student writing samples to more fully understand if and how students were becoming cognizant of their power through language. Also, as I was teaching, I created a table/log of teaching/research activities, an early version of Appendix B, which helped me to make sense of general patterns across the unit.

I also spent more than a year after the study more closely analyzing the data sources. I used Grounded Theory (Merriam, 2009) to find themes and patterns across data sources. I also draw on the tools of critical discourse analysis to analyze the patterns of discourse in classroom conversations, students' written work, and in my fieldnotes and researcher's journals more closely. Before proceeding, I should explain that critical discourse analysis and SFL share common theoretical and methodological traditions which I explained in Chapter 2. Some of the terminology differs, however, for the sake of clarity, I will attempt to simplify and consolidate terms where necessary.

### ***Transcription Procedures***

I originally transcribed classroom conversations based on a key from the symbols used in Atkinson & Heritage (1999), because I felt the method would give me more precise information like stressed words, overlaps in the conversation and the lengths of pauses. Having the key, I listened to the recordings and typed all the words and inserted all the actions I could remember or saw in the case of the video. Early in the year, I tried to transcribe classroom lessons as they unfolded but as the school year got busier, and the

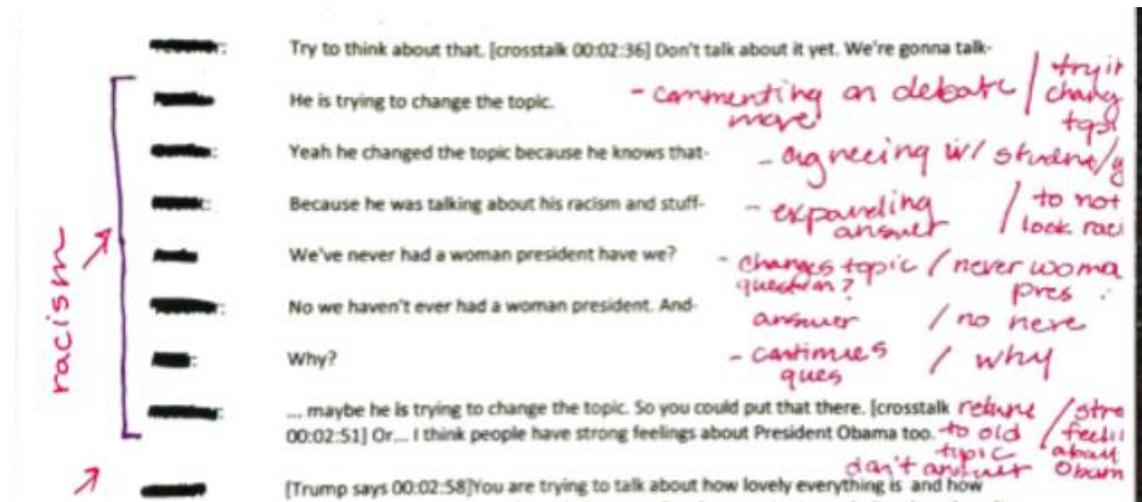
time between recording and transcribing grew longer. When I returned to transcribe the classroom episodes after data collection had concluded, I relied on the audio, my field notes and researcher's journal to create a fuller picture of each class. I went back, checking for errors while relistening to the tapes. I ordered the transcript, with one turn as one person spoke and marked time elapsed. Then I rechecked for all the features of the transcription key. Depending on my analytic goal, I transcribed some classroom episodes with more delicacy than others. Creating the transcriptions – at whatever stage in the project -- was a first step in analyzing the data. In reporting of the data in this manuscript, I removed the markings and added conventional punctuation to make excerpts more readable.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

By the end of the study, I had generated stacks of data: transcripts, student writing samples, fieldnotes, and researcher journals. I needed a way to make sense out of the 'big picture' of the practitioner research study. That is, I wanted to ascertain the transformations that occurred from this pedagogical invitation to critical language awareness by examining the interactional patterns, discourses, and stances which emerged as salient. In addition, I wanted to know how engaging middle school emergent bilinguals in language awareness impacted their literacy development and mastery of academic language. I deliberated about how to approach the data. Should I analyze each student's complete data set to look for learning and transformation? Should I analyze class learning across the "beginning," "middle," and "end" of the unit?

I decided to approach my data analysis from different angles. I looked across the four series of lessons in the argument unit: consumerism, protest, debate, and choice project, to generate broad categories related to learning and transformation. I analyzed transcripts I felt represented our work on language awareness. For example, in deconstructing text, I analyzed our first experience quite closely, when we broke down the introduction paragraph, but did not go into as much depth when we did similar analysis on the body paragraphs.

**Figure 3.1 Sample of Analysis**



I used Grounded Theory in my analysis (Merriam, 2009). This meant, procedurally, reading each transcript line by line and generating notes in the margin about key ideas such as those pictured on the far right of the sample above, and the function, such as what is pictured in the middle. Then I would go stanza by stanza (Gee, 2014) and write a key word next to each such as the word “racism” on the sample above.

After I made notes in each transcript, I looked across the lessons and collapsed similar notes into categories; for example, we talked about racism a lot in class, so that was a category. Then I looked at how those categories fit together. For example, talk about “racism” became “power: inequity by race,” and “sexism” became “power: inequity by gender,” and instances of student talk changing lessons became “student power.” The themes I found were scaffolding, power, and choice. Many examples of which are in Chapters 4 and Chapter 5.

### *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis*

Next, I analyzed key transcripts once again. I turned to look at certain teaching and learning episodes more closely through a critical lens with another kind of analysis. This approach to discourse analysis drew on the diverse approaches found in the scholarship of Fairclough (1992), Gee (2014), Kress (2011) and Rogers and Wetzel (2014). These frameworks are rooted in systemic functional linguistics and meshed well with my project. While I was not able to analyze the transcripts closely during period of instruction because of time constraints, I did so after the research unit ended. For the sake of clarity, I decided to use consistent terminology to describe categories and functions of discourse (e.g. Rogers and Wetzel, 2014). I analyzed the interpersonal, textual and ideational metafunctions of the transcripts of class discussions, letters from administrators, and student work samples to examine themes. The results of this work can be seen in Chapter 5 in the discussions of the letters from administrators and how power and choice played a role in our lessons.

I went through each transcript once with a unique color for each metafunction of language, and then a different color for each of the categories (e.g. interpersonal, textual, ideational). I looked at the patterns and noted especially areas where the three functions overlapped. I used Rogers (2014) “Survey of Linguistic Features and Functions Connected to Orders of Discourse” (pp. 136-138), a set of questions regarding features of each metafunctions, to guide my analysis. This helped me hone in on what the language choices in the transcripts revealed. Although I coded by color in this phase of my analysis, the work informed how I would analyze functions in the spreadsheets in Appendix C.

### ***Analyzing Change in Student Argument Writing.***

Analyzing change in student argument writing occurred before and during every class. We analyzed together and individually. The analysis informed all our lessons. Some of those analyses can be seen in the chapters that follow. Chapter 6 includes discussion of these analyses and samples of Ravi analyzing his own work. Appendix D shows an example of a simple rubric we used to guide our work.

The discussion that follows will detail a much more delicate analysis than would be impossible to perform during a class or between today and tomorrow’s class. To more closely examine at a micro and macrolevel the effect of our work on language awareness on emergent bilinguals’ writing, I analyzed arguments written by Beatriz, Ravi, and Ibrahim from across the year of study. I examined the workings of the ideational, textual, and interpersonal metafunctions in their writing and how those changed over time.

When I first started the research, I thought I could use a rubric or prove by their test scores how they had improved, but by the time the actual analysis happened I had realized that such thinking both underestimates the students' abilities and everyone's critical awareness. Both teacher and student language choices needed to be examined much more carefully. Much as I had done in analyzing the transcripts line by line, so too, would I have to look at student writing clause by clause. I would not only look at the workings of each metafunction, but I came to find how the metafunctions started to work together as students became more impassioned in their writing.

My first step was to review all the SFL work that I had read on the elements of effective argument. I started with Rose and Martin (2014) and Brisk (2015) a couple of years ago, so to them I returned with a broader view this time. Since those researchers wrote on elementary students, I added Humphrey's (2017) 4X4 rubric on exposition, to examine standards for secondary students. I also drew from Schleppegrell (2004), Christie and Derewianka (2010), and Derewianka and Jones (2016), as foundational work on argument and general academic register. With their work in mind, I knew I would be looking for stages of argument, and language choices in processes, modals, modal adjuncts, appraisal, nominalization, mood, tense, connections between and within clauses, and a host of other elements.

From a critical awareness lens, I was also looking to see how the students were able to create text to dismantle what they thought was wrong in their worlds. I wanted them to express their identity through their writing. I wanted them to know if they were getting their point across regarding something they cared about.

**Figure 3.2 Excerpt from Analysis of Metafunctions in Ibrahim's Writing**

IBRAHIM JANUARY				
	interpersonal	ideational	textual	teacher notes
YES	definite answer, all caps.		<i>does not make a claim explicit, in answer to the prompt, "Should students get paid for good grades?"</i>	This time he has 3 paragraphs and has divided text into sentences. This was an all-school writing prompt, but since this student's family was living in poverty, many of the reasons come from Ibrahim's experience
Because some people in school need money		mental process- "need" here and repeated several times throughout text	<i>evidence - need money</i>	
because so they can get snacks in the vending machine	modal- "can"	material process- "get"	why need money, affordances of money	New vending machine in school that year. This student could never buy snacks there.
and they need money for their lunch money.		Mental process- "need" here and repeated several times throughout text, The choice of some people in school" and "they" is interesting, because it puts him outside that group though he is in it. Embarrassed?	why need money, reason 2, This time has a clear lexical chain, "they" = "some people in school"	

I created charts like the one pictured above. I broke each of the student samples into clauses. Then I looked at the interpersonal, ideational, and textual metafunctions of each line. It was sometimes difficult to know where to categorize a word. The more I looked at the student work, the more I saw the same word or phrase could serve all three

metafunctions. Indeed, those were often the places where I found the writing to be most effective. For example, even the first words in Beatriz's letter, "Dear Neighbors" could be thought of in terms of the interpersonal metafunction, because it positions her in a community with her neighbors and in terms of the textual metafunction, because it signals the conventions of a letter. The complete charts of how I deconstructed the students' language to analyze for the interpersonal, textual and ideational metafunctions are included in Appendix C.

### **Standards for Quality of Conclusions**

Next, I move to the quality of the study. I used the measures of quality noted in Merriam (2009): credibility, consistency, transferability, and trustworthiness, with the addition of catalytic validity from Lather (1986) to discuss the quality of this research.

#### ***Credibility***

Merriam (2009) referred to Lincoln and Guba (1985), writing that *credibility* or *internal validity* is based on whether the findings are credible given the data presented in the study. Merriam (2009) asserted, "Probably one of the most well-known ways to shore up internal validity is *triangulation*" (p215) which can be found with multiple methods, sources of data, investigators, or theories to approach the data. In this study, the long-term data collection plan gave me time to collect multiple recordings over the course of the unit which lasted four months, minus a few of weeks for testing and festivities. I analyzed both oral and written text. Through work samples I was able to see if the conclusions I made from students' oral language aligned with those I saw in the other modalities. I had so much data that I trouble limiting it to a manageable level. Although I

was the only investigator, I called on the opinions of critical friends both in the university setting and colleagues at school to help me examine, explain, and challenge my findings.

I drew ideas from both critical discourse studies and genre theory.

*Member checks*, or checking one's findings with the participants, is also key in helping to make a study credible. In class, I often asked my students questions about what they were saying. This is a practice I intentionally used for several reasons: to clarify understanding, model various technical vocabulary and couple structures, and finally to give students time and impetus to connect and think deeply about issues. Often in the transcripts I found places where I checked the meaning of what my students were saying and saw my understanding change. Although I clarified the participant's meaning immediately after they made a statement or a few days later in conferences, I did not check my final findings with them, because some had graduated and others had moved by the time I completed my analysis. This is an area where the study could be improved.

*Reflexivity* is also a measure of credibility. The researcher must examine their own biases. Merriam (2009) explained, "Investigators need to explain their biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken" (p.219). I attempted to be reflexive by writing a thick description of my background, views and experiences in both in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3. In my researcher's journal, I also tried to pick apart my lesson plans and my thinking about what was happening in class, to make clearer to myself what was fact and what assumption and to look at my biases.

*Consistency*

In qualitative research, rather than attempting to ensure that the results would be the same were the study to be repeated, the researcher instead seeks *consistency* attempting to make sure that the results are consistent with the data. In other words, no one could ever exactly repeat my study, because all teachers and all students are individuals, but I am obliged to prove my analysis fits my data. To that end, I tried to share my research process. I recorded all the steps of my research process in detail. I added various excerpts to this dissertation to show how my data was collected and analyzed, as well as the steps I took in reaching my conclusions. I have retained that data for others to examine.

I sought the opinion of other researchers and teachers to see if my teaching ideas were sensible and data analysis logical. I got close to my students, as do most practitioner researchers, so it often became difficult to see them, the other participants, as outsiders would see them. In some ways that led to a truer picture, in other ways it could have led to a distorted view. Thus, I called on the knowledge of others. One of the conclusions I reached was that students write better when they are invested in that writing, which could make the results difficult to reproduce. I was cognizant of eliciting the opinion of others regarding the leaps in logic that I made throughout the research process. I endeavored to write in the detail required to allow my fellow teachers to judge the applicability of my research to what they know and experience.

### ***Transferability***

According to Merriam, “The investigator must provide sufficient descriptive data to make transferability possible” (p.225). In order for a reader to know whether they can

apply the researcher's work to their own context, they need a rich or "thick" description of the researcher's context and information on varied participants or "maximum variation" (p.227). I tried for both. I introduced my school and students and tried to give both an overview of our work together and some specifics of unique lessons. In terms of maximum variation, I tried to give a sampling of all the participants' work in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, I chose the work of three very different students for delicate analysis: one girl, two boys; one Asian, one African, one American from Puerto Rico; one sixth grader, two seventh graders; one newcomer, one immigrated three years before, and one student who had been in U.S. schools since kindergarten; speakers of different home languages.

### ***Trustworthiness***

Trustworthiness involves the ethics of the researcher. I find this a complex issue in my study. Coercion is an ethical peril. I made every attempt to give my students the choice of whether to participate. Regardless of whether individual students chose to participate or not, the same work was required of all students. Students and their parents had a choice to opt in or out of the study at any time. Information regarding the study was in the parents' languages of preference, and I was clear to the students on my purpose as is discussed below. I also repeatedly asked permission to record, and at the students' request I stopped regularly recording video of class. One student did choose not to participate. However, my students and families sometimes express feelings of indebtedness towards me. I help a lot with access to school-based resources. Parents and students might have felt awkward in refusing to do me a favor after I had done favors for

them. There is also a power differential between a middle school students and teachers. Although I in no way intended to coerce either students or their parents, the issue is not simple.

### ***Catalytic Validity***

According to Lather (1986) catalytic validity “refers to the degree to which the research process re-orient, focusses, and energizes participants in what Freire (1973) terms ‘conscientization,’ knowing reality in order to transform it” (p.67). Lather’s (1986) argument is based “not only on the recognition the reality-altering impact of the research process itself, but also on the need to consciously channel this impact so that respondents gain self-understanding and, ideally, self-determination through research participation” (p.67). My students and I discussed the importance of language choices throughout the study. My purpose as a researcher and a teacher was to help them understand they and other authors are making choices. We looked more and more critically at texts as the study progressed. They knew that I believed they could harness language choices to impact their success in school, and as tools to help them in battles they chose in their communities.

### **Limitations**

My biggest limitation was also my biggest advantage. I knew my participants quite well. I saw them not just in my own class, but I coached their teachers on how to make their tests more accessible, and on strategies for teaching. It was probably I who talked to the students or their parents when it was time to go to camp, or when they still had not brought in this or that form. I was the one that went out and got them black socks

for the choir concert when I knew they were trying for an excuse not to go. This knowledge helped me when it was time to get permission for the study and when trying to understand the context of conversations in class. It might also have limited my ability to see past what I assume to be true about each of them; the familiar view of the child I knew might have kept me from seeing what was unknown or different. I am biased, so I implemented the measures for quality described above. I needed to continually seek out colleagues to know if I was correctly interpreting what I found, because I (almost) always see the what is great in the students.

Also, emergent bilinguals are not homogenous. The participants in this study did not share a common language. This is unusual. They were all at an intermediate level of proficiency; other bilinguals are beginners or advanced.

Lastly, I know more about SFL now than I did when I was teaching these emergent bilinguals. I was learning about SFL and what it means to combine criticality and genre theory as my students learned. I am still learning. Perhaps I could have been more effective had I known more in 2018.

## **Summary**

This chapter explored the context, research questions, practitioner research design, methods of analysis, and limitations of my study. The next chapter will provide an overview to much of the work my class did to develop language awareness and how their learning was scaffolded.

## **Chapter 4: Scaffolding Critical Literacy Through Argument**

### **Overview**

In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate how lessons can include elements of both Genre Studies and Critical Awareness, each aiding in developing the other. I will show that emergent bilinguals can “do” critical literacy. There is no need to work on basic concepts first. I will demonstrate the scaffolding of critical awareness through intentional lesson design, building from student strengths and adjusting to their needs. I show how students help each other develop that awareness through classroom talk.

### **Making Connections**

Much of teaching involves facilitating the connections between the known and the unknown. Critical teaching includes an extra layer: disrupting what we thought we knew. In this chapter, you will meet seven emerging bilingual students from my class and witness a portion of their journey towards becoming critically literate (within the argument genre), both with written texts and spoken language. I will take you across time with the students’ voices and artifacts of their work from January to May of one school year to show how we scaffolded each other’s journey with critical literacy.

The lessons of our work with argument were divided into four parts: consumerism, protest, debate and essay, and students’ choice projects. In the consumerism lessons we discovered how authors’ linguistic choices can make us desire material objects. During the protest series of lessons students read and wrote about the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Next, students researched and debated topics of interest, and we used that work to build group and individual

argumentative essays. Finally, students used all their argumentative and critical skills to write to facilitate change on the issue they considered most important.

What follows is a conversation that happened as the class was watching part of the presidential debates between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in preparation for our own debates.

Hillary Clinton [*presidential debate audio*]: And the birther lie ... was a very hurtful one. You know, Barack Obama is a man of great dignity and I could tell how much it bothered him and annoyed him...

Ahmed: Who is Barackobama?

Hillary Clinton [*debate audio*]: That this was being touted and used against him.

Noora: Can you stop?

Me: [*I turn off audio*] Okay. Um. Do you know what ... Who is Barack Obama?  
Obama ??

**Students:** The president-

Me: President Obama.

Ahmed: Oh... His first name is Barako?

Ibrahim: Barack

This exchange occurred just as the eight students in my ESOL 3 class, seven of whom participated in this study who were introduced in Chapter 3, were beginning to listen to Clinton and Trump's language choices. They were instructed to write the technical (field specific) words, emotional words, polite words or other strong words they heard. I was planning on explaining what Clinton meant by the "birther lie" when Noora asked me to stop, but what Ahmed needed was to connect "Barackobama" to the President Obama that he knew. I was honestly shocked when I thought that he did not know the former president. But he did know. How he knew him was not matching up to the name he was hearing. The other students did not laugh at him or tease him; they just facilitated the connection between the known and unknown for Ahmed.

When I began this unit, I designed a series of lessons. Argument is one of the most privileged genres in secondary school and appears in multiple content areas (Schleppegrell, 2004; Humphrey, 2017). Within the genre of argument, which is also called exposition, there are various sub-genres. Martin (1985) drew a distinction between texts "persuading to" which are calls to action, and "persuading that" which are attempts to prove a position. For example, one could argue to stop someone from vaping, or write an essay to prove that vaping is harmful. Brisk (2015) gave similar examples of the difference between "persuading to" and "persuading that," and also distinguished between *discussions*, "which present both sides of an argument," and *expositions* which "present only one side of the argument" (p.257). In my experience, I have found that students are asked to write to prove one side of an argument and are taught to draw on opposing opinions only to create counter arguments, so I chose expositions as the focus

of instruction, as did Humphrey (2017). Elements required to effectively “persuade to” and “persuade that” are similar (Derewianka & Jones, 2016) so my students did both. Throughout this chapter I will identify and discuss how I scaffolded elements of effective argument within a critical frame.

I was also inspired by Jank’s (2010) book on literacy and power, in which she described a *literacy* teacher “as someone who works with others to make meaning with or from texts” (p.19), and a *critical literacy* teacher as

in addition, interested in what all kinds of texts (written, visual and oral) do to readers, viewers and listeners and whose interests are served by what these texts do. They also help students to rewrite themselves and their local situations by helping them to pose problems and to act, often in small ways, to make the world a fairer place. (p.19)

I was compelled by the idea that my students could find and use the power relations in text to further their own power in our school and their worlds.

As described in Chapter 2, the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016) starts with a rich environment in which students experience texts from the field of study in a variety of modalities. I am a firm believer in sharing and breaking down great examples of text with my students. We talked about what we were reading and hearing. We created texts as a whole class and then in groups and then individually. I had years of experience reading student texts before I read about the elements of argument and how those elements are privileged in schools. I used those to design lessons. However, just

teaching the students the parts of argument was not my goal. My intention was to guide them to question what they read and help them learn to make their own voices heard through their developing literacy. Thus, while I had the SFL frameworks in mind, the students' interests and passions held equal weight. Large portions of this study, such as the whole section of the unit on the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shootings and subsequent protests, arose from the class conversations which you will see in Chapter 5. However, my notions about the elements of argument and the language awareness the class needed to explore were vital.

In looking at the transcripts, I admit that I felt rather relieved. My students talked a lot and I often worried that I should be able to "get through" material without having to take side trips. At the end of the school year, many things that I wanted us to read and write remained untouched. I find that the line between chaos and the orderly challenging of each other's thoughts is blurred. I worry that other teachers are much more effective at discipline than I. However, as I looked back at the lessons, I found that in many of those side trips, like "Brackobama" above, chances for a little talk ensured all members of the class had the tools necessary for learning. What seems clear to me may not to my students. They need time and opportunities to talk and make connections.

Although I cannot detail every class activity or every conversation our class had, I will try to present elements I consider representative of how we learned critical literacy and the genre of argument from each other. Appendix B includes information on the sequence of lessons. I draw on transcripts, fieldnotes, my researcher's journal, and student work in this and all my findings.

### **The Consumerism Series of Lessons**

In my experience, a common middle school practice is to tease people about their sneakers. Just this week a student noted that I have three or four pairs of boots that look exactly the same to him and he wondered why, and I noted he had several pairs of sneakers that look the same to me. We talked about how what we saw was different.

However, at the time of this research, Ibrahim was teasing other students in the class about their shoes calling them “Walmart shoes.” His own sneakers were a prized possession and received a great deal of his attention and care. I have learned that sneakers are really important to many of my students, but teasing others based on material possessions was not congruent with a safe space. Thence arose the unit on consumerism.

Advertisements are multimodal compositions, so we needed to go beyond language analysis to examine, critique, and redesign other semiotic resources. (Semiotics is the study of how languages/people use signs and symbols to make meaning.) On this point, Janks (2012) wrote,

Critique enables participants to engage consciously with the ways in which semiotic resources have been harnessed to serve the interests of the producer and how different resources could be harnessed to re-design and re-position the text. It is both backward- and forward-looking. (p.153)

Much of critical literacy has to do with power, both the power relations within text and the power to question these assumptions and manipulations text, and then the

ability to use text to create societal change. In addition, effective argument is creating a web of words that convince the audience of the writer's claim. I chose stories to help students question wants versus needs. I used advertisements as a way to show how text can be used to manipulate one's ideas and desires.

### **Stories of Want and Need**

We started with stories, including the short stories *Thank you, Ma'am* (Hughes, 1958), and *The Jacket* (Soto, 1983) along with the picture books *Those Shoes* (Boelts, 2007) and *The Last Stop on Market Street* (de la Pena, 2015). The short stories were at a reading level above that of many of my students and could be found in any "regular" classroom in my school.

I use strategies to engage and support my students in stories appropriate to their age and interests. For example, the students initially read *Thank you, Ma'am* silently. I noticed all of them looking at the paper for a few minutes, but only Aanush and Ravi lasted the whole time. After five minutes, Noora and Beatriz were doodling on their copies, Ibrahim and Ahmed had to be reminded that it was *quiet* reading time, and Tala's eyes looked heavy (researcher's journal, January 8, 2018).

Then we looked at a picture of blue suede shoes which they thought were funny looking. Next, I divided them into two groups to reread and act out two versions of the story. I noted in my journal that soon they were reading out loud, asking questions of me and each other, and no one appeared off-task. They especially enjoyed the bit about Roger trying to steal Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones's purse for money for the blue suede shoes, only to get tackled and then dragged along by the ear. The lessons she taught him

were easier to talk about when we had viewed them twice. The importance of the climax, when Roger learns to trust Mrs. Washington, was more apparent when-- through their own stage direction-- they saw Roger had a chance to escape and did not. In the next couple of days, I used this as a chance to review old standards, such as how to write summary and theme which would arise again and again in their academic careers. In particular, as stated above, I chose these texts to introduce discussion on wants and needs, why we long for things, and what people long for. Then my intention was to make clear the role language choices can play in those wants.

Generally, I use picture books both to get important issues into discussion quickly and to illustrate various genres in a bare bones form. I often think the pictures themselves are a story. Besides adding to our work and thoughts on consumerism, the picture books were our beginning steps into multi-model text analysis (Kress, 2010; Rogers & Mosley Wetzel, 2014). At this point, we talked about how different elements of the pictures connected to and expanded the story. For example, we looked at the pictures in *The Last Stop on Market Street* (de la Pena, 2015) to make assertions about the socioeconomic conditions of the communities at the end and the beginning of the bus ride. They noted the graffiti, bars, and man with a shopping cart could be signs of an area without as many economic resources as the tree-lined church street (researcher's journal, February 2, 2018).

**Figure 4.1** *The Last Stop on Market Street* p.1-2; 23-24



We really had to look at the last pages to understand what CJ and his grandmother were doing at the homeless shelter. At first, the students thought they were living in the shelter. Later they used picture clues like the chef hats to tell they were volunteering (researcher's journal, February 2, 2018).

**Figure 4.2 The Last Stop on Market Street p.25-26**

When students paired to create Venn diagrams representing the intersections and differences between *Thank you, Ma'am*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, and *The Jacket*, they all said the common factor in the three stories was that “They all wanted something.” Ravi and Ahmed added, “Appreciate what you got.” Noora noted what I had not, which was that “They all have a lady as a man character...they all have boys...they all have ladies in the story.” All the ones learning a lesson were boys and all those teaching a lesson were women. I had considered the race, but not the gender of the protagonists, but Noora had. Noora did not talk as often as some of the students, but she would often be the first to challenge a text. Ibrahim and Aanush both wrote about acts of kindness in the stories. Ideas were in the air. We began to examine how authors can manipulate the audience and what their audience wants.

## **Advertisements**

Every day my students are surrounded by advertisements. Watching ads is a price they pay to watch YouTube videos or to get to the next stage on their online game. Because we live in an age in which the moment after one searches for a product on one platform, it turns up as a targeted advertisement on another, I choose to use advertisements as models of persuasion. I remembered reading about Kress (2010) using soap bottles as a bridge into multimodal analysis, so I decided to try this with my students. We looked slides of shampoo and conditioner bottles from Japan, in part because I can read Japanese and they could not. I wanted them to begin to really look at text for clues to meaning. We started with images. Kress (2010) wrote about soap bottles:

when we encounter them in the supermarket or at home- not only through the modes of image, writing, colour, but also in actual or imagined 'inner' mimesis through touch and feel, scent and smell, in action – real or imagined. The feel of the plastic container; its texture; the shape of the 'bottle', the action of pouring or other use suggested by the shape; its imagined and actual fit in the hand; the scent when the lid is undone; all engage more of the body than sparser representations of the 'representation' might usually suggestion. (pp. 76-77)

Are not words just as rich in the depth of their associations? Through multimodal analysis, I wanted to scaffold the knowledge of the richness of text for my students with objects that seemed more accessible, so I started with soap.

Our conversation as captured from the original slides and my fieldnotes (February 3, 2018) entry immediately following the lesson went like this:

**Figure 4.3 Shampoo Slide 1**



They said this was either shampoo or body soap, and it probably smelled good because as Aanush said it had “vegetables and flowers and stuff on it.” They paired the image with the sense of smell.

**Figure 4.4 Shampoo Slide 2**



When I asked, “What is it? Who is it for? How do you know?” for the product above. Tala said, “This is definitely shampoo” Unlike me, she noticed that the container actually says “shampoo” in English. They went up to the Smartboard and pointed out the animal picture and had a discussion over whether or not it might be a shampoo for dogs because of the animal picture on it. Aanush thought it was for boys. The characters actually stand for horse and oil which I shared with them.

**Figure 4.5 Shampoo Slide 3**

By the third picture, the students had already established the pictures were of shampoo. Their discussions became more concerned with the question of “Who is it for?” Awareness of audience is key in arguments (Humphrey, 2017). They all said this was for men. Beatriz and Noora said that it had “boy colors.” I asked what boy colors were, and they said dark colors. Then Ahmed noticed that it said “strong,” so he asserted that it must be for men. Noora disagreed, “No, girls are strong too.” I asked them what these packages had to do with people buying things and if they really thought there was much difference. It took me a while to realize they were at this point actually practicing critical literacy, and I should not try to lead them in another direction. They did say that the shampoo packaging was trying to get people to buy things, but they seemed more concerned with discussing if boys or girls are stronger. The boys were making the point that men are physically stronger. Beatriz said that “girls are smarter and that’s a kind of strong.” Ibrahim disagreed. Our class started to discuss the word “strong.” They were

also disrupting common assumptions about kinds of strong. They were breaking down and examining words.

Next, we dissected commercials and looked at persuasive strategies to illustrate how linguistic choices match the strategies. We named pathos, ethos, logos, kairos, big names, and the use of research as tools to persuade and looked for them in commercials. The examples on the chart were from the class scribed by me.

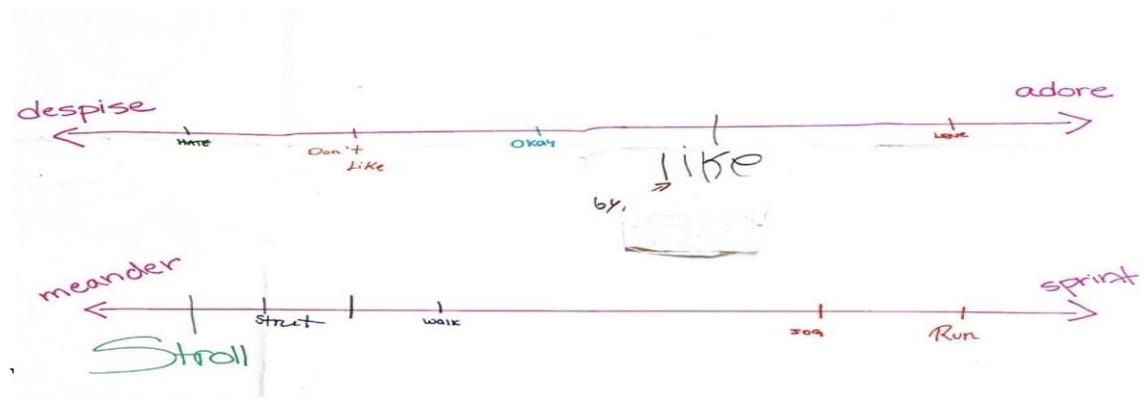
**Figure 4.6 Argument Strategies and Examples**

The image shows handwritten notes on a white background. On the left, under the heading 'Argument Strategies', there is a list of strategies: 1.) State your claim/opinion, A.) Big names: famous people (listing The Rock, Logan Paul, John Cena, Shera, Jake Paul), B.) Logos: use numbers (listing # of people, %, prices, # new features, tel # sequence), C.) Pathos using emotion (listing puppy, cat, poor babies, food), and D.) Ethos trust (listing doctor, everyday person, dentist, mom, sick person). A circled term 'WORD CHOICE' is written next to the list. On the right, there are two examples: E. Kairos do it now (coupons, one day sale) and F. Research use (reliable) studies (a recent study showed). Below these is the instruction 'Think about AUDIENCE'.

Trying to connect the methods of persuasion to language choices led us into a discussion of “word grading” which reoccurred several times throughout the unit. This was an accessible term for them because we always talk about sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Derewianka and Jones (2018) defined gradation as, “using language to adjust the strength and focus of utterances” (p.327). Using gradation is key in expressing one’s

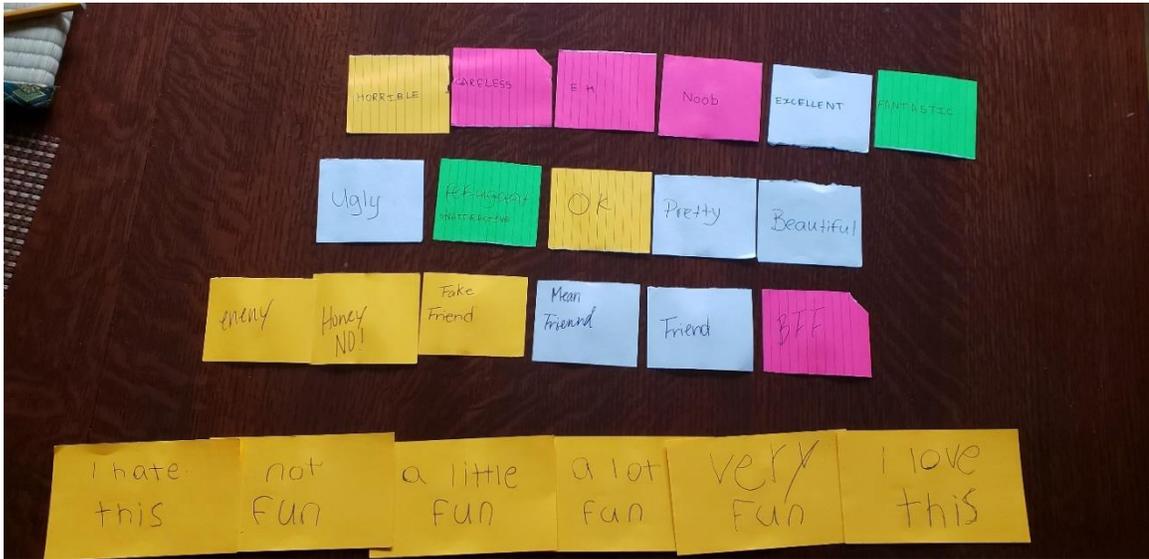
opinion. We started out a practice: I asked them to *say* their names to the people at their table. Then I asked them to *whisper* their names and then *shout* them. We talked about the differences between the three directions and words like “bigger” and “littler” and “quieter” and “louder” arose in the discussion (fieldnotes, February 22, 2018). I told them that just as their grades show a ranking, word choices reflect grades that change their strength and impact. Next, we moved to a chart with “despise” on one side of a line and “adore” on the other side. One by one volunteers came up and filled in the places on the line of feelings. Ahmed even signed his entry. We repeated this for another line from “meander” to “sprint.” They got the idea, quickly filling in the words “hate,” “don’t like,” “okay,” “like,” and “love” along the spectrum of meanings between despise and adore, and “stroll,” “strut,” “walk,” “jog,” and “run” between meander and sprint.

**Figure 4.7 Graded Word Lines**



of their own invention. Some are pictured below. They sorted each other’s work. I had trouble with the grading of “Fake Friend,” “Honey, NO!” and “Mean Friend,” but some of them did not understand “meander.” That is a lesson in the value of learning each other’s words. Just as students need to learn teacher words, we need to bring their language in schools.

**Figure 4.8 Student Created Flashcards of Graded Words**



The multiple meanings and associations that lie within words are important when breaking down text and considering one's own word choice. Consider the difference in representation of the same event as a "protest" on one news channel and a "riot" on another. To get at this my class looked at Ninja blenders. At the beginning of class, I asked students in pairs to write down all the associations they had with the word "ninja." The transcript of this February 26 conversation started like this.

Me: Okay. So, before they even see anything in the commercial, the name is important, right? So, for example if I call a student a scholar that makes them seem really smart right? In a good way, but if you call a student

Ibrahim: Dumb

Ravi: Dumb



Students connected the characteristics of a desirable blender with words they had associated with the word ninja.

Me: What kind of things do you want... What does this have to do with a blender?

How are they making you think better of the blender? Because we have all this word, Ninja there. Talk with your partner. Talk with your partner. What does this have to do with a blender? [*Lots of partner conversations*].

Tala: It's a good cutter? It's strong.

Me: Yay, you don't want a blender that's gonna break, right? (2 lines omitted)

Beatriz: Powerful.

Me: Powerful. We don't want a wimpy blender that's gonna break with a little ice, right?

Me: Aanush?

Aanush: It's fast and strong.

Me: Yay. You want fast and strong. Why do you want your blender, fast and strong?

Aanush: It's gonna be quick.

Me: It's gonna be quick. Good. Ibrahim?

Ibrahim : Um, sharp.

Me: Sharp! Why do we need sharp blender?

Ibrahim: So you can cut the fruits in half. (5 lines omitted)

Ahmed: Also cool and didn't one of them say dope?

Ibrahim: Dope.

Ahmed: Yeah, so, like, you know, it's like a new thing. ... You want something, like, new. You want something better.

Ibrahim: Something better than this.

Me: Right, because this, I have to tell you this blender costs, like, five times more than other blenders. (10 lines omitted)

Ravi: Powerful, strong, and quick.

Me: Powerful, strong, and quick.

Ravi: It will do it work quicker that would save, like, electricity. (10 lines omitted)

Tala: Um, like Noora was saying, it can blend the ice faster, because some, like, blenders don't even blend ice as good.

Me: I didn't ... I'm sorry, I didn't hear.

Tala: Some blenders don't blend ice as good, so this one probably does because it's really sharp.

Me: Yeah. Like a ninja. All right, so you see, that's just one word, right? Next time we watch through, I want you and your partner to write down any other strong words, okay? And then pair them back up with the strategies we have.

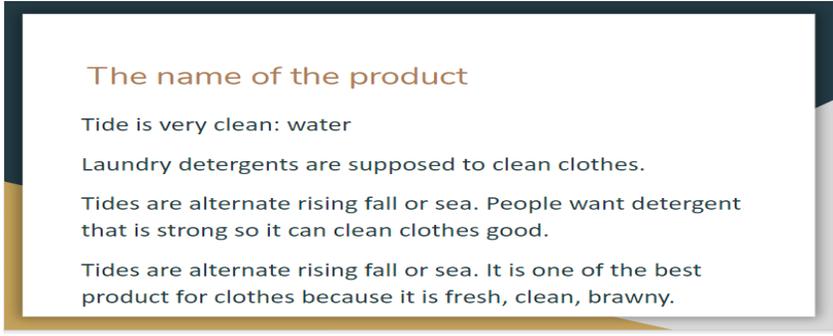
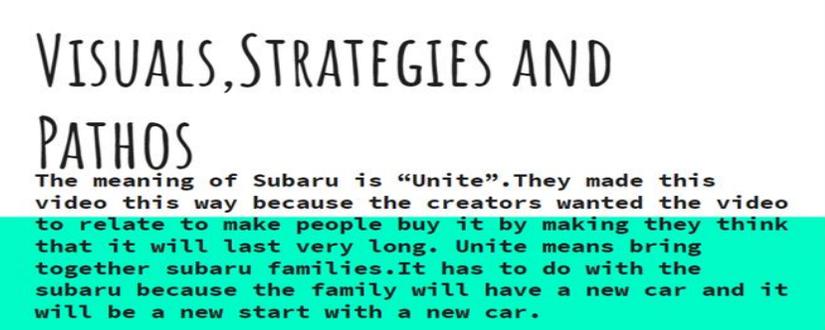
All the students were beginning to think about the meanings that can lie beneath a single word, questioning text. They then carried that same idea to analyze other words in the commercial and then an article on school uniforms. We got into the habit of calling out “strong words.”

### **Commercial Analysis**

The students then took this analysis to an article on the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting. They looked for strong words in that article that showed the emotions and perspectives of those quoted and pictured. My original plan was to complete the consumerism lessons and then move to debate. Chapter 5 describes my motivation to build of the discussions of the shooting already happening in my class. and my article choice.

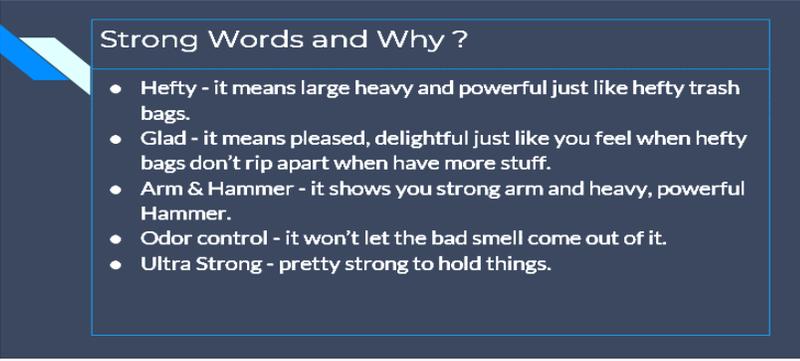
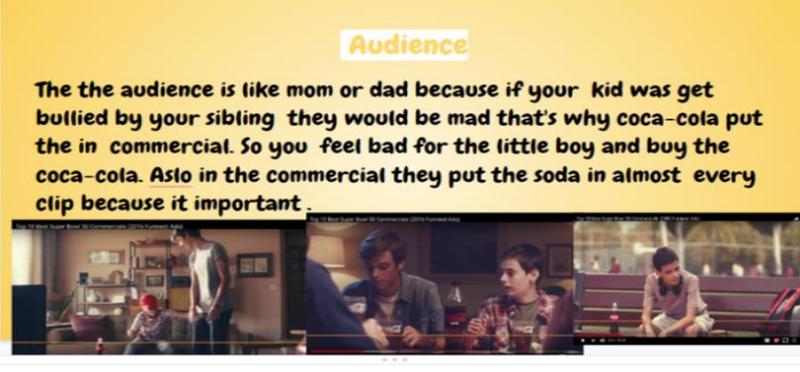
After that article, the students analyzed a commercial of their choice for persuasive strategies and the language choices and pictures that supported those strategies. Table 4.1 includes samples of what each of the students shared in their presentations. This table illustrates the students’ analysis. The left-hand column shows my description of the slide and notes on the student’s awareness of language choices in the commercial. The right-hand column shows the slides the students made and used in their presentations.

**Figure 4.10 Commercial Presentation Excerpts**

<b>Author and Researcher Comment</b>	<b>Slide from Commercial Analysis Presentation</b>
<p>Aanush on product name: He is able to associate the word “tide” with aspects of a good detergent.</p>	 <p>The name of the product</p> <p>Tide is very clean: water</p> <p>Laundry detergents are supposed to clean clothes.</p> <p>Tides are alternate rising fall or sea. People want detergent that is strong so it can clean clothes good.</p> <p>Tides are alternate rising fall or sea. It is one of the best product for clothes because it is fresh, clean, brawny.</p>
<p>Beatriz on persuasive strategies: pathos relates “unite” to longevity, bringing together, family</p>	 <p>VISUALS, STRATEGIES AND PATHOS</p> <p>The meaning of Subaru is “Unite”.They made this video this way because the creators wanted the video to relate to make people buy it by making they think that it will last very long. Unite means bring together subaru families.It has to do with the subaru because the family will have a new car and it will be a new start with a new car.</p>

<p>Beatriz screenshot</p>	
<p>Beatriz persuasive strategies paths: using multimodal analysis linking the crayon to childhood past to car emotions</p>	<p>In the commercial they added a crayon because the subaru is representing how the child grew up with the same car. The strategy they used was pathos because it makes you feel sad and happy at the same time because it makes you remember when your child was little. It makes you feel mixed emotions.</p>
<p>Tala's screenshot</p>	
<p>Tala related to pathos: connected text to her own emotion as a basketball player</p>	<p><b>Pathos</b></p> <p><i>What does it make you feel? This commercial made me feel really excited from the shots that they made and the people that they used.</i></p>

<p>Tala: Related use of certain players and their names to connect to her own emotions and those of others.</p>	<p><b>Big names</b></p> <p><i>The video game makers used people that in NBA. So people that like NBA or basketball can play with their favorite players. The game also uses basketball teams if you do like the team or the player that you have. The makers added some of my favorite players like, <u>LabRon James Cavalires</u>, and the Rockets</i></p>
<p>Ravi's screenshot example 1. Connect famous actor to desired qualities of product, big names</p>	<p><b>Big Names</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Cena</li> <li>• Represents strength and power.</li> </ul> 
<p>Ravi's screenshot example 2</p>	 <p>Made her buy more so she could impress John.</p>
<p>Ravi persuasive strategies: connects commercial images to ethos</p>	<p><b>Ethos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common person in a Supermarket.</li> <li>• A cashier working at a Supermarket.</li> <li>• Got influenced to use something.</li> </ul>

<p>Ravi “strong words:”related a series of words used in his commercial to characteristics of an ideal trash bag</p>	 <p><b>Strong Words and Why ?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hefty - it means large heavy and powerful just like hefty trash bags.</li> <li>• Glad - it means pleased, delightful just like you feel when hefty bags don't rip apart when have more stuff.</li> <li>• Arm &amp; Hammer - it shows you strong arm and heavy, powerful Hammer.</li> <li>• Odor control - it won't let the bad smell come out of it.</li> <li>• Ultra Strong - pretty strong to hold things.</li> </ul>
<p>Noora on audience: used multimodal analysis to connect children and bullying to the audience, concerned parents.</p>	 <p><b>Audience</b></p> <p>The the audience is like mom or dad because if your kid was get bullied by your sibling they would be mad that's why coca-cola put the in commercial. So you feel bad for the little boy and buy the coca-cola. Aslo in the commercial they put the soda in almost every clip because it important.</p>
<p>Ahmed on all the strategies he saw: elaborated a great deal on various strategies in his presentation. He pointed out words and pictures that proved the egg test was “totally fake”</p>	 <p><b>Argument strategies</b></p> <p>Big names-goldilock and the three bears</p> <p>Logos-850-1200</p> <p>Pathos-happy.grateful.cool.funny.goldilock</p> <p>Kairos-do it now</p> <p>research-raw egg test</p>

Freire (1970/2012) asserted, “be it anything, we must adopt a critical view: that of a person who questions, who doubts, who investigates, and who wants to illuminate the very life we live” (Freire,1970/2012; see also Fairclough 1996, p.7). All the students were beginning to doubt and investigate; they had begun to deconstruct text considering ideas, relationships, and stances. They were noticing the strategies of persuasion in the

advertisements that pervade their days and nights. This recognition is important not just because they are being constantly bombarded with messages to buy, but as a step toward critical literacy.

Aanush picked apart the name of the laundry detergent Tide. He went beyond the associations with water to cleanliness and the strength of the “Tide.” He found connections I had never considered as I passed bottles of Tide on the laundry detergent aisle. At first, I thought “fresh, clean, brawny” must have been words from a dictionary or thesaurus he found, but after just looking at Kress’s (2010) soap bottle connections listed above, Aanush’s words bring to mind a physical reaction as when one touches the waves: the feel and smell of the ocean.

Students are often unaware of an author’s use of intertextuality. Without prompt, Ahmed noted two text-to-text connections in his commercial. First, he connected his Purple Mattress commercial to *Goldilocks*. He explained, “*Goldilocks and the Three Bears* is a story that our parents all told us when we were kids.” He went on to note that there were three mattresses in the commercial soft, medium, and hard, and that they all failed the egg test. The science experiment portion of the commercial he chose mirrors a common school text, the lab report. In his presentation, he went into detail about why the experiment in the commercial was “totally fake,” drawing on his knowledge of what makes a good experiment.

Ravi taught me not only who John Cena is, but also expanded the notion that names are important. He found that product name, brand name, and the words on the box

are all connected and planned when he wrote of “Hefty,” “Arm & Hammer,” “odor control,” “Glad,” and “ultra-strong.”

The way Beatriz linked the name Suburu, which she explained means family unity, to a forgotten crayon to a car outlasting a childhood reflected knowledge of how the creators played with consumer emotions. One wants a car and a family that last. Crayons are a symbol of a child, and a stray old crayon that of a childhood past. She showed us how emotive language choices can be using images and words.

Noora wrote regarding a boy being bullied in her commercial, “that is why coca-cola put that in the commercial. So, you feel bad for the little boy and buy the coca-cola.” She also noted how the image of the soda was present in every clip and how it was linked to the feeling of family when the boy was teased and then ultimately protected by his brother. This is essence of critical literacy. She and, indeed all the students, saw what the author “put in” repeatedly, and considered why.

### **The Protest Lessons**

In the middle of the lessons on consumerism, the shooting occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. We stopped our work on consumerism for a few days and read about the shooting and upcoming student walkout, using our sharpening language awareness. The walkout occurred just after the students had finished their commercial presentations. That series of lessons built around the protests is the subject of Chapter 5. Here, I add just a few parts of those lessons that complete the picture of how we scaffolded each other’s learning on critical literacy and argument.

In the consumerism unit, students and I were already deconstructing text.

Fairclough (1992) wrote that consciousness “is a precondition for the development of new practices and conventions which can contribute to social emancipation – to what one might call emancipatory discourse practices” (p.10). We continued our questioning of the arguments around us and moved into opportunities to construct text while discussing strategies to do so effectively.

Students made protest signs and wrote letters to power holders which will be described in Chapter 5. Between those activities, I noted several students were working on matching their writing to their audience and explaining their reasoning. In argumentative writing, awareness of audience is particularly key. (Recall earlier description of the interpersonal metafunction). Students need to develop the skill of matching language choices to audience.

Going back to *Those Shoes* (Boelts, 2007), students wrote letters to me and their families to ask for shoes for themselves or others. They then read the letters without saying the addressee’s name while their classmates guessed the audience from reasons and wording. They practiced once more as they matched reasons for a field trip with a student or principal audience, and then again when they wrote their own reasons for not having school on Saturday to a friend or our principal. Ibrahim asked and was allowed to change the question to Friday school, and gave needing time to practice his religion as a reason to give the principal. Tala wrote about Saturday school to her classmates, “Honey, no! I have a life.” As you will see in Chapter 6, through the year student writing became much more focused towards particular audiences.

Each genre has required and optional parts, called *stages*. According to Derewianka and Jones (2016), the stages of both analytical (persuading that) and hortatory (persuading to) expositions, which are the kind of arguments my students practiced, both include a *statement of position* and *arguments*. They explained the statement of position includes the issue and background information, thesis, and an optional preview of arguments. In each argument includes a *point* and *elaboration*.

Table 4. 1 Derewianka & Jones (2016) Stages of Expositions

Hortatory Expositions (persuading to)	Analytical Expositions (persuading that)
Statement of Position -issue and background information -appeal -preview of arguments (optional)	Statement of Position -issue and background information -thesis or position -preview of arguments (optional)
Arguments -point -elaboration	Arguments -point -elaboration
Reiteration of appeal	

(Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p.235-236)

My students are often called upon to include a counterargument in their argument writing, in which they must address a point commonly asserted by those holding the opposing view.

In argument, being able to call on outside voices for support is vital. We study how to attribute sources and insert research. After years of teaching, the students have shown me that elaboration is always the most difficult stage of argument. Year after year, they include research to prove their point but don't explain the connection between the research and that point. It often goes something like this, "Animal testing should be

banned. According to (Professor Somebody of University of Someplace). (Big number) of animals die each year in testing.” I always find myself saying, “So what? Tell me what that has to do with (why animal testing is bad).” The kind of pattern you see below in the class transcript from March 14 is indicative of the way I work to draw out elaboration

Tala: I want Donald Trump to actually pay attention to our world and actually see what’s going on with like teenagers and kids and like how kids are smoking and stuff. He could stop that by not letting cigarettes like be over 21 years old and like how drinking is and saying to go to shooting it should be over 21, not 18.

Me: Okay. And why?

Tala: Because we don’t need that many people to start dying and we don’t need those kids like trying to act like adults and trying to do like what they want. We need like kids to actually grow up with like good life

Me: And what about 18 year olds makes them like they’re not able to have guns yet?

Tala: 18 year olds they, they like, some 18 year olds who like to like commit suicide and kill other people because like they’re hurting them and.... So we can actually stop that by not letting those, letting mature people have guns like 21 year old like sometimes you never don’t know and in some places you, they don’t even let you show like a driver’s license so anybody could just walk out with a gun, so we need to like start showing driver’s license when we have umm.. when we are trying to get a gun.

To help students understand this roadblock in how language functions at the textual level (coherence of the text), I drew from Hillock's (2011) strategy of asking students to examine evidence in a crime called "Slip or Trip?" to develop their elaboration. The worksheet is in Appendix E, but stated concisely, students look at a picture and short account, and they have to prove whether the husband fell or was pushed. It lends itself quite easily to showing the necessity of elaboration. We do talk about the language in the "Slip or Trip?" text regarding Queenie, the wife of the dead man, which is quite sexist. However, the main reason we use the crime scenario to explore elaboration is because it sticks with them. They explain, or they cannot prove their point. Without context and connection, a frying pan on the stove is just a frying pan, not a possible murder weapon. The need to connect and contextualize evidence is always the case in arguments, it is just usually not so obvious.

## **Debate and Essay**

### ***Debate***

Another way I have found my students learn to elaborate is when they are forced to do so in order to win a debate. In the next series of lessons, the class chose a topic and teams. Beatriz, Noora and Tala wanted to prove schools should stop giving homework. Ravi and Aanush said they were wrong. Ibrahim and Ahmed said that homework was worthless, but they cared more about being on the boy's team than about proving homework was bad, so they joined Ravi and Aanush. Both teams argued to win (fieldnotes, April 13, 2018). We watched debate clips as our model text, each team researched, coded their research into reasons, and debated. After the debates, we again

read and broke down model texts and used that same debate research to write group and then individual arguments. The two teams were so competitive that even after each paragraph of the group essays, they wanted to be judged on whose was better.

We circled back to word choices in planning our debate. While they were organizing their research, they were also exploring words. One day they made a list of polite words and emotion words they had heard that day. The next day they annotated two short excerpts describing the lives of enslaved people, one from a 1920 history book and the other from a 1990s history book from a book called *Not Written in Stone* (Ward, 2010). We used the same language we had earlier in choosing words we heard in commercials, but this time we were challenging our history books. The students paired to choose their emotive words together. Ahmed and Ravi circled the following words from the 1990 article: “hated,” “anger,” “bitterness,” “freedom,” “freedom is hard to crush,” “liberty,” “worst,” “control,” “slaves could not own their own property,” “cruel,” “unfair,” “prohibited slaves from learning to read and write,” and “greatly limited the rights of slaves.” Ahmed summed them up, “Slaves’ lives were cruel and unfair.” After circling words including- “freer,” “fires,” “colored mammies,” “pet them, and tell them stories,” “ham, corn bread and bacon,” Beatriz wrote of the 1923 article,

This article was talking about and trying to make us think that the slave’s lives were really good. Some evidence is that when it was talking about the cabins it makes you think that they were big and cabins. It makes you think that being a slave is not really that bad and that you don’t even have to work a lot.

We searched for examples of technical (field-specific), emotional, polite, and other strong words in the Clinton-Trump presidential debates and *The Great Debaters*. I was intrigued by the connections they made. They often talked of rights of which they felt they were deprived as in the excerpt below.

Me: Some people were trying to make the public think that um, President Obama wasn't born in the United States so he couldn't be president.

Noora: He wasn't?

Ahmed: He wasn't born in the United States? He was born in Africa, right?

Me: He was. No, he was born in the United States. You have to be born in the United States to be president.

Beatriz: No fair! [two lines omitted]

Noora and others: No fair!

Me: No fair? You can be anything else, but not president. But if you think it's no fair that's something you could write about.

Ahmed: Hey I'm the only one here that could be a president...yay!

They noted the use of turn taking in the debate and commented on interruptions as well as the reason behind the interruptions. They were starting to notice voices can be silenced in text.

Me: What do you think about that? Anything there? "Earlier this month you said she doesn't have a presidential look."

Ibrahim: Probably woulda lost your mind-

Beatriz: That's rude.

Me: Why is it rude?

Noora: Because it's not... because she ... he's telling her that she won't look like a president.

Me: Good. So what do you think he's thinking a president should look like?

Ibrahim: Like a real man. And not a woman.

Me: Like a man...oh!

Aanush: Like Donald Trump

Ibrahim: And that's why can- [8 lines omitted] Yeah, but like, he's trying to make Hillary not be the first girl president, That's why he keeps trying to change the subject over and over.

During these lessons, they would listen and analyze debates during part of the class and read and research for their own debates for the other portion of the class. They placed their research into a organizer on Google Classroom. The organizer included three columns, "research for my side," "research for the other side," and "other research." After a couple of days of individual work, the members of each team combined their work. They then color-coded pieces of research to group had found that seemed to go together. From there they made their reasons.

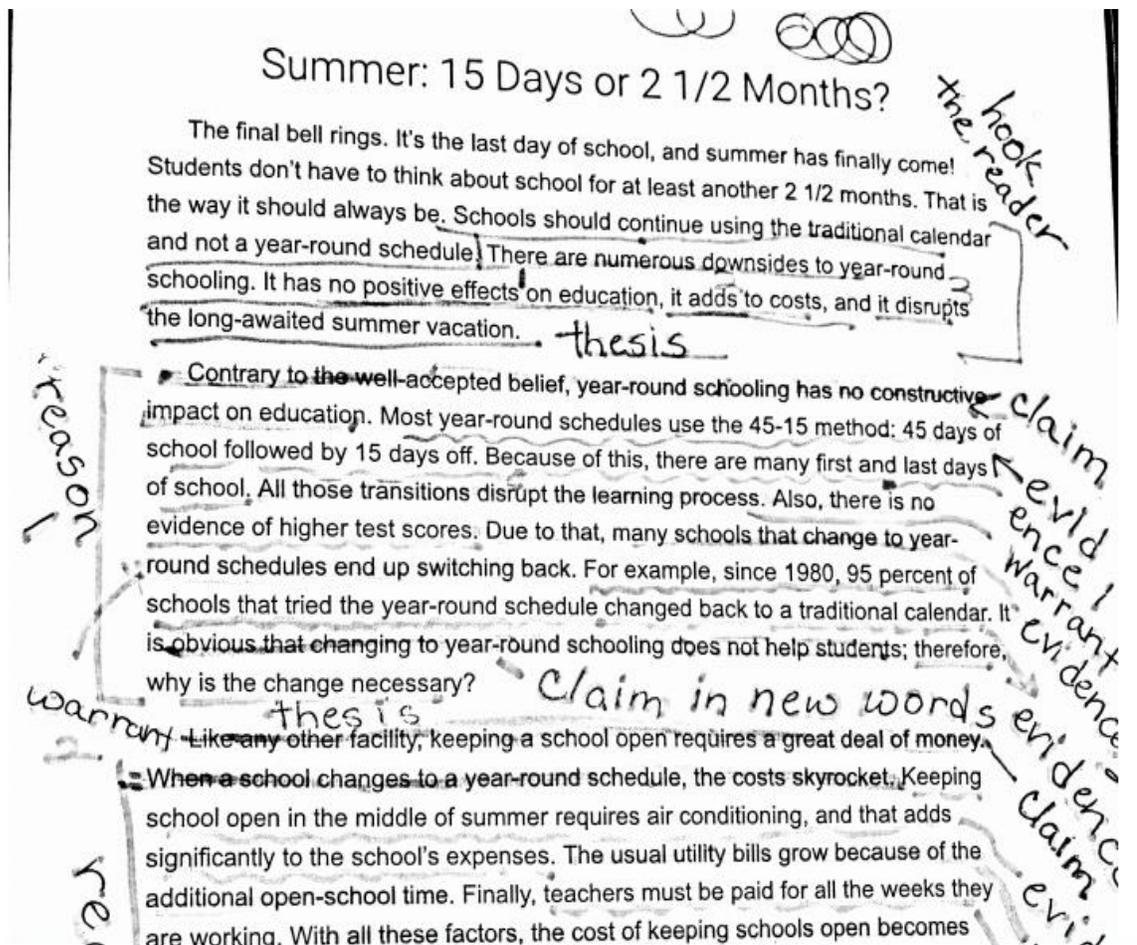
We went back to the idea of ethos and connected it to verbal processes for reported speech like “wrote,” or “stated.” We also discussed attribution, for example “According to (Professor Somebody of Somewhere University), (quote).” Each group went through each piece of evidence and discussed if the writer was trustworthy. This was an important step for them because many of them had copied and pasted expression like this example from the boys’ chart, “According to the survey, 77 percent of students and more than 80 percent of teachers and parents say homework is important or very important.” They had a link below the quote on their charts but had noted no details about the survey like who conducted it, or how many people had been surveyed. Discussions of trustworthiness bridged to bringing in other voices of authority into their writing. You will see examples of how students developed this skill in Beatriz’s, Ravi’s and Ibrahim’s end of the year writing sample in Chapter 6.

Listening to the debate video, I noticed they had begun to elaborate without prompt. For example, the boys did not just say homework was good because it let parents know what was going on in school, but elaborated that if parents know what is going on they can get help if their kids need it. They added that having homework could enable parents to help their children directly on a particular homework assignment or by making them go to afterschool homework help. However, they did not use a great deal of emotive language in their debate with the exception of the girl’s repetition of the word, “stress.” I found that interesting in light of their success in analyzing the loaded words in *Not Written in Stone* and the debates described above (fieldnotes, March 18, 2020).

### ***Building Toward Essays***

We next read and broke down model argumentative essays piece by piece. To refer back to Teaching and Learning Cycle terminology, we were beginning to deconstruct text. A monochromatic version of an originally highlighted record I scribed as students broke down the parts of a model text on year-round school follows (Thoughtful Learning, 2018). Different colors help to make patterns of stages clearer.

**Figure 4.11 Deconstruction of Text**



We deconstructed their writing as well. Students wrote paragraphs individually using their debate research. They would then share their writing with their team to

develop a team paragraph, then we discussed those paragraphs. Finally, they went back to revise their individual paragraph. We repeated this cycle for the introduction, body, and conclusion paragraphs.

The students talked about what they saw. For example, in discussing the introduction paragraphs, we found that the girls' team had a story and the boys' team a statistic to begin and give the reader background on the issue. Then the teams stated their opinion and previewed their reasons. This mirrored the way the opener on the debate team started their debate.

Together they found the stages of argument through these discussions of model texts and later applied them to their own work. They addressed what Derewianka and Jones (2016) above called the statement of position, including issue and background information, thesis or position, and preview of arguments (class transcript, April 30, 2018).

The stages were not the only thing they explored in their discussion. By talking through their drafts together they were able to make changes. Noora noticed wording, "I think we should have used more like stronger words that like instead of really bad. We could like say awful or horrible?" Tala helped us become more aware what the audience knew and did not know. The following is taken from our class on April 30.

Tala: We could have explained more things like how we said "and ALEKS." We should explain like what ALEKS is and what ALEKS does for us.

Me: Excellent point. Like, it's really important to know who you're talking to. Not everybody knows what ALEKS is.

Tala: Yeah, if we explain ALEKS and we could had more than just one [assignment].

Aanush: I thought ALEKS was someone.

For a few minutes after this they expounded upon what they considered the excruciating details of the homework involved in the individualized math online program, ALEKS, and talked about how they could tell those details to the reader to make the case stronger. After each class, the students incorporated new ideas into their original work. They had all created an argumentative essay.

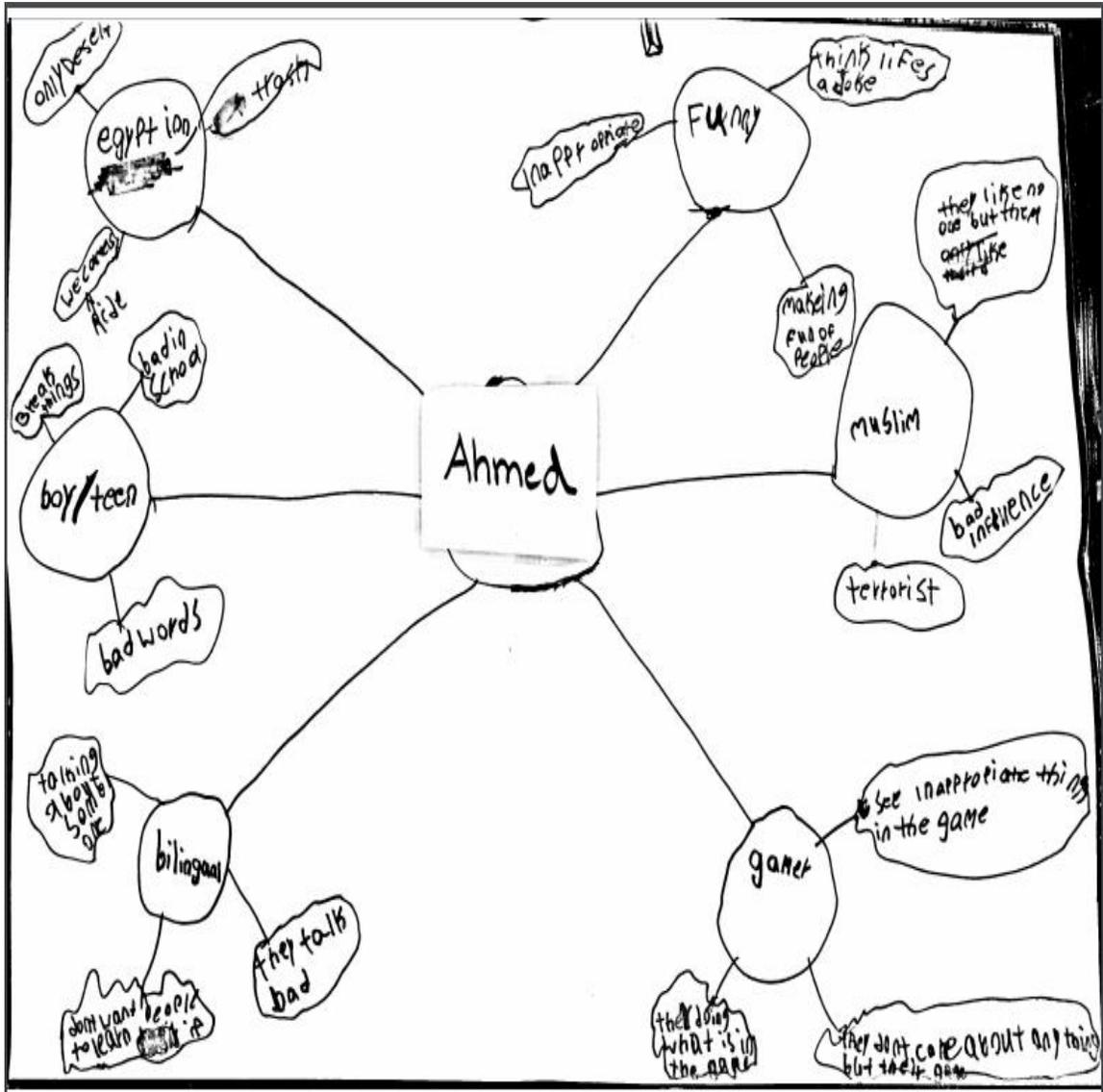
### **Choice Projects**

The last series of lessons was the students' choice projects. They were to write to someone about changing something they thought needed changing. We had just finished our essay and a long week of standardized testing before coming into the last two weeks of school full of activities and schedule changes. We had done a couple of activities to make such broad directions clear. For a few minutes one day we just did a silent brainstorm. I wrote self, family, school, community, and world each in the center of a piece of paper. Students rotated with two minutes at each paper writing ideas for changes they wished to see in that arena. We shared out thoughts.

A couple of weeks before, during a class shortened due to state-mandated testing, we had created identity circles. The next class we added assumptions or stereotypes that

we had encountered about the groups with which we identify. For example, Tala identified as “Mix” and the next to that identity she wrote, “not mix” and “Your just white. How r u Black.” Ahmed’s identity chart is below.

Figure 4.12 Ahmed’s Identity Chart



After our discussion, students had their project ideas. All the final projects related to something they had identified as pieces of their identity. For example, Ahmed identified

as a gamer and he was upset that gamers were underestimated, so he wrote to the Olympic Committee attempting to prove gaming deserves its place as an Olympic event. Tala wrote to a local grocery store chain which had denied her mother check cashing privileges while letting a white man cash his check moments later. Aanush wrote to a Unitarian minister, saying that she should share the ideas of Hinduism with her congregation and explained their virtues, after he wrote that people believe Hindus “stink,” “have a lot of Gods” and are “poor.” Noora shared that sometimes people think she and other girls are “mean,” so she wrote asking the sixth-grade principal asking to be allowed to create posters around the school to start a campaign of kindness. Her request was granted. You will see copies of Ibrahim, Beatriz, and Ravi’s projects in Chapter 6.

Within a few actual class days during the last weeks of school, with very little prompt or pressure, all the students had written strong pieces of argument to challenge the injustices they saw in their world. Freire would have been proud.

## **Conclusions**

Through the unit students developed critical literacy and proficiency in academic language as they moved from image to text, and from spoken to written text. Through group work and class discussion they learned to deconstruct text. They built on each other’s ideas. I learned that by having an awareness of SFL and the stages and metafunctions of an effective argument, I could provide opportunities for them build those skills together. It was in the final projects, however, in which the students shone. They researched because they wanted to prove their point and make change. They wrote for justice. They used their “strong words” when they had a reason to do so.

In the next chapter, I will explore more deeply the protest unit. As I analyzed the transcripts of classes over the entire unit, the themes of power and control proved central. Those themes were explored as they emerged in the series of lessons inspired by the student discussions of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shootings and subsequent protests.

## **Chapter 5: Power and Choice**

### **Overview**

In this chapter, I will trace the themes of power and choice across the district, school, teacher and student levels. I will illustrate how these layers of choices made content personal and motivated students to develop critical awareness and enabled me, as a practitioner researcher, to design lessons that would hold their interest. I continue to show a portrait of students as they practice a critical SFL.

### **Scaffolding in the Classroom**

Scaffolding in the classroom is different than what happens between a parent and a child. I see my students for 90 minutes a day, and I have up to 15 of them at a time (which is much fewer than other teachers). Teachers need to scaffold language both through their lesson plans and on the fly in the course of discovering what the students already know and what they have to say.

Hammond and Gibbons (2005) and Gibbons (2009) wrote about the kind of talk in the classroom that scaffolds student learning. To facilitate language development in emerging bilinguals, a teacher:

- Listens to what students want to say and avoids ‘scripted responses’
- Engages students in lengthy exchanges so that turns are longer, ideas can be revisited, reworded and refined
- Builds on students’ previous experiences
- Recaps discussions at various stages and makes key points explicit

- Appropriates students' contributions to provide a more technical or academic wording when necessary
- Allows students more time to respond (perhaps by asking for further details).

(Gibbons, 2009, p.158 in Derewianka & Jones, 2 p.55)

I often fear that students are getting off track or worry that my class is always the noisy one. I am afraid the other teachers are getting more done. I feel pressure about all the things that need to be accomplished. However, without talk, teachers cannot really know where to start and how to proceed. Especially for emerging bilinguals who often have stronger speaking and listening skills than reading and writing skills and whose backgrounds are often so far from that of their teachers, talk is essential. Students and teachers need to build on what they know and what they care about. Is school not a training ground? If students do not feel free to ask for clarification and push back on what they feel is wrong within the school, how will they learn to do so effectively?

### **Background**

They came into the classroom snickering as if they had once again made a grand discovery about how to get something past their teachers. Ibrahim told Ahmed that the students on the bus were talking about a way to get out of class and go outside if they joined "this protest thing." I am not sure whether they thought I was too obtuse to pick up on their conversation, or they did not count me among those they must bother fooling, but I joined in the discussion anyway. I asked them if they knew what the "protest thing" was about.

Ever honest, Ahmed and Ibrahim said they did not really care as long as they got to go outside and get out of class. Ravi said he thought it was something about guns. Tala said that she heard it was about school shootings. Everybody was foggy on the details.

Having just finished a book called *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* by Snyder (2017) detailing turning points from democracy to fascism in the twentieth century and their current day parallels, red lights flashed in my head. I was afraid my students were willing to stand with the crowds without thinking, to trade moments of pleasure for taking thoughtful positions on issues. They were giving up their power to use their voice to promote change. Rather than pull something from outside and following the calendar of lessons exactly as I had planned to start this part of our quest to use literacy as a tool of power, I decided to start with what they brought into the classroom that day.

Clark, Fairclough, Ivanic and Martin-Jones (1990) wrote, “the development of a critical awareness of the world ought to be the main objective of all education, including language education.” They continued, “Language awareness programmes ought therefore to help children develop not only operational and descriptive knowledge of the linguistic practices or their world, but also a critical awareness of how these practices are shaped by, and shape, social relationships and relationships of power” (p.249). What better way to show the power of literacy than to guide students to not waste an opportunity to make themselves heard on an issue they brought to the classroom?

In this chapter, I will discuss the most common themes that arose as I coded class transcripts, throughout the study: choice and power. I will examine how these themes at

the district, school, class and individual levels fostered students' development of critical literacy skills. I will focus on the section of the argument unit which began when Ahmed and Ibrahim walked into school talking about the protest, and how they could get out of class. I resolved to use this opportunity to at least let them know what they were getting themselves into if they chose to join the protest.

### **The Inciting Event**

On Valentine's Day, 2018, a nineteen-year-old former student named Nicholas Cruz walked into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida with an AR-15 rifle in his bag. He activated the fire alarm, shot some students and staff as they poured into the halls in response to the alarm, and others as they hid in their classrooms. Seventeen students and staff were killed and seventeen were injured.

Cruz had been expelled from the school. He had a history of violent outbursts and had battled mental illness. He showed a pronounced fascination with guns and knives: keeping them by his side, showing them to other students, and posing with them in his Instagram posts. He had even called himself "a school shooter" (CNN, 2018).

After the day Cruz destroyed the lives of so many at their school, the survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting took action. They called for reform in gun laws. The protest Ibrahim had heard about on the bus was to be a nationwide, 17-minute protest calling for stricter gun laws. Each of those minutes was to represent one of the lives taken. Students in my district learned about the work of the students in Parkland and asked if they could organize protests at several district schools including my own.

The day after Ibrahim and Ahmed started the conversation about the protest, our class read a Newsela (2018) adaptation of an article originally published in *The Washington Post* about the Marjory Stoneman student activists, “Student critics of modern gun laws speak out.” When open coding (Merriam, 2009) the data for this unit, I found the themes of power and choice ran throughout. I noted my powerlessness when my students asked me if it was okay to join the protest. I told them honestly that I had no power to give them permission to join the walkout. I could neither decide the policy nor what they should do. I related what I had heard: some districts were talking about counting students tardy, others were just talking logistics, and that a nearby district had suspended students at the end of the previous year for walking out with their teachers who were striking. We had also previously read and written about heroes who had sacrificed greatly for their convictions.

Two of my students had already been suspended that year. I was afraid to encourage action that could count against them. If the conversations had ended there, the protest section of our argument unit and the learning that took place thereby would not have been possible. I initially felt powerless to do anything other than inform them. I said the choice was theirs. This brings up the other theme that ran throughout the argument unit, choice. Choice and power extend from the institutional to the interactional levels, both in action and linguistic choices, which I will demonstrate.

### **Power and Choice at the District and School Level**

Had the suspensions of students for walking out of classes to support their teachers in contract negotiations in the other district not caused such a huge controversy,

I am not sure whether my district would have dealt with the protest in the same way or how many of my students would have participated in the walkout.

As it turned out, within a few days of when the topic first arose in our class, both my district superintendent and then the principal of my school sent out letters to all the parents via email. I read the letter from our principal to my class. I did this not only because the protest had already been a topic of conversation, but also because emailed notices from school only occasionally reach the parents of my students, due to the language of delivery, technological glitches or other reasons. To assume that students would know about the letters just because they had been sent via email to their parents would have been a mistake. The lack of translated versions of the email and paper copies inhibited the power of the parents of some of my students.

During data analysis, I read and re-read each letter many times. I used critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2002; Gee, 1999; Rogers, 2011; Rogers, 2013; Gee, 2014) to look at the ideational (field), interpersonal (tenor), and textual (mode) metafunctions of the letters. I highlighted elements of each metafunction in a different color. I closely examined convergences in these areas of register to dive more deeply into the meaning of the letters. (The details of my analysis can be found in Chapter 3 and the definitions of the terminology in Chapter 2.) Although I never taught this group of students, the metalanguage: “field, tenor and mode,” or “ideational, textual, and interpersonal,” later in the argument unit, we did often take a highlighter to text to look at specific kinds of word choices connected to those metafunctions, as a means for them to get a fuller

understanding of how language choices create meaning. The theme in many of the superintendent's sentences was "we," the district, the permission givers.

The superintendent framed the conversation with his linguistic choices. Students could choose whether to protest or not, but this choice would be tempered with reminders of behavior expectation. This often happened within the same sentence. For example, the superintendent wrote, "We remain confident our students will demonstrate the values and behavior we expect of them each day as they engage in this national conversation, while respecting the viewpoints of all" and "We also respect their Constitutional right to free speech, particularly when it is peaceful and respectful." Students' choice and power could be realized if they followed the rules imposed by the district. Discipline would only be required if students did not follow the rules "We do not anticipate disciplinary actions will be needed if students respect the guidelines for any activity as outlined my school principals." The voice of the district told families, at least the ones who could and did read the email, "Leadership teams will determine parameters for any activity" as he positioned the students as "capable citizens, confident in their voices, and caring."

My students and I often perform the same kind of analysis. We look at what the author assumes the readers know or take for granted (the theme) and the new information (the rheme). In the case of my students, I use this technique because they often need help examining the information, they have given the reader in their writing and what they have not. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, developing writers often have will talk about a "he" or "it" who was never identified or start but not develop a topic. In the superintendent's letter, the information that was taken as a given was that the students would follow

behavioral expectations determined by their administrators. This would allow them to participate in the protest if they chose. These choices serve the textual metafunction to create meaning across a text.

The superintendent’s letter opened the arena for the principal to take action to communicate specifics of the plan for the protest. Building principals or “school leadership teams” were set up as architects of the plans to make both participation and nonparticipation in the protest possible and safe. They were to determine the guidelines. However, the register of our principal’s newsletter positioned the students as the architects of the plan. This is particularly evident in the processes of the email. As explained in Chapter 2, processes are the way systemic functional linguistics talk about the choices one makes in kinds of verbs to create meaning.

Table 5. 1 Processes Present in Administrator Letters

Processes describing the administrative team	Processes describing the students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to support</li> <li>• worked with</li> <li>• understand</li> <li>• created plan that supports and maintains safety of students</li> <li>• honor</li> <li>• worked closely with</li> <li>• working on support plans</li> <li>• realize</li> <li>• are consistently working toward educating students who are passionate leaders and are succeeding</li> <li>• address concerns</li> <li>• appreciate partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approached the administrative team</li> <li>• report</li> <li>• make an announcement</li> <li>• choose not to walkout</li> <li>• choose to walkout</li> <li>• reached out</li> <li>• are passionate leaders</li> <li>• aware of the world</li> <li>• to be civically active</li> <li>• have their voices heard</li> <li>• impacted by guns</li> <li>• will ask for</li> <li>• will invite</li> </ul>

In class, students take a highlighter to the processes in text to show which verbs are associated with which actors and discuss why the author made those choices; I did that with the principal's letter. The administrative team was positioned to support the students who were to be the leaders of action. The students were "aware," "civically active," "passionate leaders" with whom the administrative team would work to "support," "understand," and "honor." In our principal's letter the power of the students and their right to choose was ever present.

Unlike the superintendent's letter, the principal's was mitigated only once in the form of an appeal to the families, "please help us by communicating to your student that leaving (*district name*) property or heading to areas outside of the planned walkout area may result in disciplinary consequences." This followed a description of the safety procedures regarding the security resource officer restricting the area, it called on families to cooperate and even then "may" only have resulted in discipline.

The principal outlined our school's plan in this excerpt of her letter:

On Wednesday, March 14 at approximately 9:58 a.m., several student leaders will report to the office and will make an announcement that will honor the victims of the Parkland shooting. They will ask for 17 seconds of silent reflection after reading all 17 names. Following, they will invite any student who wishes to walk with them outside to do so. According to the students' plan, the walkout portion of the protest will last for 17 minutes and will be marked with an air horn at the beginning and at the end. **I want to reiterate that the walkout will be completely optional, and students may choose not to participate.** (*bolding in*

*original text*) Because we do not know how many students will participate, we carefully created a supervision plan to honor all the students who choose to walkout as well as those who decide to remain in class (principal, 2018).

Again, the choice of whether to act lay with the students. They were the ones making the plans and announcement inviting others to walk out. Even the bolding in the text emphasized that students could choose. The principal positioned the school administrative team as responders to the student action. The students were the powerful deciders.

She and the superintendent both repeated the word safety in its many forms as shown in excerpts from both their letters:

- “Keeps student safety at the forefront”
- “Student safety is our primary responsibility”
- “We will work closely with staff members to ensure supervision, care and safety in the best interest of students.”
- “Safety and security in all our schools”
- “A peaceful and safe learning environment for your children”.

Many English teachers might know the signpost from *Notice and Note*, Beers & Probst (2012) called “Again and Again,” noting that if a word is repeated again and again in a novel, it is a clue to the novel’s theme or conflict. In discourse analysis, the same is true. This repetition of the word safety across the two letters was likely meant to ease the worries of the parents regarding the protest. How the idea flowed across the entirety

of both the letters, picked up again and again, reflects the textual as well as the ideational metafunctions in this effort to relieve parent worries.

The administrative response created a situation in which students could join the protest or not with no repercussions from the school. Both the principal and superintendent placed the decision of whether each student would protest in the hands of the student. The students and their parents were repeatedly assured of safety no matter which path they chose.

I read the principal's email to the students. It did help them feel safe and empowered with choice. Perhaps it just made the choice less difficult. I no longer had to be worried my students might be suspended. Four of the students expressed hesitation to protest after our first discussion. After the principal's letter, all but one of my ESOL 3 students, decided to join the protest. Schoolwide, most students protested, but others did not. For some that decision was ideological and for others it was connected to trauma associated with guns and protests.

### **Teacher-Driven Choices and Power**

In every moment in the classroom, a teacher makes choices from curriculum and lesson planning to classroom management. Whether to smile at a student and say hello, remain distant, or scold; whether to sit this student next to that or allow free seating, whether to talk more or listen more... all those things matter. Since I was only one of two specialists working with the emergent bilinguals at my school and the only one at my level, with no set curriculum, and I had the trust of my administrators, I had the power to

design my own lessons and curriculum. Without that freedom, I would not have been able to design this series of lessons.

### ***The Protest Sequence of Lessons***

The first two lessons in this sequence occurred before the protest and the rest of the sequence started the afternoon after the protest. The first lessons happened in the middle of the consumerism unit, because neither current events nor student needs decided to lend themselves to my predetermined plan. To put it briefly, this sequence of lessons involved annotating the article mentioned above on the student protesters called “Student critics of modern gun laws speak out” (Newsela, 2018) and then summarizing it. Then, after the protest, students made a sign to show the message they each were sending as they stood outside those 17 minutes. The one student who chose not to protest made a sign for a message he wanted to give the world. The following day, they shared their posters first with me as they were finishing and then presented them to the class. Next, they turned their message into a letter. After I read the letters, I noticed most students had reasons/evidence, but they were not developing and explaining those reasons to form warrants. I took a break from the protest work and we did “Slip or Trip?”, a lesson plan suggested by Hillocks (2011) referred to in Chapter 4 which takes the form of a murder mystery in which students explain the significance of the clues in the text and illustration to help them become more aware of the necessity to explain their evidence. We also read letters written by previous students at my school which caused change. Finally, we returned to our letters, and after a discussion, they made their final version of those letters.

*The Article*

The first activity involved students annotating the article from Newsela on the protests carried out by the survivors of the shooting. They wrote what they already knew, we shared background knowledge, and they read through the article looking for a powerful word that struck them in each paragraph. The next day, they wrote a summary of the article. We did this before the protest so students could make an informed choice about whether or not to join the protestors. This was also before the administrators had given students permission to protest if they chose. I struggled with the choice of article.

I grappled with which version of the article to use. One of the features of Newsela is that it includes three or four adaptations of each of its articles from popular newspapers at different Lexile (reading) levels. In the version with the lower Lexile level, that much nearer the reading level at which my students test, the language was impoverished. Many of the key features of argumentative writing were missing. This may sound strange as both articles were not of the argument genre, but rather recounts. But cohesion within clauses, emotive language, grammatical metaphor and gradation can be found in both genres. The use of language in the lower Lexile article was not that at the level to which I wish my students to aspire. For example, the first paragraph in the 1160 version read as follows:

The teenagers captured the sound of gunfire on their phones as the shooting began. When it continued, they texted their parents and took to social media to share each fearful moment with the world outside their school.

Then it was over and 17 people were dead. Within a day, as they continued to express their thoughts online and on air to reporters, the survivors' expressions of grief turned to calls for political action. (Newsela, 02/20/18)

The 560 Lexile article read:

There was a terrible attack at a school in Florida on February 14. It was a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Seventeen people died. The students who lived shared their thoughts online. They also talked to reporters. It was not enough for them to be sad. They want to do something to stop this from happening again. They want the government to help. (Newsela, 02/20/18)

The year following this research, I asked my students to compare the articles. As one of my students put it, the lower Lexile article “just tells you what happened, but the other one helps you know how it felt.” I want my students to learn to write well, so they need models of good writing.

The 560 Lexile version has short, choppy sentences. The themes are repetitive and uninteresting. Take the second paragraph, there are no marked themes in which the author puts something other than the normal subject in the first part of the sentence. The sentences begin 17 people, the students, they, it, they, they. There are no connections and transitions within the sentences. In the “easy” version the grammatical metaphors were absent. The lower Lexile version was meant for middle school readers, but it contained none of the attributes of developmentally appropriate academic writing on Christie and Deriwanka’s (2008) continuum discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Middle school

emergent bilinguals need more time to break down and practice with complex texts, not less. So even though, as once again Ibrahim did not hesitate to let me know, “Ms. Fujii. I don’t get it. This is hard. This is **frustrating**,” we persisted anyway (fieldnotes, February 27, 2018).

### Students and Power

Students began the article by paraphrasing the title. Table 5.2 demonstrates what the students wrote using their exact spelling and capitalization. I made the conscious decision to start with what the students knew and could discover or, their individual and collective “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).

Table 5. 2 Student Annotations on Protest Article

	<b>Title paraphrase</b>	<b>What I already knew</b>
Ravi	Protest by the florida school shootout survivors for gun control	Gun control is basically making it harder to get guns. Getting gun like machine guns gonna be harder a lot. 17 people were killed at MSHschool. the shooter wanted to be a professional gun shooter. He was said to be crazy
Aanush	The students that are survived from recent shooting are protesting about Gun Control.	What I already know about Gun Control and Marjory Stoneman Douglas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not kill people</li> <li>• Gun shooting should be limited</li> <li>• He got suspended before he got expelled because he was bringing stuff he was not supposed to bring.</li> <li>• You can buy gun at 18 →21.</li> <li>• Restrictions</li> </ul>
Ahmed	Laws about guns are bad	I know 17 people died
Tala	(Didn’t write anything. Worked with Beatriz)	<u>5 What I already know about gun control.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People (over 18) can get a gun But there changing It</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

Beatriz	Wan People protesting to change it to 21 years so people can get guns not 18	<p>What I already know about gun control ... and shooting...</p> <hr/> <p>The person that shot people was from that school. He got expelled. People knew he was going to do it but they didn't tell.</p> <hr/> <p>Can buy guns at 18. killed 17 people. A coach stood in the way to save a student and he was killed.</p> <hr/> <p>The killer posted a comment on youtube that he wanted to learn how to use guns because he wanted to kill people at his school.</p> <hr/> <p>The killer had an automatic gun. Now it is happening all around the world all because of that student.</p>
Ibrahim	The survivors said Guns are really Bad	What I already know about Gun Control + 17 PeOPle got killed and A lt of Familis were sad and mad
Noora	(no paper)	

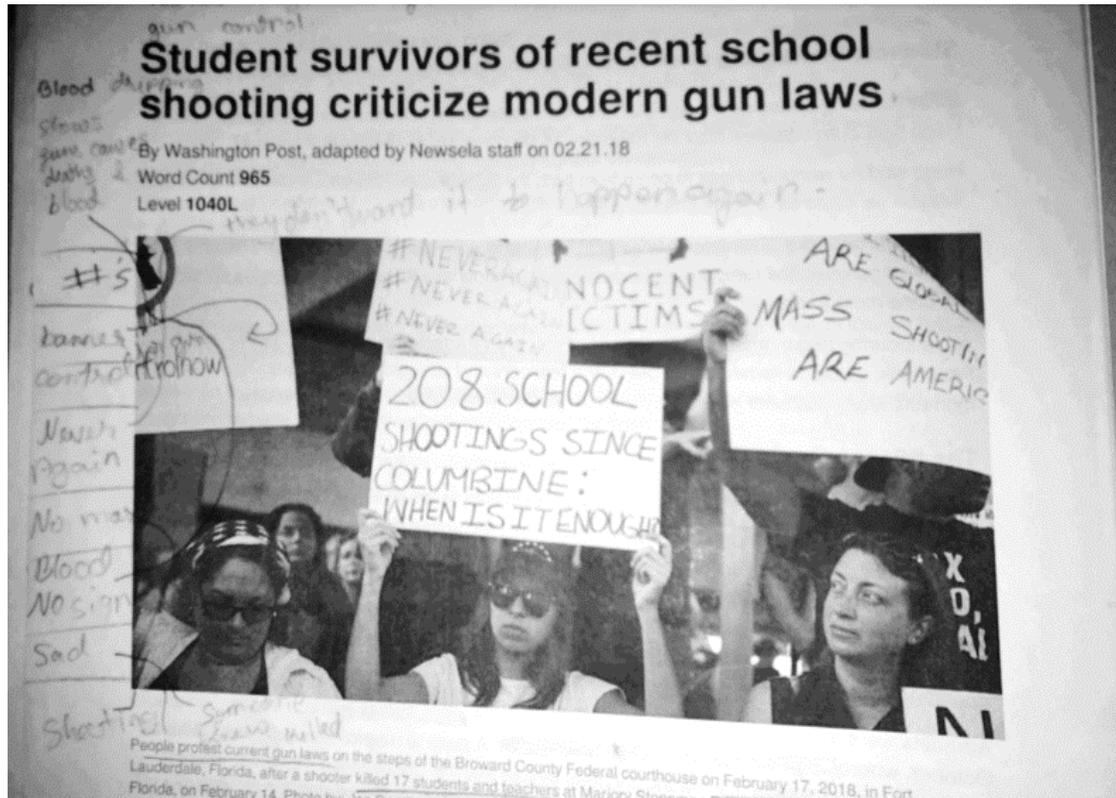
Just from looking at the title, “Student survivors of recent school shooting criticize modern gun laws,” students were able to get a general idea of the article. With varying degrees of sophistication students got the thrust of the paragraph. For example, Ibrahim’s “The survivors said Guns are really Bad” did not identify the survivors of what or their specific action, but neither did the original title. Others were much more specific and added to the title elements from knowledge they brought into the discussion. Ravi specified the location of the shooting, “Protest by the florida school shootout survivors for gun control.” Beatriz, added a specific gun control measure to the title, “People protesting to change it to 21 years so people can get guns not 18.”

As a group, they had a great deal of background knowledge. Between the time we first discussed the protest a few days earlier and when we started the article, they had

gone from a vague knowledge of the shooting to quite specific details especially about the shooter. Beatriz was much better at writing it down, but both Tala and Beatriz, heavy users of social media, showed a knowledge of specifics about the shooting and shooter. They shared information about the coach that stood in the way of the shooter to protect students, the shooter having been expelled, that “people knew he was going to do it but they didn’t tell,” and the shooter’s social media post. Students also had knowledge of specific gun control provisions. Tala and Aanush wrote about changing the age at which guns can be bought from 18 to 21. Ravi knew about the initiative to limit the sale of automatic weapons. Ibrahim knew a lot of families were sad and mad and Aanush gave the directive, “Do not kill people,” as something he already knew.

The next step was the sharing of this background knowledge in a discussion. By sharing what students knew from their various literacies, we built a knowledge base to begin our analysis. Students were able to each bring their strengths to the conversation. My heavy social media users, Tala and Beatriz, had watched videos that informed our discussion. Ibrahim and Ahmed talking about getting out of class, brought the idea of these series of lessons to the class. Ravi and Aanush were my stronger readers and they were already bringing information from the text into the discussion. By the end of this step of the lesson, students had had time to work as individuals, then with partners, and then through whole class discussion to connect with what they collectively already knew to inform the next step of analysis.

Figure 5.1 Ravi's Annotations



Our class began with analysis of the picture to bridge into written text analysis, as we also began reading the texts of others to support our writing. The directions were as follows:

- Work with a partner.
- Look at the picture. What does it show you?
- What do you see in the picture?
- Jot down what it tells you and how you know it.

When Ravi scanned and jotted on the photograph as he was working with Aanush, he made connections to the strategies he found in his commercial analysis. He wrote “#”.

At first, I thought this was about the hashtag signs, but he told me the protesters were using logos, trying to emphasize the number of shootings to prove how grave a problem guns are. He noted the poster only partially shown in the top left corner had “blood dripping shows guns cause deaths & blood.” This is interesting in that in his second letter draft he uses his verbs, processes, skillfully to show that guns kill people. He also cited the emotion of the subjects of the photograph “sad...knew someone killed.” He was already analyzing how interpersonal metafunction of language operates.

Next, they went through the whole article and looked for “powerful words” like the ones we had looked for in our commercial analysis. Those directions read, “Find a powerful or central word in article. Read each paragraph with a partner or alone. Think of the meaning of the paragraph. What is the most central or powerful word? Write it next to the paragraph and explain why you picked it.” The students generally picked emotive words as powerful. They seemed to be focusing on the powerful over the key words, judging from the content of the next day’s discussion as we built a summary. Though they all had powerful words to share, they had not all understood key details of the article that first day.

Beatriz and Tala choose words that indicated thinking about nominalization which is changing a verb into a noun which helps one pack much more information into a sentence. They underlined either the process or the nominalization and then wrote the other form next to it: “consideration/consider,” “leaders/lead,” “sympathizes/sympathy,” and “demonstrate/demonstration.” They picked emotive words and phrases to underline “heart is heavy,” “kill,” “victims,” “soul to the gun industry,” and “blood is being spilled

on the floors of American classrooms.” Aanush picked up on the line uttered by the friend of students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Guillermo Bogan, “selfishness of the gun industry” as powerful and then later addressed gun makers in his own sign and letter. He also underlined multiple words connected with violence: “blood,” “mass shooting,” “guns,” “shooting,” “gunfire,” and “captured.” He and his classmates later used the same kind of words in their own writing to create a case against guns.

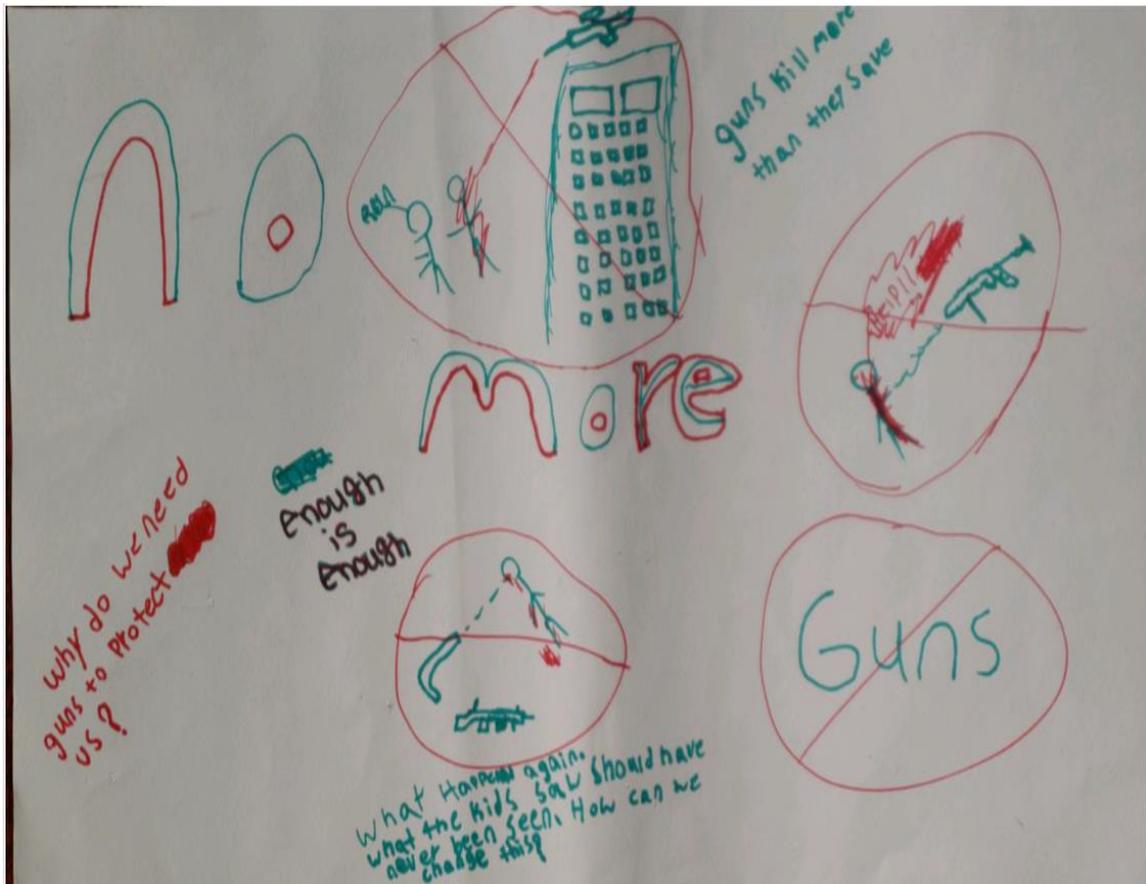
### **After the Protest**

During this series of lessons, students’ sense of their power seemed to change as their arguments developed. At first, Ibrahim and Ahmed thought that the protest was just a chance to get out of class. At the end of these lessons, all the students were writing to express themselves and their opinions on issues related to guns. They went from having no message, to solidifying one. After coming in from the protest, they reflected on what they stood for by their participation. They expressed this message through their signs. Discussions of the pictures and catch phrases helped them refine their thinking. At first, they did not consider an audience, but later they all knew to whom they were talking. They were considering who had the power to affect gun use in those decisions. They started speaking about what they wanted people in power to do. Through the subsequent letter drafting, they further refined their thinking and developed evidence and explanations for their claims.

### ***Their Signs***

The students were full of excitement the day of the protest. None had made signs to hold during the protest, so we decided to make signs afterward. I asked them to show what they were saying through their participation.

**Figure 5.2 Ahmed's Protest Sign**



Ahmed knew what he was trying to say after the protest. Taking a closer look at his writing, we can see at the ideational level, he drew guns as the actors in violence. None of the guns had a shooter. They were killing people. His words concurred, “guns kill more than they save.” At the textual level, he used the conventions of signs. He skillfully placed the universal no or general prohibition circles through both the word “Guns” and the acts of violence, which matched the biggest text on his sign “no more

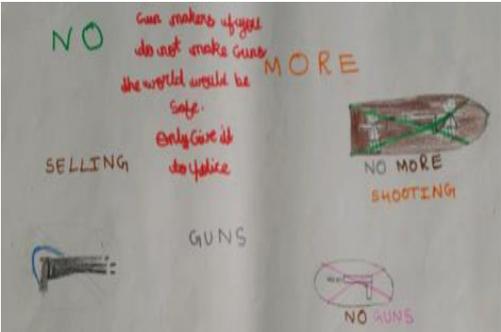
Guns.” At the interpersonal level, we see how his use of emotive pictures with blood-covered victims covered the paper. When creating his poster, he no longer chose protest as just a way to escape class. His opinions were clear, “enough is enough” and directly under a gun shooting a person in the head and another on the ground, he adds, “What Happened again. What the kids saw should never be seen.” He went on to position himself with the reader as a decisionmaker asking, “How can we choose this?” He believed he had a choice and power.

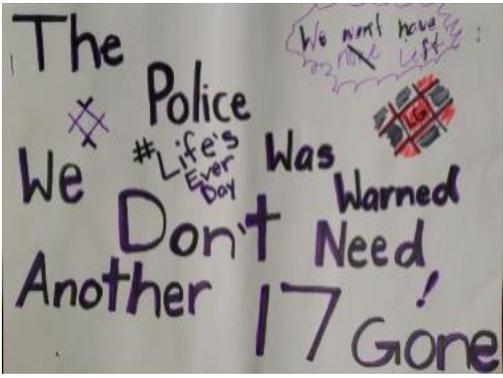
In argumentative text, awareness of audience is key (Humphrey, 2017; Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Brisk, 2015). I found my students wrote much more effective arguments when they felt they had an authentic audience as noted in the analysis of student writing samples in the following chapter. One of the texts I did not include in Chapter 6 was a standardized prompt. Though the test took place very near the time when the students were writing their choice project, the students wrote very little and what they did write showed far fewer language choices typical of effective argument. The power of student arguments varied according to whether they had agency in choosing their battles.

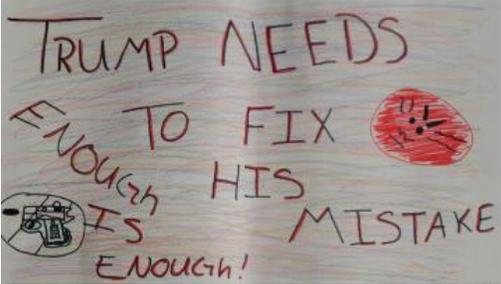
Before the protest work, we had worked on matching reasons and language to audience in the consumerism sequence of lessons, when students had to make a case to either me or their mother with reasons they or someone they knew should be bought new shoes, following reading the picture book, *Those Shoes* (Boelts, 2007) and then again in their analysis of commercials. Before they moved into writing letters, I wanted to make sure they could identify whom they were addressing. This was not always clear in their signs. In a letter there is much more room to explain and expand to address audience. I

wanted them to talk through who they wanted to do what. Discussion led to all the students identifying an audience for their letters. Table 5.3 is a chart including their names, poster, audience identified from the poster and that which came out in conferences with the students about their signs.

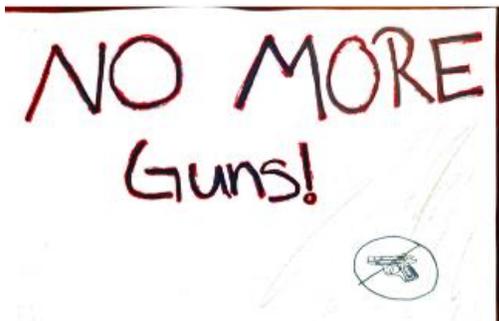
**Figure 5.3 Protest Signs, Analysis and Discussion**

Author	Sign	Audience in Sign	Comments on Audience Developed in Class Talks
Aanush		Gun makers	<p><b>Me:</b> And can you tell us who yours is addressed to?</p> <p><b>Aanush:</b> Gun factory, people who make guns.</p> <p><b>Me:</b> And why did you choose to address it to the gun factory?</p> <p><b>Aanush:</b> They may close the gun factory and they may change their opinion.</p>

Author	Sign	Audience in Sign	Comments on Audience Developed in Class Talks
Tala		A statement about the police and another about “we”	<p><b>Me:</b> Okay, and can you explain YOURS to me?</p> <p><b>Tala:</b> Okay, so I say like the police is .... Cause like the shooting at the school They kept on (saying) it on Snapchat and like neighbors would (inaudible) like shooting in his back yard, and, and yay.. Like we don't want like another 17 people gone, and we don't have like enough lives so people could get like sacrificed and all that stuff. And there's like lives taken every single day.</p> <p><b>Me:</b> OOOOh. So.... what would like people to do about it?</p> <p><b>Tala:</b> UM</p> <p><b>Me:</b> And who would you like to do what? Like <b>who</b> are you taking to? Who's your audience?</p> <p><b>Tala:</b> This is really like talking to police officers, like. to let them know like, they need to be like watching out more</p>

Author	Sign	Audience in Sign	Comments on Audience Developed in Class Talks
Beatriz		A statement about Trump	<p><b>Beatriz:</b> Okay, so Trump needs to fix his mistake, because he doesn't really care about the gun thing, so he's not doing anything about it. Like he should at least like not let teenagers...like, buy guns.</p> <p><b>Me:</b> Okay. And why is it bad to let teenagers buy guns? Give us some reasons.</p> <p><b>Beatriz:</b> Because some teenagers use them inappropriately. and they do bad things with them like killing</p> <p><b>Me:</b> And is that different? Do adults do fewer bad things than teenagers?</p> <p><b>Beatriz:</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Me:</b> Why?</p> <p><b>Beatriz:</b> Well, because teenagers are still growing up and they needa learn</p>

Author	Sign	Audience in Sign	Comments on Audience Developed in Class Talks
Ibrahim		Gun buyers	<p><b>Me:</b> So who are you writing yours to?  <b>Ibrahim</b> To the gun buyers.  <b>Me:</b> Okay. Like who?  <b>Ibrahim</b> Like the gun, like the people who buy guns... Yay  <b>Me:</b> You mean like just normal families and stuff who might buy guns?  <b>Ibrahim</b> Yeah normal yeah  <b>Me:</b> And what does that have to do with for the little kids? What do you mean by that?  <b>Ibrahim:</b> Well, because like the little kids will... The little kids will think that mom or dad's gonna do something bad with the guns, and they can like end up in jail, so they get scared.</p>
Ravi		Trump? Looks like it was signed by Trump because of positioning	I want the government or Donald Trump to give permits because there are the response (pause)... They are the people who can give like, give the permission to give permits to the people who can buy guns. But if there are no permits then the people can't use legal guns

<p>Noora</p>	 <p>A hand-drawn sign on a white background. At the top, the words "NO MORE" are written in large, red, capital letters. Below that, the word "Guns!" is written in a smaller, red, cursive font. To the right of the text, there is a simple line drawing of a handgun, which is enclosed in a circle with a diagonal slash through it, indicating prohibition.</p>	<p>Imperative. No audience identified.</p>	<p><b>Noora:</b> Mine, it says No More Guns. Because uhm, because like guns are not safe because little kids are. They can just... If you have gun and you have a little baby. they can like mess around it and it's not like safe, they don't know like if it is safe or not. Also, if you don't (<i>pause</i>)... Like if you don't have like safe neighborhood, you still don't need the guns, because you have like tables, you can throw like glass, vase, plates. That will stop them, so you don't need, really need guns if you're a police you don't need guns.</p> <p><b>ME:</b> So who are you writing this to and what do you want them to do?</p> <p><b>Noora:</b> Donald Trump</p> <p><b>ME:</b> Okay and what do you want Donald Trump to do?</p> <p><b>Noora:</b> To.. be.. careful what he's doing and not being stupid.</p> <p><b>ME:</b> Okay and not be stupid in what way?</p> <p><b>Noora:</b> Like pay attention to what you're supposed to do. Probably didn't know what happened, the shooting. Probably he didn't know what is going to happen. After the shooting happened, President Trump knew so yeah</p>
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As they were adding the finishing touches to their posters, I circulated and talked to them about their audience and reasons for their position. After the lesson, I transcribed the conversation and subsequent presentation of their signs. By the time they shared their posters, all were able to identify an audience for their letter and spoke forcefully of what they wanted the person or group to do. With each time explaining their poster, their arguments solidified. They learned from each other. For example, Ibrahim started talking about children and guns, and then Noora picked it up and added it to her argument. Tala brought up the idea that teenagers should not be able to buy guns, because many cannot control their emotions which connects to suicide and murder, and Beatriz picked it up for her argument. The students were able to write and speak more powerfully by sharing their thoughts and getting multiple chances to think through their work. .

The following sequence, recorded at the end of the class in which students made and presented protest posters, shows how they were thinking about the power in their word choice. Between the presentations and getting started writing her letter, Beatriz kept repeating that she was going to write to “Donald.” For the first five times she said it, I did not pick up on what she was doing. Finally, I figured out what was happening when Noora started doing the same thing.

Me: Noora, you want to think about that? Are you allowed to call grown-ups by their first name?

Ibrahim: Donald?

Noora: No

Me: We're gonna use our really STRONG words that help us, that help us get what we want

(6 lines omitted) What should you say instead of Donald Trump?

Ibrahim: You could say President Trump

Me: PRESIDENT Trump

Noora: NO

Beatriz: Nooo! He's not OUR president

Ibrahim: You're not supposed to call like everybody by their first name, so you're not supposed to

Beatriz; Cause I didn't vote for him

Aanush: Bad Trump

Noora: He's not my president

Ibrahim: Yeah, he's not my president either so I don't gotta call him Trump

Me: But if you want to convince him. Okay just think about it

Ibrahim: My mama and daddy can do that

Me: Think about all the strong words we talked about in our commercial presentations

*[2 minutes omitted in which most students are writing. Some ask if they can hand write]*

Beatriz: I'm not saying Dear Donald Trump. I'm putting Dear Donald

Me: [*aside to student*] Yay, would has an L-D, like could. It's funny when L and D are together, you can't really hear the L.

Beatriz: I'm putting Dear Donald

Me: And why are you putting dear Donald? Cause you don't wanna say he's your president?

Beatriz: No

Noora: He's not mine.

Tala: He's not mine.

Noora: I have a king actually. In Saudi Arabia there's a king not a president. And I'm the queen

Me: [*chuckles*] You're the queen?

Beatriz: I'm the princess.

The students not only now had an audience, they were using different salutations to reflect their feeling about the audience. Whether students chose to say Trump or Donald or President Trump reflected their feelings about the president and anticipation of how the reader would respond to those choices. None of them were at voting age. The only vote they had cast was a mock vote at school. Their choice of whether or not to support the President became reflected in their writing choices. This shows their deepening knowledge of the interpersonal metafunction of text. Beatriz decided to keep

her choice of “Dear Donald” to express her dissatisfaction even though she knew that choice was against common social practices. Other students like Ibrahim intentionally chose to follow conventions. Like Noora the queen and Beatriz the princess, my students were strong.

My role was to make students aware their words are a choice and could have consequences, not to take away that power of choice. This was connected to a conversation I had with Beatriz and Noora about a minute after the princess statement. They had been talking about who would vote for Trump, and Beatriz shared that her grandmother voted for Trump because he said he would make the world better. I went over to try to get them to go beyond the first line of their writing and was drawn into a conversation that was a bit uncomfortable for me.

Beatriz: Who did you vote for? For Hillary?

Me: Yes

Noora: Yay!

Me: You just have to be careful when you ask people that because some people like to say, and some don't.

Beatriz: Why?

Me: And, sometimes it's hard for teachers to say because you all should have your own ideas.

Noora: I have my own ideas.

Me: You do have your own ideas, so I am pretty safe. Okay, we got a letter to write.

Noora: But you trust us.

The district gave students the power to decide whether or not to protest. I had the power to decide what my students could read and how to handle the lesson. The students had the power to discuss their feelings and the causes they believed without fear of retribution in the class. None of them seemed at all worried about expressing their feelings about the President. I think I was the only one hesitant to do so. Honestly, I often wonder if my class involves too much student talking and not enough student doing, but here I see through these discussions they were growing and realizing their power through writing.

### ***The Final Letters***

Though they followed our work on the article, protest and first draft of the letter chronologically, activities in the murder mystery lessons and the model letters are in Chapter 4 of this dissertation rather than below. What follows are excerpts of the students' final draft of their letters, which along with their signs, were displayed to all who passed our way. If I had it to do again, as with their final projects, I would have helped the students to send their letters to their intended audiences rather than just put them on display. My intention was to have them develop the words to represent their presence at the protest and facilitate the ability to speak and write about all their causes in the future.

I will end this chapter with a discussion of the two students with whom I began, Ibrahim and Ahmed, to show how they began to use their literacy to advocate for what they believed. Though they openly said they just wanted to protest to get out of class in the beginning, both were trying to facilitate change when they wrote their letters.

Historically, of the seven participants, perhaps Ahmed and Ibrahim had the most significant challenges with writing fluency and technical accuracy. Of the seven letters the students in this class wrote, Ibrahim's was the shortest. He lost his rough draft. Ahmed's was full of mistakes. However, both of them knew what they wanted to say.

Ibrahim used the ideas from the discussion of his sign in his letter. He was no longer just trying to get out of class. He used his writing to change his readers as he told gun buyers,

Dear Gun Buyers,

You need to stop buying guns because it is bad for you and it is bad for the world... if you buy a gun and if you kill someone you will be in jail for killing a person and sometimes you sever (*serve*) a life sentence in prison and you will not see your family or your kids for a long time.

His letter salutation showed his audience was the gun buyers. He gave them reasons not to buy guns he felt would be convincing using a variety of field-specific, gun-related vocabulary (jail, killing, life sentence, kill) which also show his growth at in the ideational level. Also, at an interpersonal level, he explicitly addresses audience when he wrote "if you buy a gun and if you kill someone, you be in jail." His appraisal of gun

buying is clear. At the textual level, he used the conventions of letter writing and is working toward connectors that express cause and effect. he connects back to his “do it for the kids” idea in expressing the fear that penalties for gun use would take gun owners away from their children.

Ahmed put his reasons for protest to pen and paper, too. His draft was full of technical errors and passion, and had some quite nice turns of phrase. Due to an absence, he only had time for a rough draft. That meant he was not able to conference and work through errors, so his letter was the least technically proficient, with many errors in capitalization, punctuation, and how to put the pieces of the language of advocacy together.

He wrote of the dangers of guns. In terms of the ideational metafunction, His letter is full of appraisal. Ahmed attempts to sway Trump to disallow guns by constructing a world without guns. He wrote that without guns-

alot of people would be Here

no more killing

no more suesday (*suicide*) or anything like that

it would save alot of people

maybe there would be alot of living things on earth

maybe the school shooting in Parkland would never have happened.

Figure 5.4 Ahmed's Letter on Guns

Dear Mr. trump

I think if you can make it hard  
for people to get GUNS it would save  
a lot of people. if you would make  
it harder for people too get GUNS maybe  
the school shooting in Parkland  
would have never happened.

~~There~~ a lot of pe ople would be here  
if there was no more guns, there  
would be no more killing  
and no more suicide of anything  
like that. maybe there would  
be a lot of ~~the~~ liveing things  
on earth

"Guns Kill more than they save"

by ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

Ahmed's choices at the interpersonal level throughout the text, show emotive words connected to life and death: "save people," "people would be here," "suicide," and "living." When examining the textual level of Ahmed's writing, we can see that he was beginning to thread the repetition and rephrasing of important ideas through the text. Ahmed repeated the phrase "if you can make it hard for people to get guns"- "I think if you can make it hard for people to get guns it would save a lot of people. if you would make it harder for people too get guns maybe the school shooting in Parkland would never have happened." He also connected to other texts. In his letter he used quotation marks to quote the phrase some used at the protest that we talked about in class discussion, and he used on his sign, "Guns kill more than they save."

### **Summary**

At the heart of critical language awareness is the idea that people make language choices which function to communicate ideas, build relationships, and affirm identities. As I have shown in this chapter, the themes of choice and power were woven throughout this unit and across the individual, classroom, school, and district domains. In Chapter 6, I will focus on how the design of this unit supported students' writing and academic literacy over time.

## **Chapter 6: Tracking Effective Argument Writing Across Time**

### **Overview**

In Chapter 6, I present a sample of the multi-layered analysis of academic language development that happens before, during, and after instruction by the practitioner-researcher. Then I analyze the interpersonal, ideational, and textual metafunctions of arguments written by three students, Beatriz, Ravi and Ibrahim, chosen to represent the diversity of my class. The samples written in September, January, and May of the year of research demonstrate the growth that occurred in all three students as they engaged in critical language awareness.

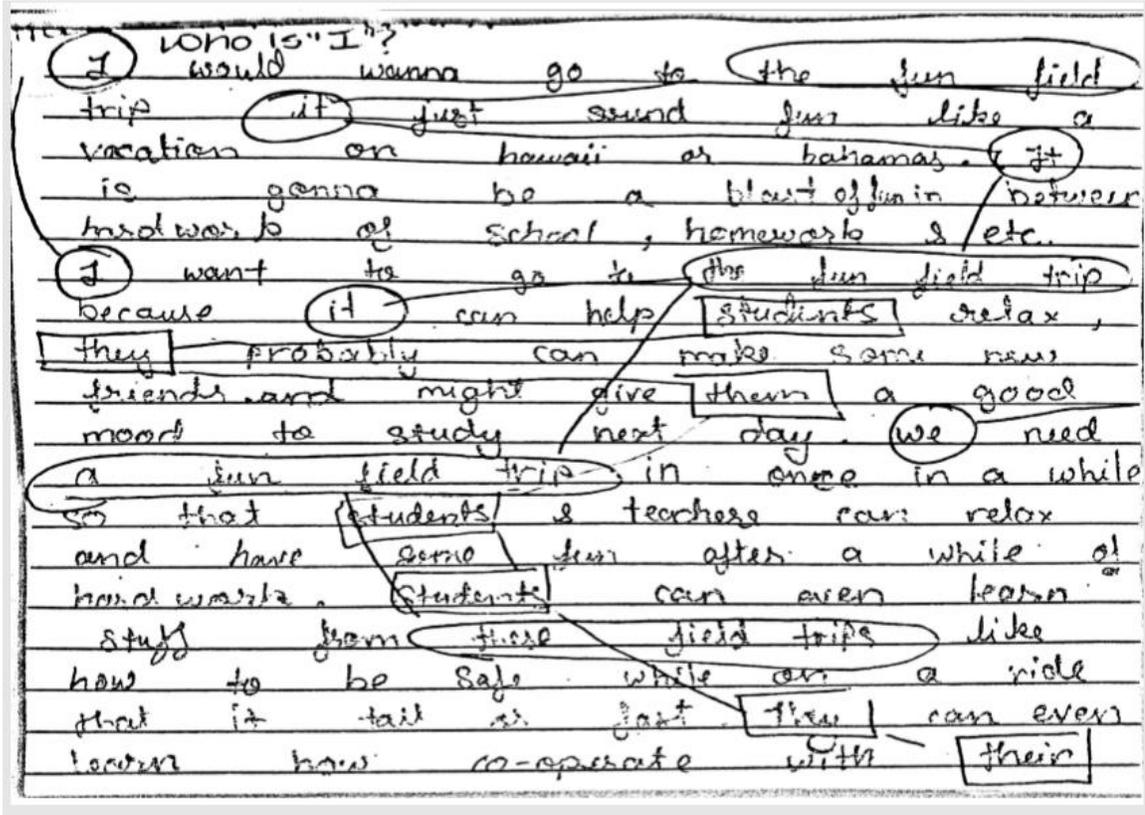
### **Introduction**

I analyze student writing every day. Sometimes I change lesson plans mid-sentence as I glance at a student's writing or when I see possibilities in a moment of class conversation. In addition, I continually confer with students about their writing. Anyone can add their name to the "quick question" or "conference" sign up list when we are working on longer pieces. I make mental notes of who is not signing up to check in with me or with peers. Each time, I evaluate, and then either answer a question they have for me or find a next step in academic language development from those quick snapshots. Their work shows me when to slow down or speed up, what kinds of things light them on fire and what puts them to sleep. After every class, I reflect on what the students wrote, or did, or said, before I plan my classes. Along with the successes in the everyday, there are always language and lesson choices that I wish I could redo.

These formative assessments are important because I know many of my students have felt helpless in the face of writing tasks in the past, and they are not privy to what Christie (1985) called the “hidden curriculum” of language. The first thing many tell me at the beginning of the year is, “I hate reading.” When I ask them what they think the best thing they have ever written is, it is usually what they just wrote with me. I want to unhide that language curriculum. I want to take the mystery out of academic language, so we evaluate the oral and written choices they and other authors make in every class. We talk about what is effective and share ideas to improve.

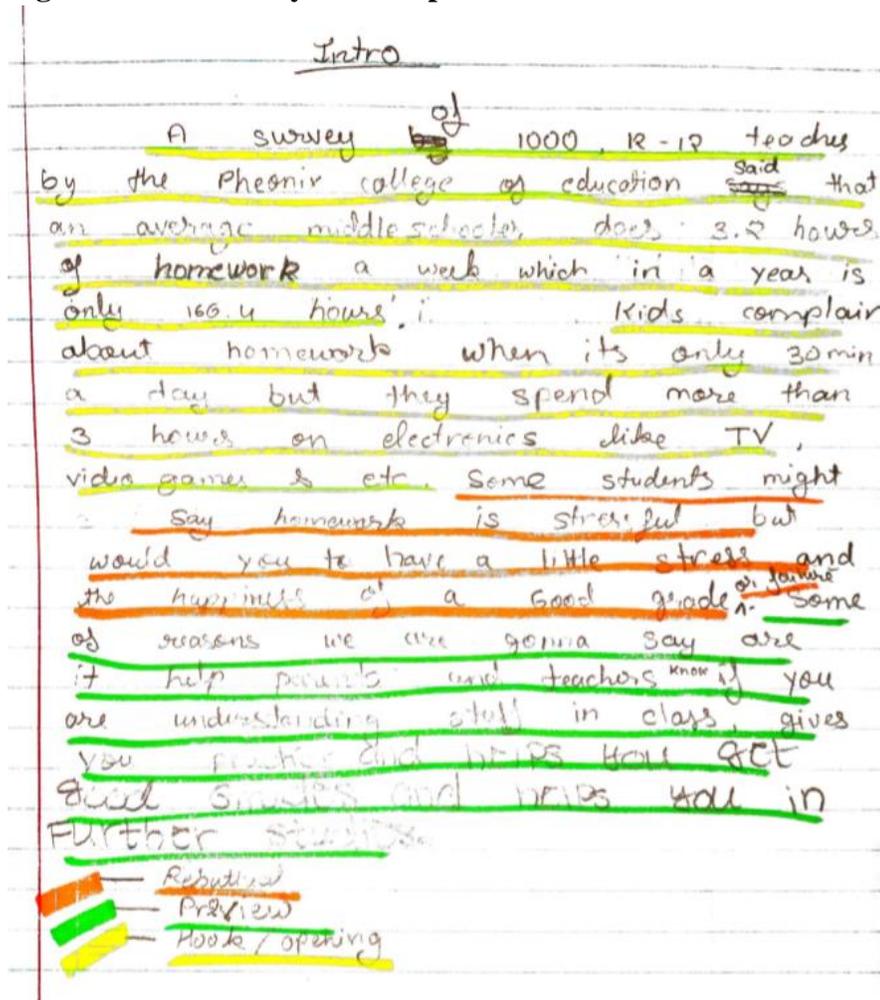
Students analyze their own work during class. This is essential to their learning. Rather than me telling them that a pronoun does not have a referent, it is more important that they become able to look at their own writing and ascertain how the information flows through the text. Below are two examples of how Ravi analyzed his own writing. The first example illustrates how he mapped out a lexical chain. He connected the nominal groups throughout his answer. I started him off with the “Who is ‘I’?” prompt. That helped him understand which subjects need more explaining.

Figure 6.1 Ravi Analysis Example 1



In the second example, he deconstructed the introduction paragraph of his argumentative essay to look at its parts. As a class, we looked at introduction paragraphs, and talked about the elements. The most important assessment happens when students apply the knowledge they have built and apply it to their own writing and determine whether it functions as they wish.

Figure 6.2 Ravi Analysis Example 2



The assessment mentioned above is multi-layered. It involves both me and the students as a group before, during and soon after each class. It sets the course for our lessons. However, to better inform my future practice and that of other practitioners, I wanted to create a fuller picture of how my students' writing changed over the course of our work together on language awareness.

In addition to the everyday assessment, I thought it was important to return to a sub-sample of my students' writing with a greater level of delicacy that is far beyond

what I usually do in the classroom. This helped to answer my research question, “In what ways can this critical language awareness support literacy development and mastery of academic language?”

To do this, I turned to my growing knowledge of Systemic Functional Linguistics to look more closely at three of my students’ written artifacts across the school year. I revisited the work of key researchers in SFL. I went back to Brisk’s (2015) rubric and noted how she had explained each element in that rubric in other parts of her book. I read and reread Humphrey’s (2017) 4X4 rubric for exposition to find the elements she considers vital when describing argument writing of students in secondary school. I revisited Schleppegrell (2004), Christie and Derewianka (2010), and Derewianka and Jones (2016) reexamining their descriptions of academic language proficiency as it connects to argument.

As I described in more detail in Chapter 3, I broke each work sample into clauses. I made a chart for each, examining the interpersonal, ideational and textual features. The charts are included in Appendix C. This analysis was not quick or easy. Yet, I know that my students make choices with language which function to communicate ideas, build relationships and affirm identities. The more delicate analysis did show me more about all those elements of argument to which my students and I aspire. In this chapter, I will focus on three students who are diverse in terms of language of origin, time in the US, access to economic resources, and gender. I examined their argumentative writing at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. I demonstrate how their growth in creating

cohesive, evidence-based arguments functions to convey important ideas, relationships, and identities.

In the following sections, I provide an overview of the writing samples, (re)introduce the three students, and then illustrate how they grew as argumentative writers. To do this, I use the frameworks of SFL as an organizing guide and share my analysis of the textual, ideational, and interpersonal functions of their written language. These layers of meaning provide insight into the choices they made as writers and how these choices accumulated into end-of-the-year writing projects that had voice, passion, and purpose.

### **Overview of the Writing Samples**

In September, students wrote in answer to a prompt adapted from a writing prompt about a mural in City Hall on the MODEL formative assessment created and marketed by WIDA. Many students did not understand what City Hall was and could not relate to the original ideas for the painting, so they had little to write. Our district team changed the prompt slightly to be about what should be painted on the school front hall.

The MODEL paper test for grades 6 - 8 is described on the WIDA website as, “an English Language proficiency assessment for students in Grades 1-12. As a flexible, on-demand assessment, this test can be administered at any time during the school year, depending on the needs of the district, school, teacher or student. Scores from WIDA MODEL Paper can be used to predict student performance on ACCESS for ELLs” (WIDA MODEL, 2020, para. 2).

First, the test started with a quiet write for one minute using the following prompt.

### Figure 6.3 September Writing Prompt

These young artists are working on a mural, which is a large painting on a wall.



Describe what you see in the picture. Write as much as you can in one minute.

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1at

a “mural” was. Next, they read along as I read, “There is a large, plain wall in the main hallway of the school. The principal has asked students for ideas of what the mural should show. These are two popular ideas. “Idea #1: Some people want the mural to show students in their team content area classes.” This was followed by four class names and pictures related to the content areas. The other popular idea was, “Idea #2: Some students want the mural to show students at different school events.” This was followed by four examples and pictures of school events.

Finally, after filling out a space for organizing their thoughts through an outline, web or other graphic organizer, students wrote in response to the following prompt, “You

will write about what you think the new mural should show. You can write about one of the two popular ideas or about your own new idea. Describe in detail what the mural will show and explain why the principal should choose your idea.”

I chose this writing artifact as an object of analysis, because it was done at the beginning of the year and because all three students wrote letters as an answer to the question. I thought it a good comparison to their final projects for which they also chose to argue in a letter format. As opposed to when students were answering other standardized prompts, they seemed to be engaged. They had a chance to talk about their ideas before writing; they did not go through writing conferences and multiple drafts.

The second writing sample was in answer to the question, “Should students be paid for performance in schools?” As a trial for a vocabulary enrichment program called Word Generation, all students throughout the school read two articles. The week of lessons around this topic was shared by all the teachers in the school. As instructed, during Monday’s class, I read the corresponding article aloud, and students practiced key academic vocabulary in pairs. Their math teachers were to work with them on word problems using the same vocabulary related to the topic. Students read about surveying and interpreting graphs about the results with their science teachers on Wednesday, and they debated the topic in their social studies class on Thursday. Finally, they were to write an essay on Friday with their English teachers. We did this after another mini debate in my class.

Looking at words, engagement and debate were to be steps in our work on language awareness. Our argument unit was just beginning when the whole-school work on

whether students should be paid occurred in January. Through all the work that week, students had gained background on the issue, vocabulary had been taught and used intentionally, and they all had something to say about the issue. The second writing sample I examined was that piece. Unfortunately, one of the three students, Ravi, had not returned from an extended winter break at that time, so I do not have this mid-year writing sample from him.

Finally, the last sample of analysis is the final writing piece of the year. Students were free to select their own projects. Writing time was limited because of the flurry of end-of-the-year activities that occurred as they wrote. They were to use all they had learned in class to write to change something they thought needed changing. All the students chose to write letters, but the topics varied greatly. (More about the Choice Projects was discussed in Chapter 4.)

I chose these artifacts because they occurred at the end of the argument unit and demonstrate how the students used literacy to affect change. This lies at the very heart of critical literacy. Like Rogers and Wetzel (2014), I believe that,

The goal of critical literacy teaching is to draw our students' attention to the ways in which discourses circulate, to the ways in which they are constructed, and how they might design practices that lead to more just and equitable social futures.

Thus, in our critical literacy classroom one of our primary concerns is to enable students to engage with social struggles in ways they find meaningful. (p.9 -10)

Throughout the unit students had choice in topics and helped guide the direction of the lessons, but the Choice Project pieces were individual. Tala's mother was denied

check writing privileges in a store when the white man before her in line got to cash his check. Tala wanted to change that, so she wrote her letter to the local grocery store chain owner. Another student saw one of his major strengths as gaming, so he wanted to prove to the Olympic committee that the next Olympics would be incomplete without adding video gaming as an event. The pieces I will detail here also have that power of purpose.

I had planned to have more time for this project, but in the end, between all the activities, the students had only a few actual writing days. This was not quite the same as the procedure followed for the single drafts of the other work analyzed, but not far different. Much of our work in the unit had been to breakdown and look at the language choices of ourselves and other authors. Between the field day, award ceremonies, parties, and trips, almost all the revisions were done independently.

### **The Students**

Beatriz was a sixth grader at the time of the study. She is originally from Puerto Rico and moved to the Midwest in the fourth grade. Spanish is her first language. She had been receiving ESOL service in my district for two years before she entered middle school. Her grades were neither exceptionally good nor bad in elementary school.

Ravi and Ibrahim were seventh graders at the time of the study. Ravi arrived from India at the beginning of the school year. He was the winner of prizes, with excellent grades at his English-medium, former school. His first language was Gujarati. Ibrahim's school experience started with many "does not meet expectations." He is now in high school, and is still struggling to meet the requirements toward graduation. After arriving in the United States from Gambia at the age of three, he has received all his schooling in

the United States. Though during their first years in the U.S. he and siblings communicated in Fula, they now communicate exclusively in English. His parents occasionally use Fula now in their home. (For a more detailed description of these students, please see Chapter 3.)

### Beatriz's Writing Growth over Time

#### *Beatriz's September Writing Sample*

Below is Beatriz's September argument piece. The words in parentheses throughout these pieces are names I have changed to protect the identity of the participants. Usually, I just wrote in the pseudonym, but when the names did not fit or made the text unclear, especially on the handwritten texts, I wrote "student name" or "principal name."

**Figure 6.4 Beatriz's September Writing Sample**

**Prepare Your Ideas**

You will write about what you think the new mural should show. You can write about one of the two popular ideas or about your own new idea. Describe in detail what the mural will show and explain why the principal should choose your idea for the mural.

✂ Monkeys ✂

Dear Principal.....

Hi! My name is (Beatriz)

I think you should choose my idea because, if we painted monkeys on the hallways, then people would really like this school and it would also be really fun. Then people could tell their friends to come to this school. And in the future this school will be legendary.

On the space for her graphic organizer, Beatriz's writing includes bows, and she used hearts for periods. On my initial notes I noted her lovely voice. Matching words and reasons to audience, combining ideas, and developing argument by connecting evidence to the claim were my initial ideas for work going forward. I noted the word "legendary." More than two years later, when I created the charts for my SFL analysis on this and Beatriz's other writing, I delved into these ideas much more deeply.

In this writing sample written early in the year, Beatriz was just starting to develop control of interpersonal metafunctions in her first letter. She addressed the principal as "Dear Principal...." leaving out the principal's name. Knowing she was a new sixth grader only a month into the school year, there is a good chance she did not know the principal's name yet. However, since both titles and whether to add a name or not is tricky in a second language, that was an area we explored later in class. It would have been more usual for a student at my school to address the principal as "Dr. Simmons." To do otherwise would be a choice in establishing one's position in relationship to the principal. As noted in Chapter 5, by February Beatriz was quite careful in her choices about whether her salutation to the President should be, "Dear Donald" or "Dear Mr. Trump" or "Dear President Trump." In September, this was not evident in her letter. Later, she would have made a different choice in salutation.

Her first sentence in the body of the letter is friendly and informal, "Hi!" The clause "you should choose my idea" is softened by the "I think," a mental process, that precedes it and weakens her claim, and she does use the modal "should" instead of something stronger like "must" or "have to," but is still a bit strong for the principal.

Often a writer might have added an “if” to emphasize the principal’s right to choose or lead with something like how good the wall would look instead of what the principal should do. The fault there might be in the prompt, however, which reads, “explain why the principal should choose your idea for the mural.” I had just taught the students to use questions to help formulate answers. Maybe Beatriz was just doing that.

Throughout the argument unit, students practiced choosing their words carefully to reflect their feelings about the subjects of their writing and looking at the choices of others. In her next letter, Beatriz will use more forms of appraisal. Here she skillfully chose the word, “legendary,” to describe a future school, if only we had monkeys on our walls. Otherwise, her forms of appraisal were limited to “really fun” and that “people would really like” the monkeys. She was already using “would” and “could” to express possibility. Her reasons, if they had been proven, might have appealed to the principal. The logic and flow of her argument will be discussed below.

In terms of the ideational metafunction which helps us understand how Beatriz communicates ideas, we see that she heavily relied on mental and relational processes “like,” “be,” and “is.” She just told the reader the monkeys were good. She did not show us how they would affect the students in the school or what the students would do better if the monkeys were there, (material processes). The only exception is that “people could tell their friends to come to the school.” This is a verbal process which would have strengthened her argument had it made logical sense in the text. She does not bring in the voices of experts or those who might disagree with the monkey notion.

The part that gives the reader the impression this is a charming writer instead of the author of academic text is its textual organization. This is the textual metafunction at work. Again, Beatriz was only eleven at the time of writing, but the evidence does not prove her argument. There are logical misconnects and gaps in what she assumes the reader knows and what the reader would know.

First, she identifies herself only by her first name. She never mentions her last name or grade. In a school of 860 students, it was a leap to think the reader would know who “Beatriz” was. She placed “You should choose my idea” in front of the part where she said what her idea actually was. Maybe this speaks to the format of the letter as a test answer rather than an actual letter. This is, however, similar to how the proficiency of students in all the WIDA states are judged.

Though she has some errors in punctuation, she is well on her way to using connecting ideas between clauses with “and,” “because,” “then,” and “if.” A next step would be working on how to divide sentences and then learning how to pack connections inside clauses.

Table 6. 1 Stages of Beatriz’s September Writing

Claim	“You should choose my idea” (painting monkeys on the wall)
Evidence	“people would really like this school”
Evidence	“it would really be fun”
Evidence	“Then people could tell their friends to come to this school”
Evidence	“And in the future this school would be legendary.”

I had trouble finding the logic in her argument when looking at the above table of her claim and the evidence she uses to support that claim. First, does having monkeys on the wall make a school likable and fun? She would have to fill in a lot of blanks to prove that. Next, “Then people could tell their friends to come to this school,” makes no sense. She knew that people go to school in the area where they live. She would have had to add something about the monkeys making people move to make that reason logical. Finally, the word, “legendary” is well chosen, but the legend has not been defined or explained.

### ***Beatriz’s January Writing Sample***

Just before the argument unit, I gave students a pretest with the following directions for their response to the question, “Should students be paid for school performance?”

### **Figure 6.5 January Writing Prompt**

***Using all the evidence and vocabulary you talked about this week, write an essay. Remember to give your opinion, evidence and explain how the evidence supports your opinion.***

The essay should have at least five paragraphs:

- ***Introduction*** (hook, why is this issue important, thesis)
- ***Evidence paragraph one*** (claim, evidence, explain your evidence and how it proves the claim)
- ***Evidence paragraph two*** (claim, evidence, explain your evidence and how it proves the claim/ warrant)
- ***Evidence paragraph three*** (claim, evidence, explain your evidence and how it proves the claim/ warrant)
- ***Add a counter argument*** into one of your other paragraphs or make a new paragraph.
- ***Conclusion*** (repeat your thesis in new words, wrap up your thinking)

These directions follow those given to students writing a five-paragraph essay in other English classes at my school. In response, Beatriz wrote the following:

**Figure 6.6 Beatriz January Writing**

This is important because of all the different opinions. I say that students should be payed for school performance because than you can keep saving money so you can get into a good collage.

My evidence is that if people get payed for school they will be motivated.They will work twice as harder.The negative thing about it though, is that they will only do it for the money not to learn.

If students get payed they can get to a good collage and get a very good job.They then would be able to help poor people and their family.Then they will be to buy food for the poor and maybe give them a house.

It would be a very good idea to pay students.

At the level of textual organization, Beatriz did mostly what the directions asked her to do. In the hook section of the prompt, she was asked to include why whether students got paid or not was important, and that is what she wrote. The statement, “This is important because of all the different opinions” fits exactly with her experience of the preceding week. Everyone at school had been talking about it the whole week in all of her classes, and she had debated the issue twice. To an outsider reading her essay, it would not be so clear. She was supposed to put in evidence and she did. She was supposed to restate her claim in new words, and she did.

Table 6. 2 Stages of Beatriz's January Writing

STAGE	Quote from text
Claim	I say that students should be payed for school performance because than you can keep saving money so you can get into a good collage.
Evidence	My evidence is that if people get payed for school they will be motivated.
Counterargument	The negative thing about it though, is that they will only do it for the money not to learn.
Evidence	If students get payed they can get to a good collage and get a very good job.
Restates claim	It would be a very good idea to pay students.

After each piece of evidence, she added a then statement or two to build on her evidence. They did not always get connected back to her claim, but she showed a sense of pathos, appeal to emotion, “If students get payed they can get to a good collage and get a very good job. They then would be able to help poor people and their family. Then they will be to buy food for the poor and maybe give them a house.” With a bit of work, her ideas could sound like a case for paying students in order to create a more secure social safety net. Even her counterargument was there, but not rebutted. She was starting to get a basic formwork for argument just from the directions. She did exactly what she thought she had been told to do.

Turning to the ideational and interpersonal functions of language, we can see that Beatriz assumed the reader was familiar with the issue beginning with “This is important...” She switched back and forth between pronouns from “students” to “you” and “people/they” and “students/they.” This could again be a problem of a pretest that no one reads except the teacher. Even after having debated the issue, perhaps she was just

going through boxes to check writing as she was instructed. Her forms of appraisal were expanding a bit. “Good” was still repeated several times, but she also wrote, “motivated,” “only for money,” and “twice as harder.” In the later, her stretch into using more complicated expressions should be noted. She used several models to show what people could do or be if they had money. There really isn’t an identifiable audience in this piece.

In sum, Beatriz was starting to play with argumentative text in January. Her organization was getting stronger and clearer. From class, she was interested and involved in the debates, but the writing seemed like an afterthought rather than a tool to change.

#### Figure 6.7 Beatriz’s May Writing Sample

DEAR NEIGHBORS,

MY NAME IS (BEATRIZ) AND I AM A SIX GRADER AT NORTON MIDDLE SCHOOL. FOR A SCHOOL PROJECT, I WANT TO HELP PUERTO RICO BY COLLECTING MONEY SO I CAN SEND THAT MONEY TO THE UNIDOS POR PUERTO RICO ( UNITED BY PUERTO RICO) CHARITY. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE I AM ORIGINALLY FROM PUERTO RICO AND MOST OF MY FAMILY IS STILL THERE. MY FAMILY STILL HAS NO WATER, AND THEIR ROOF IS LEAKING. MY FAMILY DIDN’T HAVE ANY ELECTRICITY FOR 8 MONTHS, AND THEY RECENTLY JUST GOT THEIR ELECTRICITY BACK.

PLEASE HELP ME, MY FAMILY, AND OTHERS IN PUERTO RICO. WITH THE MONEY RAISED THEY WILL BUY FOOD, TOOLS AND BUY THE THINGS THAT ARE NEEDED TO HELP PUERTO RICO GO BACK TO HOW IT WAS. ACCORDING TO THE MISSION DISCOVERY UNION, 2 HURRICANES HIT PUERTO RICO, IRMA AND MARIA. THEY WERE BOTH CATEGORY 5, HURRICANE MARIA SUSTAINED WINDS OVER 150MPH. ACCORDING TO RYAN GRENOBLE, IN IN SOME COMMUNITIES ABOUT 80 TO 90 PERCENT OF HOMES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DESTROYED. SIMILARLY TO MY FAMILY, PUERTO RICO STILL NEEDS HELP WITH REBUILDING

HURRICANE SEASON IS COMING UP, THE PEOPLE IN PUERTO RICO NEED TO BE PREPARED. MANY  
PEOPLE STILL DON'T HAVE WATER OR POWER.

THAT IS WHY I NEED YOUR HELP TO DONATE MONEY TO HELP PUERTO RICO.

PLEASE TURN IN THE MONEY IN THE DONATION BOX IN THE OFFICE.....

THANK YOU.....

HAVE A GREAT DAY!.....

-(BEATRIZ LAST NAME)

### ***Beatriz's May Writing Sample***

Beatriz's May work is very different than her September or January writing. Her call for action had matured. Elements of effective argument are threaded through the text. Please note that since she wrote in all capital letters, my choices in capitalization might not reflect those she would have made. In the following sections, I walk you through my understanding of the choices she made as a writer in terms of representing ideas (ideational), relationships and identities (interpersonal), and organization (textual).

In this letter to her neighbors, Beatriz chose a level of politeness appropriate for the audience. She addressed her neighbors in general. She wrote, "Dear neighbors." She used concessions to polite language, as she asked them to "Please help me, my family and others in Puerto Rico," "Please turn in the money in the donation box in the office," "Thank you," and "Have a great day!" Although she wrote in the imperative form, she

softens these commands with please and thank you. This is a much different way of asking than the, “I think you should” framing she used at the beginning of the year.

She strengthens her argument by doing what Humphrey (2017) called, “taking multiple insider/outsider roles to persuade audience” (p.39). She establishes credibility by introducing herself by not only first name, but also by her last name, grade and saying she is doing a project at a middle school they will all recognize. She positions herself like them and their children. She also establishes a noble reason, “For a school project, I want to help Puerto Rico by collecting money, so I can send that money to the Unidos Por Puerto Rico (United by Puerto Rico) Charity.” Then she places herself with the victims of hurricanes in Puerto Rico, “I am originally from Puerto Rico and most of my family is still there,” “My family still has no water,” and “My family didn’t have any electricity for 8 months.” Her writing reflected intersections of her identity. She was a Norton Middle School student and a neighbor, but also a daughter and granddaughter of Puerto Rico. She utilized all those pieces of herself in her letter.

Her range of evaluative vocabulary showed tremendous growth. She has moved past “like” and “fun” to words like “completely destroyed” and “their roof is leaking.” Much of that appraisal is tied to human needs that were not being met in Puerto Rico after the hurricanes, which will be discussed in the ideational metafunction section. In the explanation of this letter, it is more difficult to separate the metafunctions neatly as she often made choices in word or phrase which served more than one of the metafunctions at a time as skilled writers tend to do.

At the ideational level, we see how Beatriz chose language specific to the field of hurricane relief. This is particularly evident when she cited authorities, “category 5,” “sustained winds over 150 mph,” but also when she is speaking in her own voice of “tools,” “rebuilding houses” and the upcoming “hurricane season.” This is another hallmark of an effective argument (Brisk, 2015; Humphreys, 2017; Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

Mental processes, especially “need,” and the relational process, especially in the negative “do not have,” were repeated. Too many relational processes can make writing bland. Here, it seemed to strengthen Beatriz’s call to action. This repetition built the reader’s sense of what Beatriz’s family and other people of Puerto Rico need but do not have. She added to the degree with words like “still” and “recently just got” in, for example, “Puerto Rico still needs help with rebuilding houses, buying tools, and food.” Through this repetition of needs she was meeting another of Derewianka and Jones (2016) standards, justifying with concrete evidence and examples (p.235). This “still” could also serve the function of countering questions of why Puerto Rico needs help so long after the hurricanes, what Humphrey (2017) would call “opening space” to the arguments of others and then closing it to assert one’s own claim.

At the textual level, I noticed the lexical chains were clear and the call to action followed a logical order. When Beatriz wrote “According to The Mission Discovery Union,” and “According to Ryan Grenoble,” she gained authority and credibility through using expert voices. She did not, however, explain who Ryan Grenoble was or what The Mission Discovery Union is. This was an area of further growth for her. Otherwise, who

she was, and her subjects were clear. There was a clever pattern of the needs of Puerto Rico which lead to the action that was required by her neighbors. Then the pattern was repeated. Unlike her earlier writing, she was able to establish the background and purpose of her call to action. Her reasons were convincing.

The analysis is much more specific in the Appendix C but basically the stages of her call were as in Table 6.2

Table 6. 3 Stages of Beatriz's May Writing

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Text from Beatriz's letter</b>
Background: She explains who she is, her mission, and the necessity of that mission using her family needs as an example.	My name is Beatriz and I am a six grader at Norton Middle School. For a school project, I want to help Puerto Rico by collecting money so I can send that money to the Unidos Por Puerto Rico (United by Puerto Rico) charity. This is very important to me because I am originally from Puerto Rico and most of my family is still there. My family still has no water, And their roof is leaking. My family didn't have any electricity for 8 months, and they recently just got their electricity back.
Call to action	Please help me, my family, and others in Puerto Rico.
Need for action/ needs of Puerto Rico in general	With the money raised they will buy food, tools and buy the things that are needed to help Puerto Rico go back to how it was.
Citing the voices of authorities on conditions	According to the Mission Discovery Union, 2 hurricanes hit Puerto Rico, Irma and Maria. They were both category 5, Hurricane Maria sustained winds over 150mph. According to Ryan Grenoble, in in some communities about 80 to 90 percent of homes have been completely destroyed.
Connects general and personal need, beginning and middle of text	Similarly to my family, Puerto Rico still needs help with rebuilding houses, buying tools and food for the people that need it.
Establishes urgency and continued need	Hurricane season is coming up, the people in Puerto Rico need to be prepared. Many people still don't have water or power.
Returns to a call to action, more personal and specific	That is why I need your help to donate money to help Puerto Rico. Please turn in the money in the donation box in the office.....

End thanks, name and lots of dots	Thank you..... Have a great day!..... -Beatriz (family names)
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Both the way she started her sentences “My family,” “Similarly to my family,” “With the money raised,” and “Please help me” and the overall structure of the letter connected her argument, led to her call to action and to the idea that she needed the help of the reader.

Only in the more delicate analysis of this chapter did I realize Beatriz is good at reading directions. In her first two pieces, I would ask her to say why an issue was important, and she would say something like, “This is important because....” The prompt would say to give evidence and she did. Here the issue really was important to Beatriz; her family was suffering. She showed why her neighbors should donate, because she had a reason to do so, and it flowed naturally. Her family’s needs illustrated the needs of Puerto Rico to her and she was able to communicate that to her neighbors.

All writers have areas for growth, but there was a great leap from advocating for monkeys to populate the school mural to this letter.

### **Ravi’s Writing Growth over Time**

#### ***Ravi’s September Writing Sample***

Ravi was our newest arrival to the U.S. He came at the beginning of the school year after attending an English-medium school for part of his schooling in Gujarat, India. His September writing shows this. Expressions like “I am having an idea” and “Respected Principal” or “Ms. Dr. Simmons” ring rich with his first English and previous school experience. The usage of the present progressive when U.S. English speakers more

commonly use simple present is something I have noticed in both newcomers who have studied English in India and in Indian parents when they speak among themselves. In some ways, the “wanting” and “having” and “liking” seem to make more sense to me, and I miss them when they leave. The “Respected Principal” and “Ms. Dr. Simmons” are not what is primarily used in U.S. schools but match quite well to the stories my students have told me about the respect they felt their teachers in India demanded.

Figure 6.8 Ravi’s September Writing Sample Original and Transcription

From,  
(Ravi - Last)

To,  
Mr. Dr (Principal Name)  
11 September, 2017  
Respected Principal,

I would like to inform you that  
I am having an idea for  
the plain wall in the hallway.  
We should basically paint on  
sports star as in school  
we study more than play. We  
should paint Cristiano Ronaldo in  
his playing movement. By seeing  
this more student's would like  
to join our soccer team. It would  
also make the wall look  
good. I also choosed a photo  
of Ronaldo from google it is  
a colorful which would make  
the wall look more attractive  
It would give inspiration to

---

more students to succeed  
to like word hard  
to with about this  
and encourage

Thanking you  
(Ravi (last name signed))

(Ravi - last name)  
Student of Team (team name)

From,  
 Ravi . (last name)  
 To,  
 Ms. Dr Simmons  
 11 September, 2018  
 Respected Principal,  
 I would like to inform you that I am having an idea for the plain wall in the hallway. We should basically paint on sports star as in school we study more than play. We should paint Cristiano Ronaldo in his playing movement. By seeing this more students would like to join our soccer team. It would also make the wall look good. I also choosed a photo of Ronaldo from google it is a colorful which would make the wall look very attractive. It would give inspiration to more students to work hard to succeed like him in their field. I would like you to discuss with other teachers and principals about this.  
 Thanking you,  
 (signature)  
 Ravi *last name*

At the textual level, I noticed that what Ravi thought was not in question. From the beginning, he was able to match evidence and his claim. The lexical chains were clear. He loved playing on the soccer team, and he used that even on his test prompt.

Table 6. 4 Stages of Ravi's September Writing

Stage	Text
Claim	I am having an idea for the plain wall in the hallway. We should basically paint on sports star
Evidence 1	By seeing this more student's would like to join our soccer team.
Evidence 2	It would also make the wall look good.
Explaining evidence 2	I also choosed a photo of Ronaldo from google it is a colorful which would make the wall look more attractive

Evidence 3	It would give inspiration to more students to work hard to succeed like him in their field.
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Later, he would be able to better explain and connect his evidence back to his claim. Here he is already starting to flesh out his evidence, for example, the wall would look good because it would include the colorful picture of Ronaldo from Google. Later he learned to tell the reader why having attractive walls might create a better school.

Turning to how Ravi chose to represent relationships and identities in his writing, I noticed several things. First, Ravi was aware of his position in relation to that of the principal and worked on varied forms of expressing politeness with varying degrees of initial success. This is an accomplishment in and of itself, as I was just debating with a couple of my students, whether one must change one's language depending on the audience. Ravi already knew that.

As noted above, he addressed the principal as "Respected Principal" and "Ms. Dr. Simmons." He was trying for politeness. When he said, "I would like to inform you that I am having an idea for the plain wall in the hallway," the "would like" sounds like a nugget of a polite request, but when combined with "to inform you" it sounded more like a legal notice. In the closing when he wrote, "I would like you to discuss with other teachers and principals about this," he is starting to soften his language and experiment with modals in the expression "I would like," but by putting it in the imperative form it is still basically telling the principal what to do. The language to match the level of politeness he sought would develop through the year. I noted the most growth in Ravi in the use of polite terms, perhaps because he was most concerned about being polite.

**Figure 6.9 Ravi's May Writing Sample**

Dear Ms. Grunwald,

I am a 7th grader at **Norton** and our school needs to have more sports activities like softball, soccer, basketball and more. We usually only have tournaments which end in just 3-4 weeks but we need longer sessions of these sports. Even if we can't have these practice sessions with other schools we could definitely do them with grade levels.

The fact I want to have more sports is because that might inspire some kids to be athletes and maybe get better at sports they like to play. If students participate in these sports they can be healthier, use their minds to make strategies, and exercise their bodies. They can learn coordination by playing with their friends or team mates. According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, "youth sports can help deter negative behavior, such as joining a gang, because competitive sports provide an outlet for expression and controlled aggression." Which can even prevent students to have bad behaviour in class. New research published in the journal Pediatrics suggests, "that team sports may be better at keeping kids' weight down." Playing sports helps student lose the extra fat by running and exercising which can make them healthier. It might even help decrease the rate of obesity in our country. If we started having longer sessions of these sports then it just gonna help us by decreasing rate of obesity in our country and increase their good behaviour in our school.

These sport activities can be a really good practice for the upcoming tournaments against other schools. This year **Norton** has not been able to win tournaments against other **DISTRICT NAME** schools. We need to have more trophies in the trophy box near the main office. So we extremely need to have more longer sessions as they are proven to be pretty beneficial. If we started having longer sessions of these sports then our school team could be prepared for these upcoming tournaments to prove their dominance. I would be grateful if you consider adding a longer season to these sports.

Sincerely,  
Ravi (Last name)

***Ravi's May Writing Sample***

By May, Ravi was moving between his worlds of literacy as he petitioned the afterschool activity director, Ms. Grundwald, to expand the sports offerings. In his choice project, he decided to make a case to have more afterschool sports. He used Indian/British spelling of "behaviour" in his writing and then "behavior" the U.S. spelling

within a quote that soon followed. Later adding “gonna” which he heard often at our school. “Dear Ms. Grundwald” and “Sincerely” which reflect U.S. letter writing conventions replaced the “To” and “From” of September. Stative verbs in the present progressive are nowhere to be seen.

At the textual level, I noticed that in his final project, Ravi not only gave his claim and evidence, he expanded to show the connection between the two in a way that would appeal to his audience, the director of afterschool activities. He also starts with background detailing what he considered the sad lack of athletic activities at the time of writing and added expert voices to further prove his case. Below is part of one of his paragraphs broken down.

#### Tale 6. 5 Stages of Ravi’s May Writing

Stage	Text
Claim	our school needs to have more sports activities like softball, soccer, basketball and more.
Evidence	The fact I want to have more sports is because that might inspire some kids to be athletes and maybe get better at sports they like to play.
Expands on evidence by using a statement of cause	If students participate in these sports they can be healthier, use their minds to make strategies, and exercise their bodies. They can learn coordination by playing with their friends or team mates.
Supporting with expert voice	According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, “youth sports can help deter negative behavior, such as joining a gang, because competitive sports provide an outlet for expression and controlled aggression.”
Connects to school	Which can even prevent students to have bad behaviour in class.

Ravi connects all his reasons to what school personnel would consider important.

This attention to relationships and identities is signaled through his choice and placement

of words. Sports by his own report are quite important to him, and he wanted to prove that importance to them. This time his developed argument skill allowed him to show the head of afterschool activities why sports programs should be expanded. In fact, the afterschool director wrote him back, said she would try to accommodate his request, and the number and types of sports offered at our school did increase the following year.

“I would be grateful if you consider adding a longer season to these sports” is much closer to the level of politeness Ravi wished to attain than September’s “I would like you to discuss with other teachers about this.” He is leading with his gratitude at the mere consideration of doing what he wanted. The “if” means he is not even taking for granted the mental process of considering.

His expanded words of appraisal also serve to portray more sports as the right path to be “healthier,” “decrease the rate of obesity” and “prevent students to have bad behaviour.” His adverb and adjective use also expanded to serve his purpose and show the lack of adequate sports and match with the need for more, “We usually *only* have tournaments which end in *just* 3-4 weeks, but we need *longer* sessions of these sports.”

At the ideational level, I noticed that he adds to the evaluative vocabulary and introduces that particular to the field of sports health especially in quoting research. The imperative forms he used in his initial writing have been changed to statements. He had increased his use of nominalization to pack his sentences with more information. For example, “If we started having longer sessions of these sports then our school team could be prepared for these upcoming tournaments to prove their *dominance*.”

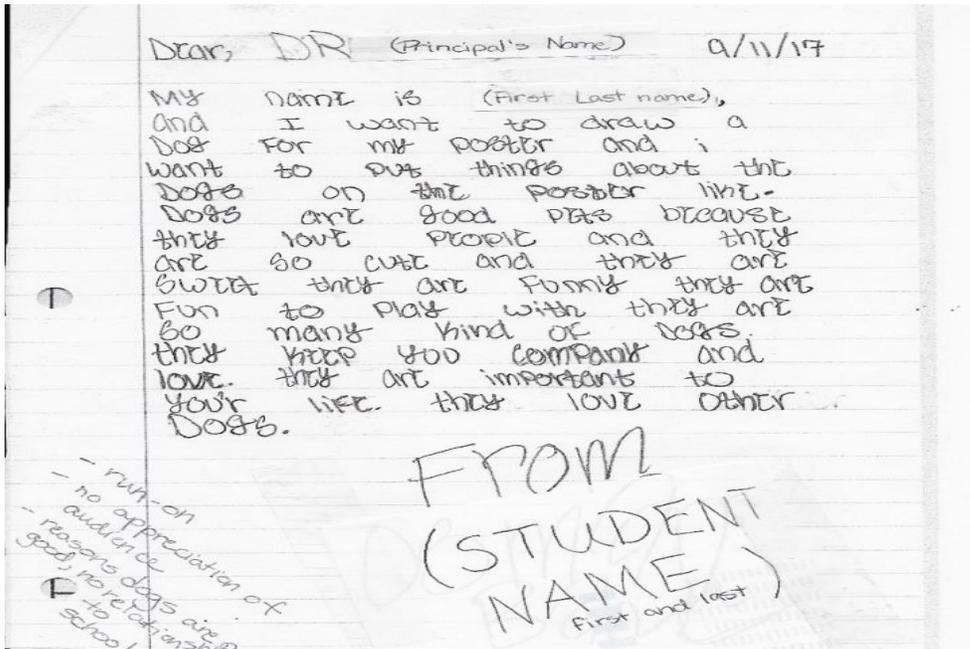
## **Ibrahim's Writing Growth Over Time**

### ***Ibrahim's September Writing Sample***

As I look at the notes I wrote on Ibrahim's paper in September, which I did not share with him, I realized how deficit focused they were (Researcher's Journal, February 13, 2020). As I said previously, I look at student pretests to see where to go next. Even with this chapter, I was looking for improvement, so I felt obliged to criticize the September writing so I could justify the work to which I devote much of my life through student growth. In Ibrahim's case specifically, there was a sorrow in looking at his September writing. This was a seventh-grade student who had been in my school system since early elementary school. Now I realize I was doing the very thing which I loathe, overlooking all the richness my students bring. I would never talk to a student about their writing using a list of all that is wrong; I shouldn't do it for myself. Ibrahim was not someone for me to fix. He brought passion and energy to our classroom. My job was to teach him to help him show his power in more ways, but I should not have started that by only writing his faults. I was mortified when I reread my notes.

At the ideational level, primarily he used relational verbs and adjectives, but he also used the mental process, "love." The word "love" was repeated three times. Over the year, Ibrahim's writing changed. He did a lot with structure at the sentence level and whole text. However, his writing never lost its passion

### **Figure 6.10 Ibrahim's September Writing**



In the later analysis, it became clear that Ibrahim could develop by working with how to connect ideas throughout the text. He needed to learn to give reasons for his claim. An examination of the stages of his first sample, so he was more interested in the dogs than the mural.

Table 6.6 Stages of Ibrahim’s September Writing

Stage	Excerpt
Salutation	Dear Dr. Simmons
Introduces self	My name is Ibrahim (Last name)
Claim	And I want to draw a Dog for my poster and I want to put things about the Dogs on the poster
Gives detail about what he wants to write about dogs	like Dogs are good pets
Explains why dogs are good pets	Because they love people

Explains why dogs are good pets	and they are so cute
Explains why dogs are good pets	and they are sweet
Explains why dogs are good pets	they are Funny
Explains why dogs are good pets	they are Fun to play with
Explains why dogs are good pets	they are so may kind of Dogs.
Explains why dogs are good pets	they keep you company and love.
Explains why dogs are good pets	they are important to your life.
Explains why dogs are good pets	They love other Dogs
Closing salutation	From Ibrahim (Last name)

### *Ibrahim's January Writing Sample*

In January, Ibrahim also wrote on the question of whether students should get paid for school. Of all the students in this chapter, Ibrahim had the least money at his disposal. His father said he could not have money for school. Camp, every field trip, school supplies or any food outside the free lunch all came from scholarships or teachers. He was always eager for hand-me-downs from my son. Though every student in the school wrote on the same topic that week, for Ibrahim money was an issue of particular concern.

**Figure 6.11 Ibrahim's January Writing Sample**

**YES**

**Because some people in school need money because so they can get snacks in the vending machine and they need money for their lunch money.They need money so if there's a field trip going on the can pay the money so they can go and have fun on the trip.And something else is if they don't have money they will not get to get school supplies for their classes.sometimes**

**Sometimes if the kids ask their mom and dad if they do not have money and then they can not have to get things from school so thats why kids need money in school just in case their mom or dad or brother or sister don't have money to give to them.People would be mlikely and motivated to go to school if they were paid to go there.**

**And school is like work if kids have to do a lot of work then they deserve to get paid for their hard work.and if the kids are doing good in school like getting good grades then they should paid for their good grades**

After leading with the big middle school divider, whether one has money for the vending machine, Ibrahim gave evidence on why students should get paid that connected with his own life: they need lunch money, school supplies, and field trip money. By

January, with a subject important to him, he was able to go closer to proving his assertion. His writing was coming closer to an essay form. There wasn't a defined audience, just a general wrong to be righted.

Here, Ibrahim generalized his own story to all kids, in order to make a case for his argument to disrupt an unfairness. After listing the needs of middle school, this time he related it back to his claim. We know not just that middle schoolers "need" things, but why and how that connects back to getting paid for school. It comes down to the haves and the "don't have"s.

Sometimes if the kids ask their mom and dad if they do not have money and then they can not have to get things from school so that's why kids need money in school just in case their mom or dad or brother or sister don't have money to give to them. People would be more likely and motivated to go to school if they were paid to go there.

At an ideational level, he was trying to pack more ideas into each sentence with more varied connectors. He used the texts and vocabulary we had read, especially in the last sentence above. At the interpersonal level, he was also developing an awareness open to other viewpoints in words that hedge, "sometimes," "some," "just in case" and his closing, "It doesn't even have to be a lot, maybe just \$2." At a textual level, his writing had changed. He not only gave evidence to support his claim, he started to explain the connection between the evidence which he did not in September

*Ibrahim's May Writing Sample*

As with all the students, Ibrahim's May writing sample was of his own choosing on an issue he wanted to see change. He identified President Trump as his audience and asked him to stop making racist comments, in a letter that he sent. Of the three students in this chapter, he was the only one who received no answer.

**Figure 6.12 Ibrahim's May Writing Sample**

	12345 Street Drive, City, State 12345
President Donald Trump 1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW Washington, DC 20500	
Dear President Trump,	
<p>I am a 13 year old boy who come to school at Norton Middle School,who doesn't like people who are racist. We, the people of United States, do not like how you are being rude to other cultures that you don't know about.The fact you are building a wall with the U.S-Mexico border, shows that you don't understand how people are struggling in other countries. Mexican people don't like what you are doing right now,You started saying that Muslim people are terrorists but they're coming here to live a good life because there countries are at war</p>	
<p>I read in an article by Newsweek that you said some bad things about Haiti and African nations coming to the US. Newsweek quoted you saying, "Why do we need more Haitians?," "Take them out," and you said all Haitians have AIDS.You need to stop talking about Haitians and Africans negatively because it makes American people think bad about those different countries. These feeling makes other immigrants scared to live in America.This is not fair because those people who come to America are here for a better life.</p>	
<p>I am writing this letter to you so you can stop saying racist things. When you say these racist things, it makes other American citizens uncomfortable and makes then more mean and rude to other people from other cultures. America is not welcoming. I have family members that are trying to come to America. It is hard for them because of the things you have been saying is making things worse.</p>	
Sincerely ,	
Ibrahim <b>LAST NAME</b>	

What struck me first when I looked at Ibrahim's early and later writing was the stark change in complexity of his sentences and the development of his argument. By May, he was developing his ideas throughout the text by using nominalization. For example, he wrote "the fact you are building a wall." What is most important though, in my final analysis, is that his linguistic choices allowed him to express much more complex reasoning and reflect his identity. In fact, he was even analyzing the linguistic choices of the current U.S. President.

Ibrahim's letter, written in May, reveals a great deal about his identity. The sentences are much longer than the repeated "They are..." of September. He used the extended sentences to show the injustices he felt Trump's words provoke. For example, "when you say these racist things, it makes other American citizens uncomfortable and makes them more mean and rude." He was using his verb and the when clause to show these effects.

On the textual level, he built background on Trump's actions and then cited words he found objectionable. Then he asked him to stop. His choice in the words he quotes back to Trump was powerful,

Newsweek quoted you saying, "Why do we need more Haitians?," Take them out," and you said all Haitians have AIDS. You need to stop talking about Haitians and Africans negatively because it makes American people think bad about those different countries

He, like all the students, expressed different parts of his identity in his final project. He not only used a reference to the Constitution, one of the foundational U.S. documents

which he had learned about earlier in the year, but also references his U.S. citizenship to position himself and his opinion as American, “We, the people of United States, do not like how you are being rude to other cultures that you don’t know about.” He wrote of the religious group to which he belongs, “You started saying that Muslim people are terrorists but they’re coming here to live a good life because there countries are at war.” Later he referenced the opinions of a group to which one of his best friends belonged, “The fact you are building a wall with the U.S-Mexico border, shows that you don’t understand how people are struggling in other countries. Mexican people don’t like what you are doing right now.” Finally, he placed himself with future immigrants from Africa who were being made to feel unwelcome by Trump’s words, “America is not welcoming. I have family members that are trying to come to America. It is hard for them because of the things you have been saying is making things worse.”

Ibrahim here was able to identify the negative appraisal in Trump’s words on immigrants and push back against those words. He called out the notions that all Muslims are “terrorists” and “all Haitians have AIDS.” He had become a critical discourse analyst.

## **Conclusions**

All the students learned to elaborate their arguments over the course of the year. Reasons became more detailed and connected to what they wanted to prove, and audience was identified and addressed. Ravi had a great change in his facility with language to express power relations. Beatriz learned to understand the perspective of her readers:

what she could assume they knew and did not know. Ibrahim learned ways to tie together ideas within a sentence and throughout the argument.

With each writing sample, I knew my students were growing and developing as writers – in terms of the cohesive organization of their pieces, how they communicated their ideas, and how they demonstrated relationships and identities. These understandings helped me to support them as writers which I demonstrated in Chapter 4. However, it was not until I returned to the writing samples to look more closely at the textual, interpersonal, and ideational choices they made that I understood the complexity of their growth as writers. As I began analysis, I decided to explain things in terms of the textual, ideational, and interpersonal, because those categories seemed clear to me and to possible readers. The longer I analyzed, the blurrier those divisions became. A single well-chosen word could serve all the metafunctions. I knew, for example, Beatriz’s writing was getting longer with much more explanation and support of her claim, but I never saw the complex patterns of verb choice, appraisal and positioning that made her choices powerful.

Perhaps the most significant change was that students were contributing their voices to a community of readers and writers. The flatness of following standard forms was lost. Beatriz and Ibrahim, especially, told the reader why their issues were important to them. They began to show who they were and fight for change. The portraits they painted of themselves were rich and multidimensional. Beatriz showed that she was a sixth-grade girl next door, and someone linked by blood and affection to Puerto Rico. Ibrahim was all in as one of “we the people of the United States”, while at the same time,

an immigrant with relatives scared by Trump's "racist" words. Ravi, a rule follower, learned to use the language that would express the power relations he felt while making his change. Partly because of him, we now have more sports after school during "open gym," where athletes like him can hone their sporting skills.

## Chapter 7: Findings

This is always the hardest part for middle school students. When they find research on their topic, it seems like just putting down on the paper should be enough. Explaining and making connections to justify a call to action is difficult. For me, as with them, getting to the “So what?” part of the argument is difficult. With so many pressing problems in the world, why is this work really important? Toni Morrison (2015) wrote,

This is *precisely* the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal. I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge—even wisdom. Like art. (para 9-10)

I make no claims to artistry. I began this dissertation writing about milestones in my learning in the hopes that my readers would not have to take so many years to figure out the same things. I sought to find a way to illuminate the power of academic language to the middle school emergent bilinguals in my charge. I discovered SFL and criticality. It sparked my students’ interest and sharpened their talents as readers and authors. I wanted to share.

I finish in the midst of a pandemic that has torn students and teachers out of their classrooms and into the world of virtual learning. Worldwide, demonstrators cry, “I can’t breathe,” referring to the murder of George Floyd and other black men and women by police officers. Calls for an end to all the manifestations of systemic racism are beginning

to ring louder and broader across the country. My data collecting permissions have ended, and the students portrayed have moved on to different schools, but discussion of how-to bring equity to schools has never been more important as inequities throughout society become more visible and change perhaps more than a dream. So, like my students, I have a cause about which I care enough to keep writing.

### **Research Quality**

First, when members of my class came across research they thought they could use, they tested its trustworthiness. In Chapter 3, I did the same. As my class learned not to take everything on the internet as gospel and that Google is not the source, I grant that just because a researcher said it, it is not necessarily true. Qualitative research, like quantitative research or the research my students find in their Google searches must meet standards for quality. In Chapter 3, I used the measures of quality noted in Merriam (2009): credibility, consistency, transferability, and trustworthiness, with the addition of catalytic validity from Lather (1986) to discuss the quality of this research.

I have shown the work, interactions and growth of students using the tools of critical analysis and SFL in my ESOL 3 class. I have tried to present a picture of the class as a whole over the course of the unit on argument divided into four series of lessons on consumerism, protest, debate, and a choice project which began in January and ended in May of 2018. I also presented the work of three individual students who reflected the diversity in my class from across the year.

**Research Questions**

Here, I return to my research questions. (1) What transformations occurred when middle school emergent bilinguals were invited to critically analyze discourse practices as part of their ESOL 3 class? What patterns of interactions, discourses and stances emerged as salient? and (2) In what ways can this critical language awareness support their literacy development and mastery of academic language?

***Interactions, Stances and Discourses***

In the work described in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, students built on each other's power. Tala and Beatriz knew the news. Noora usually had an out of the blue idea that would change everything. Ravi was the task master and, along with Aanush, entered the class as a stronger reader who could help interpret written text. Aanush always asked direction-clarifying questions that informed the whole class. Ibrahim could key in on emotions in words quickly. Ahmed loved to try out language to provoke. They all came from different cultural backgrounds, no two had families from the same country. They learned to share and support each other.

Emergent bilinguals need to have their power honored and kindled in the classroom. Chapter 4 traces our steps in using an SFL-informed curriculum, as students learned to speak to power through literacy. Students who remained silent in other classes were telling me to stop the video, asking questions as they needed them answered. As students looked at history book excerpts from the 1920s and 1990s examining how language choices could paint different, sometimes distorted pictures of reality, we learned to question their current textbooks. SFL gave them the tools to do so. When they felt free

to tell me that they did not understand, or pointed out that I had left out a word in the directions I had written on the whiteboard, or asked a question, they made needed connections between what they knew and what was happening in the classroom, but they were also learning to speak back to power in the classroom, to their teacher.

The themes of choice and power were woven across the individual, classroom, school, and district domains throughout the Protest Unit as described in Chapter 5. Protesting became a choice for the students, because the administration gave them the power to do so without punishment. Protesting became powerful for them, because they learned to connect it with a cause rather than just a way to escape class. I was able to teach them how their language choices can strengthen their arguments and be harnessed to fight their battles through a meaningful, current topic of their choosing, because I had power in designing lessons and was free from fear that protesting might get some of them suspended.

I learned that my students work much differently depending on what they are asked to do and the degree of purpose they see in a task. Just days before students started their choice project, they had to answer a test prompt creating an argument. The students did not care about the prompt and they wrote almost nothing. This not only makes me challenge the still common tendency to judge emergent bilinguals primarily on a yearly test score, but also should serve to remind readers how much students can achieve if they care about an issue.

My growing understanding of SFL: genre study and critical literacy gave me power. I did not have to just plug holes when students did not understand. I better

understood the elements of argument and other academic genres because of the genre study branch of SFL. I was able to help students understand the interpersonal, textual and ideational metafunctions of text, because their meaning and connections were becoming clearer to me. I learned to interrogate those choices using Critical Discourse Analysis. Thus, I could also teach my students to question by using the same resources.

Students need to be taught the language of school. I have used Christie's (1985) phrase the "hidden curriculum" several times throughout this work. That hidden curriculum needs to be made plain to teachers and students. When this happened, my students became powerful critics and authors.

Recognizing the necessity of teaching academic language does not mean there is only one way to go about it. To facilitate student learning, I changed course several times throughout the unit, both during class and in planning whole series of lessons. Teachers need to understand the language we are requiring of their students to learn and show mastery of content. We need to be able to know the stages and language choices typical of the texts we are requiring our students to comprehend and reproduce. Many students, not just emergent bilinguals, do not have someone at home teaching them "school" language. That does not mean their homes are somehow deficient, or that they cannot contribute to and shape school discussions. These middle school emergent bilinguals, some of whom tested five years below grade level on standardized reading tests at the beginning of the year, became agents of change through literacy. They were responsible for driving the school to create more extra-curricular sports opportunities, and a kindness campaign. Other students in the class reached out to officials in local businesses, the

Olympic Committee, and government. They grew in not only in understanding, but in questioning texts at school and using literacy to better their communities.

What is going to happen this fall with no end to the coronavirus pandemic in sight? In the last months of the 2019-2020 school year, the answer was different depending on the school. My husband's private, Montessori school required in-person Zoom classes daily. Teachers at my school posted assignments, worth five percent of the student's grade and the teachers were required to offer an office hour four days a week either through Google Meet or via email. Other districts could not require anything, but rather offered resources, because they could not guarantee that each child had access to a computer. Many students, especially those without access to technology, were given packets of worksheets to complete when the pandemic bound them to their homes. This meant that the language domains of reading and writing, which are often a strength not sufficiently nurtured in emergent bilinguals, took the forefront. Recorded lessons with audio would have helped students get more of the one more domain of input but would not have proven sufficient.

In the future, during the virtual learning situations which may become common practice, students will need opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences connect them to what is going on in the classroom. There will need to be breakout rooms for students to process together as mine did in person. They will need input in their lesson, a chance to say, "Stop" for a minute or spark a new line of inquiry within subjects. Teachers will have to learn to understand the language demands of the assignments they will give and have a great enough command of the subject to understand how to match

course concepts with student-driven work. Within virtual instruction there will have to be room for interaction and flexibility. Emergent bilinguals need teachers who understand academic English, as well as their subject, and can follow many and varying paths toward that proficiency determined by what their students bring. Both students and teachers need choice in the direction of their work.

### ***Critical Literacy Development and Mastery of Academic Language***

Chapter 6 presents analysis of language development that is multi-layered in time, purpose, and delicacy. After briefly describing varied analyses imbedded before, during and immediately after lessons, I created a fuller picture of student writing. I delicately examined student writing, from across the school year of the study, to show their development in using the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. All grew, though there were differences in what changes seemed most notable. For Ibrahim it was connections throughout to whole text and within sentences. Ravi seemed to grow the most in understanding how to show respect through words. Beatriz made great progress in becoming more cognizant of her audience. They all learned to call on outside voices connecting to other texts, ideas, and research.

In Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, emergent bilinguals were able to perform multimodal analyses of text. We started with commercials, but soon they were able to work together to deconstruct grade-level text using tools of SFL. The sources written at their assessed reading level did not have the academic language they would have to learn to succeed in all their classes, so we found strategies to work through the language of grade level text. I chose materials I thought would interest them and readjusted based on their progress,

needs and interests, so they would develop the stamina necessary to work through texts. For the choice project and debate research, they learned to find their own texts. Progress was not linear. As noted above, several students did very poorly on assignments with which they were not connected. A year later, their improvement on the ACCESS test was uneven. It took a while for students to write with the strong language they noted in texts. By the end of the unit, some like Ravi could handle such texts independently. Others still needed supports. All were looking at how language choices construct meaning.

Emergent bilinguals in the future will also need exposure to grade-appropriate academic text. But it is not enough just to give them a challenging, rich text, they need to develop the strategies to deconstruct, construct, challenge and reshape it. This means along with the presentation of the text as a means of transmitting knowledge, the texts and genres need to become the subject matter. To facilitate a meta-awareness of text choices, emergent bilinguals will have to practice strategies such as finding the stages typical of the genres in their field, and using not only field-specific vocabulary but also the connectors and nominalization necessary to create the academic sentences. Their teachers will need to know enough about genre, criticality and technology to make that possible.

One assumption of practitioner research is as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) wrote

subject matter knowledge is fluid and dynamic, constructed in the interactions of all participants within learning communities; part of what it means to learn subject

matter, then is to critique its meanings and sources, including whose knowledge is left out of the subject matter. (p.2)

It is emergent bilinguals' knowledge that is too often "left out of the subject matter." Practitioner research is particularly suited to trouble this inequity. Only if emergent bilinguals become creators and critics of the text in our schools can they inch toward equality. They need to learn the powers of language. In order to do this, students must have choice in the path their instruction takes. Their teachers are the ones who are with them each day who can respond and adjust, be it virtually or in person, so that someday the texts of the lives of emergent bilinguals will become a vital part of school discourse.

### **How this Study Contributes to the Field**

Just as many of my students expanded their newfound knowledge into the broader world, that is also my desire. This work relates to several fields. In this study, I have brought together genre studies (argument) and criticality. A critical approach, which draws on power, voice, and identity, supported my students' engagement with spoken and written texts. Often time, it is thought that students who struggle with English Language Arts, especially long-term English learners, must learn the 'basics' before proceeding to 'critical' literacies. Yet, what I have shown is a critical genre approach was the gateway for my emerging bilinguals to advance their academic literacies, written argumentations, and agency as people.

My work as a practitioner-scholar engaging multilingual students also revealed tensions that are prevalent in the fields of TESOL and literacy studies. For example, many genre studies have not taken a critical orientation. SFL is often spoken of as a

means of empowering students through giving them access to academic texts. This is essential, but insufficient. A basic tenet of SFL is that speakers and writers are always making language choices to create meaning. My students were able to analyze the choices of others and then use that knowledge as they constructed their own texts. This was true of all my students, from Ravi who had just come new to the country to Ibrahim who had only been in U.S. schools. My students showed they can do more than memorize the choices that have become crystalized in academic texts.

Likewise, students who speak English as their second or third language are often not considered to be 'ready' for criticality. In this study I have shown that not only are they 'ready' but these moments of examining power, privilege, voice serve as entry points into the acceleration of their academic literacies.

My research indicated that though concepts like appraisal, attribution, and high and low modality sound difficult, they can be easily contextualized, made engaging, and used by emergent bilingual learners as keys to become interested in text. Students were more motivated as clues in spoken and written text led to their understanding of previously hidden meanings. By the end of the year, my students were using those same SFL resources in their own writing on their journey toward critical literacy.

There is also a general tension within teaching regarding student talk. Staying on task and covering material are emphasized, but the need for teachers need to connect to student interests and scaffold material are also held as true. Learning takes place in a social environment. I found in many of the transcripts that student talk was key in building their literacy even though I often did not see the connection initially. They

needed to work together to deconstruct text and build knowledge. They also truly were off task sometimes.

***What This Research Means for the Preparation of TESOL Teachers.***

When I first started my TESOL studies, grammar was taught prescriptively. There were correct answers to be written on the correct line. I had instructors who believed in behaviorist theories of language instruction. When I got my master's degree, I had one grammar course and the only linguistics course I had was sociolinguistics. The emphasis was on how to be culturally competent and on methods to reflectively teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The teacher development courses I took were on making content accessible. Except for behaviorist notions of grammar, I found all this work beneficial, but it was not enough. I was still perplexed about the nature of specific language objectives.

This research suggests that all teachers, especially TESOL preservice teachers should learn about SFL: genre and criticality. Our subject is language. Grammar has to be taught, or perhaps more apply put, all students need opportunities to learn about language. This work shows that grammar can be empowering and taught intertwined with content.

It is not common to find SFL materials and courses in U.S. TESOL programs. My research indicates my understanding of academic genres and criticality helped me break down the texts my students were reading and writing, analyze needs, and create lessons to meet those needs. More TESOL programs need to offer critical SFL. Not just EL specialists, all teachers could benefit from knowledge of the language in their content.

*Methodological Importance*

SFL is not often integrated into teacher-inquiry. Researchers such as Brisk (2015), Gebhard and Harmon (2011), and Schleppegrell (2011) have all partnered with in-service teachers to study applications of SFL in U.S. schools. However, when I conceived this study, I had heard of no SFL practitioner researchers. This is not surprising given the time and effort it takes to find SFL resources and classes and the time demands of researching while teaching. Now, I have found two exceptions: Graham (2018) who worked with her middle school ELA class on science text using the metalanguage of SFL and Simmons (2018) who taught her AP English students to critically analyze fiction using SFL resources.

The context rich space of my ESOL classroom provided ample space for analyzing language (spoken, written, and signed) before, during, and after lessons. My relationships with the students and their teachers and families helped to provide context for all I saw in the classroom. My proximity allowed for timely adjustments.

Methodologically, I have demonstrated how my analysis was conducted at different phases: during my teaching, after my teaching, and post-teaching when I revisited the data set for analysis. This is important because the quick analysis during lessons allowed me, as a practitioner researcher to adapt instruction to meet immediate student needs and interests. Daily analysis gave me a chance evaluate and provide timely feedback on student work, record and reflect on class happenings, and reconfigure whole series of lessons based on student needs. After-teaching analysis provided me with opportunities to analyze student work samples from across the four months of research

with a much greater level of delicacy, transcribe and analyze transcripts for emerging patterns, and return to my researcher's journal to look at my own learning across the course of the research.

***What This Study Means for Teacher-Inquiry.***

This is a practitioner research study. I studied the work and transformations that occurred within my own class of emergent bilinguals. Cochran-Smith, and Lytle (2009) called practitioners "deliberative intellectuals who constantly theorize practice as a part of practice itself" (p.2). At a recent conference session I attended, I had to push back when some university-bound researchers spoke of teachers as if we were puppets who would make everything right if we simply followed a certain script or course of action. Teachers are in the classroom every day. We know the students and the ways in which schools are failing those students. Our power to facilitate change is great, especially if we learn from each other.

This study illustrates the value of the practitioner researcher's ability to change direction in the course of lessons and throughout a unit of study without losing track of overall goals and to help students connect their lives to their academic work.

As noted above, I have discovered two other practitioner researchers who integrated student use of SFL resources into teacher-inquiry, Graham (2018) and Simmons (2018). My work focusing on emergent bilinguals in middle school, most of whom in the past have found significant challenges in reading and writing differs from Simmons' (2018) work with high school AP English students. This study explicitly combines both criticality and genre learning, whereas Graham's (2018) work focuses on

middle school ELA students exploring the language of science. My work explores apprenticing students in using the tools of SFL to develop their critical academic literacies within the genre of argument. The voice of the SFL practitioner-researcher is vital and still too rare, but hereby, I hope to have joined them and encourage other teachers to do the same.

### **Final Reflections**

I wish I had known more about critical literacy and SFL when I started teaching 30 years ago. I even wish I had known more at the beginning of this work. I am finally coming to know what kind of language goals I should be writing for my students. More importantly, my students are using their literacy to change their school and communities.

I chose only a small portion of data from this teacher-inquiry for focus. All the analysis of motions, gestures and facial expressions from debate video, many student work samples and transcripts remain largely untouched.

There were many interesting avenues left unexplored. For example, I chose not to focus on our use or nonuse of the metalanguage of SFL. Instead of using a word like, “theme” which is used in a different context in most middle school classes than in SFL, I would say something like, “what you put in the beginning of a sentence.” At this point, I understand more of the metalanguage, and am working through what terms are useful to my students. For example, I have started to teach the terms ideational, textual, and interpersonal to my students. They promptly changed those to “idea,” “text” and “personal” functions. The students in this study used the tools, but not the metalanguage. That could be further explored.

I have also taught newcomer students. I wonder how these tools could be utilized by students just beginning English language studies. Understanding aspects of academic genres could provide clearer pathways in language learning. The combination of teaching basic English and criticality could be fascinating. The tools of multimodal analysis could help beginners use their deeper levels of knowledge that too often remain untapped.

I am starting to pursue the question of how the combination of criticality and genre study will work in the context of other subject areas. That is beyond the scope of this work. In addition, it would be fruitful repeat the same techniques with a group of students who speak a common language fluently. For example, in my ESOL 3 class this year, eight of the twelve students speak Spanish and a great deal more translanguaging occurred. SFL could be used to develop my students' literacies in their all their languages. There is much left to explore, and I look forward to hearing of those explorations from future teacher-practitioners.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A (List of Teacher Resources)

Brisk, M. (2015). *Engaging students in academic literacies: Genre-based pedagogy for k-5 classrooms*. Routledge.

This is an easily accessible book for teachers of elementary school students on how to incorporate the teaching of genre into the curriculum. Brisk includes not only descriptions and rubrics for the genres typical in K-5 classrooms, but also gives lesson ideas to help students develop their ability to comprehend and write in those genres. I used this as a base to develop many of my lessons with middle schoolers.

California State Board of Education. (2012) *California English language development standards kindergarten through grade 12 (Electronic Edition)*.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.pdf>

These standards are specific and SFL-informed. They are written for teachers and include practical, teachable areas for instruction.

Christie, F., & Derewianka, B. (2010). *School discourse: Learning to write across the years of schooling*. Continuum.

Christie and Derewianka have mapped out the steps of written language development from kindergarten through twelfth grade across three content areas. This is exactly what teachers need to know to help their students make those steps. However, the book is quite technical, so save it for when you are ready to dive more deeply into genre studies.

Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, writing, and rising up*. Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools.

Christensen, L. (2009). *Teaching for joy and justice*. Milwaukee: Rethinking Schools.

Christenson is a high school teacher from Oregon. Her books feature lessons that honor her students' funds of knowledge and show how students can develop writing skillx through work relevant and critical.

Derewianka, B. & Jones, P (2018). *Teaching language in context*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.

Derewianka and Jones begin with an easily accessible introduction of SFL theory and the teaching and learning cycle. The rest of the book is full of practical teaching activities for the different academic genres. This is the book I wish I would have come across during my pre-service studies.

Gebhard, M., & Harman, R. (2011). Reconsidering genre theory in K-12 schools: A response to school reforms in the United States. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20, 45–55.

Both Gehard and Harman write frequently on their work with teachers using SFL. Much of that work is through a critical lens and provides foder for applications in any classroom.

Humphrey, S. (2017). *Academic literacies in the middle years: A framework for enhancing teacher knowledge and student achievement*. Routledge.

Humphrey's book includes 4X4 frameworks for various genres that secondary students encounter in school which detail expectations at the whole text, phase, sentence/clause, and word level which she then explains. This book is a little denser than some of the others, but it is incredibly useful in determining next steps in the writing development for secondary students.

Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. New York: Routledge.

Janks' explains not only the theory behind critical literacy, but serves as a guidebook for teaching students (and their teachers) to be critically aware. She taught adults in South Africa during Apartheid. The lessons she used are intriguing and easily adaptable for all.

Rogers, R. (Ed.) . (2011) *Critical discourse analysis in education*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Routledge.

Rogers, R. & Mosley Wetzel, M. (2014). *Designing critical literacy education through critical discourse analysis*. Routledge.

Rogers is the chair of my dissertation committee and a valued teacher. My copies of her books contain many marked passages about critical discourse analysis and critical literacy that have informed my practice. In the former book, foundational scholars in the traditions of Critical Discourse Analysis explain those traditions. Then various researchers' case studies follow those chapters showing how those traditions can be applied to teaching and learning. The latter book is more of a "how to" and examples for practioners wanting to use CDA to inform their teaching of critical literacy.

Rose, D., & Martin, J. R. (2012). *Learning to write, reading to learn: Genre, knowledge*

*and pedagogy in the Sydney School.* Equinox.

Rose and Martin build on over 30 years of research using genre-based pedagogy in Australian schools. Their book offers practitioners strategies for using genre theory not only to teach writing, but also to work across the curriculum and to teach writing.

Schleppegrell, M. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schleppegrell has worked with teachers across content areas in the U.S. to help them understand how to teach the language of their content areas. In this book, she provides the reader with a thorough presentation of how the language required in schools differs from interactional language and has not been taught to all. She makes a case for critical literacy while also explaining the features of genres typically encountered in schools.

Vasquez, V.(2004). *Negotiating critical literacies with young children.* Routledge.

Vasquez's book not only shows how three-year-olds can become critically aware, she is a model excellent practitioner researcher. Read it for the lessons or the ways practitioners can seamlessly incorporate research into their students' learning

**Appendix B (Lessons)**

Date	Agenda	Data Source	Topic	Strategy
1/8	read and act out "Thank you Ma'am"	-stories with annotations, -video of acting, notes in researcher's journal about reading engagement	consumerism	visualizing reading
1/9	summary of <i>Thank you Ma'am</i> somebody wanted something but so	-summaries in Classroom -anchor chart	consumerism	reviewed structure of narrative centered around conflict as a means to summary
1/16	Who is MLK? KWL chart, research questions	picture of chart	Took a detour because they did not know MLK and why they were off. Others got confused with slavery. Combined with research skills will need later for argument writing	metacognition, knowing what I know and what I have to find out
1/17	choose MLK-related topic to investigate, research	student research graphic organizers	detour, MLK	research skills, evaluating websites using semiotic clues
1/18	researching skills, trustworthy sources, Tree Octopus website created rubric as a class, reading and researching on MLK	anchor chart of skill checklist	MLK	research skills, evaluating websites using semiotic clues
1/19	more research and presentation	student presentation slides	MLK	research skills, evaluating websites

1/22	Literacy Unit SERP, "Should students be paid for school performance?" reading, discussion, all-school vocab builder, will practice vocab in all their classes, Friday will do pre-assessment on argument writing	SERP article, audio recording not transcribed	argument pre-test for writing	
	I have a dream presentation Ahmed and partner	presentation slides	MLK	Sharing
2/1	pretest on SERP article, created a graphic organizer stating reasons for view from Monday's discussion and debate, start assessment	writing sample	intro to debate	
2/6	<i>The Jacket</i> by Gary Soto, partner read, discussion, vocabulary work, wrote summary	summaries, fieldnotes	consumerism	summary wrote, theme: discussed value material goods
2/8	<i>These Shoes</i> read together and discussed, create a Venn diagram of similarities and differences between <i>The Jacket</i> , <i>Thank you Ma'am</i> , and <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i>	Venn diagrams	consumerism	Comparing and contrasting language, verbal into written
2/9	finish Venn diagram of above, share, bridged into discussion about consumerism	took video but failed, field notes, posters	consumerism	consolidation of stories about the quest for material goods, theme
ACCESS TESTING, time of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting				
2/20	What does it mean to argue? What does it mean to persuade? talked about long weekend persuasive strategies presentation	presentation Ppt., video recording and transcription	consumerism	persuasive strategies: ethos, pathos, logos, CONNECT TO language choices, last video recording because students still expressing discomfort

2/21	finished my presentation, watched commercials, chart for audience clues, places/words that show ethos, logos and pathos, turn and talk with partner, what strategy, why, said will do a presentation about how strategies used during a commercial, start looking for a commercial write about strategies seeing	pictures of board, recording, notebooks pictures, homework pictures	consumerism	begin to understand multimodal analysis to for intentional language choices and tie to persuasion strategies and audience
2/22	Students whispered, muttered, cried, and shouted "hello", put words in order as bell ringer (despise to adore, stroll to sprint), did as class on anchor chart, stations with different gradation sets, next they worked with a partner and made their own, after they were done they made gradation sets to test their classmates, read their commercial for powerful words, added to presentation. look for strong words in your independent read	anchor chart we made together, flash cards I made they ordered in stations, flash cards they made for each other to order, their notebooks, field notes	consumerism	understanding and choosing graded words, i.e. minuscule, tiny, small, medium sized, big; stroll, walk, run, sprint
2/23	What is an audience? looked at different shampoos talked about who they were for and how they	slide, notes in their notebooks but the discussion was much richer, field notes	consumerism	linking word choice with associated meaning and audience
2/26	Please sit with the partner listed below. Get your notebook. Write all the associations with Ninja with partner, say in front of class partner writes on poster, Talk a lot about that word, why do they call the ninja blender that? What things about the blender match that? Watch commercial again <a href="https://www.ispot.tv/ad/AYvY/nutri-ninja-with-auto-iq-how-do-you-ninja">https://www.ispot.tv/ad/AYvY/nutri-ninja-with-auto-iq-how-do-you-ninja</a> What strategies do they use? What words tell you? Watch again. What pictures do they use? Why? Read the	audio recording transcript, notebook entries, ninja poster, fieldnotes	consumerism	words have associations, word choice for title, connotations and associations of words, symbolism * This is the day Ibrahim and Ahmed started talking about the protest

	dress code article (See picture) alone or with a partner. Circle 5 strong words. Why did the author choose those words? Write in your notebook.			
2/27	Take an article. Scan it for information. Work with a partner. Look at the picture. What does it show you? What do you see in the picture? Jot down what it tells you and how you know it. Find powerful or central word in article Read each paragraph with a partner or alone Think of the meaning of the paragraph. What is the most central or powerful word? Write it next to the paragraph and explain why you picked it.. Think of the meaning of the paragraph. What is the most central or powerful word?	articles with annotations, field notes. researcher's notebook about the difference between features of lower Lexile and higher Lexile text and decisions about which to use in class	Marjory Douglas Stoneman shooting (what would become the protest unit) change of plan, multimodal analysis, emotive words, words of appraisal	author's point of view by word choice, skimming and using text features to understand difficult text
2/28	Write a summary of yesterday's article, reviewed presentations. 5ws. Harder than I thought took all the class. Reminded about project	summaries, fieldnotes about discussion, researcher notebook long entry about the difference between finding emotive words and images and understanding 5ws	protest	nonfiction summary, finding information to inform protest
3/1	demonstration of a presentation using the ninja commercial, work on their presentations, reminded to look for naming, strategies, word gradation, visual and verbal text clues, conferenced	Sample presentation, their presentation progress on Google Slides	consumerism	also looking for field-specific words, associations, emotive words, audience
3/6	write a letter to Ms Fujii asking me to buy you shoes. You know I think buying expensive shoes	recording of conversation and letters	consumerism	audience matching language choice

	is a waste of money so you better give good reasons. Go into circle. Read one of the letters you wrote. The others will guess if it is the letter to me or your mother from your words.			to audience (reasons & register: modality, polite words)
3/8	created a rubric of presentation skills, practiced skills whole class, practiced doing their presentation with partner	anchor chart made together	consumerism	presentation skills
3/9	presentations	comment sheets student and mine, video for presentation, Google slides of presentation	consumerism	consolidation
3/12	first half 7th grade gone, second half presentations	same as above	consumerism	
3/13	last presentation, two groups, article group and vocabulary square group	reasons for principal, opinion, powerful words graphic academic vocab. squares	consumerism	applying to written text
3/14	Talked about walk out. (Discussion circle: What did you choose to do? What was the message? made a sign that showed the message they wanted to give. Wrote a letter to the person they were talking to.	Audio recorded discussion transcribed, posters, letters fieldnotes and agenda on slides, letters from admin about walk out, news story on channel two about walk out	protest	matching image to written text
3/15	why is it important to explain your evidence? Slip or Trip. Work with partner. List	fieldnotes, audio recorded and	There was so much energy and passion	the stages of an argument warrants

	evidence from the story and picture about what happened?	transcribed, researcher's journal	about the walkout. Decided to continue topic (changed from out topic) Detour to help develop warrants	
3/16	Read over your Slip or Trip poster with partner. Make Sure your evidence links to your explanation. Share the best evidence and explanation. Why are warrants important? Circle around and look at everybody's evidence and rules. Write what you think happened and why you think so on Google docs.	see slides with agenda, posters with claim evidence, warrant and conclusions, fieldnotes	detour to help develop warrants	the stages of an argument warrants
3/19	revise protest letters, explain reasons	protest letters draft	protest	explaining evidence
3/20	Read the persuasive essay, a student exemplar on year-round school. Mark the claim, evidence, warrants (rule and connection) that the student author used. Went over together. With a partner you work with well, create a graphic organizer of how a persuasive essay is structured.	graphic organizers	protest	stages of argument - student created graphic organizer
3/21	Created a graphic organizer as a group modelled after those they did yesterday (as picture) each student added one thing. Looked at Ravi's Talked about Mr. President (Why did he put that?) Looked at his reasons. Took the first. What are different warrants we could add? How does it help? Task: Rewrite your letters. Think of the words. Be sure they help you get what you want. Look at the reasons. Explain them. Tell why they prove your claim. Recorded.	graphic organizer, recording of presentation conference with 6th graders, new letters to compare with old, audio recording with transcript, pictures of board, final letters	protest	stages of argument in their letters, audience and language choices. "strong words": field-specific words, emotive words,

4/2	List of things important to us. Took a field trip around the school stopping at various locations (i.e., stop at cafeteria and they write what they would like to change about lunches, seating, times, etc.), independent book check in	pictures of student lists	building toward choice project	literacy to change, choosing a cause, matching reasons and words to audience
4/3	Did move around stations, things to change in community, school, home, and self; walk around, explain example paper, story of student that changed policy, What would you like to change?	group papers - lists	building toward choice project	literacy to change, choosing a cause
	Make chart Fill out hero definition, Read and discuss I Dissent. Hero buffet. Read articles about different heroes taken from Filled in the chart (see picture 4/3) She persisted and 101 Changemakers Rebels and Radicals Who Changed U.S. History	pictures of charts	building toward choice project	literacy to change, reading about others who changed their world
	The identity web: name, groups, stereotypes about the groups, share what they want to, is there any stereotype they would like to break as their project, read identity poems	posters, audio recording of student presentations of charts	building toward choice project	words to describe our identity
	Discuss different ways to request: questions vs. commands, polite words please, listed modals, "How would you ask?" game same request to different people, half students play a role (friend, teacher, principal, little sibling) half walk around the room a make a request can only pass if partner thinks is appropriate level of politeness	only researcher's journal, messed up recording	debate	interpersonal metafunction: modality, questions vs. commands vs. indirect requests
4/10 - 12	substitute teacher, Lesson on using data bases in library. Read and analyzed 3 argumentative essays	lesson plans	debate	how to find research, review trustworthy research features
4/13	voted on a debate topic that they chose "homework," reviewed databases, copy and paste into	pictures of their lists, research	debate	tying emotive and polite words

	research organizer in classroom, list 10 words that make you emotional, list 10 polite words	organizers for each student		to debate topic, research
4/16	two articles about enslaved people: one from 1920s and one from 1990s, skim, which is which, read thoroughly, look for the way the author presents the lives of enslaved people without directly stating opinion, how can you use these words during your debate? Add to debate research	audio recording of discussion, annotations	debate	(mis)representing the same event with different language choices
	Sort your research, look at the patterns you see in your research, color code the research in groups, what reason for your position presents itself? Go with your partner or partners share your research; combine your findings to come up with the strongest reasons to support your side of the debate	graphic organizers in Classroom at various stages: individual, shared, then color-coded to develop evidence into reasons	debate	How to develop reasons from research Attribution in oral text
4/18	Divide your page into sections: emotion-producing words, strong (remember word grades, emotional) words, polite or impolite (remember should, must, could, questions, orders) words and technical (field-specific) words. Reviewed what I meant, tried to expand polite words based on what they wrote 4/13, Watched Clinton Trump debate put words into columns, put on closed captions and stopped every 20-30 seconds or when requested so they could write or when they asked me to stop for a word, talked about what they found, watched a clip from The Great Debaters did a short version of the same	charts of words, audio recording of discussion, transcript, fieldnotes	debate	emotive words, modals, orders, requests and questions, field-specific vocabulary as is seen in debates
4/25	Debate final run through, debate, debate, debate, debate debrief, start on paper	video recording of debates, audio recording of debate	debate	debate

		analysis, fieldnotes,		
4/30	short weird MAP class: went back to the debate paper, some had not progressed. Put on Classroom. Talked about what went in the intro of the debate. As each student talked wrote on the board. Check writing in own paragraph and add.	pictures of the board, their work, their writing in Classroom	debate written	start to debate essay
5/1	argumentative text about texting and driving, analyzed from language choices overall and broke down into paragraph on elements of a good intro	audio recording transcribed, fieldnotes, pictures of notebooks and board	debate written	argumentative essay deconstruction start, turning oral debate research into written, intro
5/2	committee chair visit, review elements of a good intro we did the day before, read through samples, highlight elements in individual work, work in debate group to write a joint intro.	google slide, intro paragraphs, chair comments audio recorded. audio recording of lesson transcribed	debate written	argumentative essay intro paragraphs
5/5	post MAP unwind and then 40 mins deconstructing body paragraph	recorded student analysis of student work, fieldnotes	debate written	argumentative essay body paragraphs
5/8	Sub doing MODEL with the students without my guidance right after MAP	MODEL tests	required testing	testing
5/9	body paragraph model, parts discussion, writing, comparing, group paragraph then back to individual	audio recording but no transcription, group and individual writing samples	debate written	argumentative essay body paragraphs, Attribution in written text
5/10	conclusion paragraph models, what were the different strategies used, parts discussion, writing, comparing, group	group and individual writing samples	debate written	argumentative essay conclusion paragraphs

	paragraph then back to individual			
5/11	finish essays	group and individual writing samples	debate written	argumentative essay, read aloud to partner for a final check
5.15	paired and read homework essays aloud, I conference with students, started doing online portfolio,	essays through all their variations, field notes	debate written	how to revise, check your writing
5/16	Finished portfolios, described choice projects, I conference on projects and debate essay while the students research for topics	rubrics for feedback, research notes on Classroom	choice project	argumentative essay feedback and choice project research
5/17 - 23	Different students were in and out of the class all week due to end of the end activities. While they were there, they shared idea with about choice project and reason with, researched, and wrote. They conferenced with me or each other upon request. Mailed or requested appointment to act on projects,	choice projects, fieldnotes	choice project	using argument knowledge for change
5/24	Shared project and celebrated year!	choice projects, fieldnotes	choice project	sharing power of their writing

**Appendix C (Writing Sample Analysis)**

BEATRIZ SEPTEMBER				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher Notes
( <i>bow picture</i> ) Monkeys ( <i>bow picture</i> )			title	
Dear Principal.....	uses title rather than name		salutation	
Hi!	informal greeting- "Hi",	sounds perky- "!"	greeting	
My name is Beatriz.		first name only informal, relational process- "is"	introduces self by first name only	
I think		mental process- "think", weakens claim	claim	
you should choose my idea	"should"		claim continued, does not say what idea she is taking about	One long sentence about the joy of monkeys. She is charming and vibrant in her writing. Could develop to be powerful
because, if we painted monkeys on the hallways,	if- conditional People liking the school is conditional on the monkeys	material process- "painted"	supporting claim, "because" connects between clauses	
then people would really like this school	appraisal "really like"	mental process- "like"	supporting claim, "then" connects between clauses	needs more descriptive forms of appraisal
and it would also be really fun.	appraisal- "really fun"	relational process- "be"	"and" connects "also"	
Then people could tell	modal- "could"	verbal process- "could tell"	"then" expresses	New sentence, Reason is fun but does not hold true.

			result of monkeys/	Does one change schools because their friends tell them to do so? Would one choose a school based on monkeys?
their friends to come to this school.		material process-come		
And in the future this school would be legendary.	appraisal-"legendary", modal - "would"	relational process-"be"		Nice appraisal word choice. Trying to connect with the principal who probably would want legendary school. Not really logically connecting the monkeys to the origin of the legend.

BEATRIZ JANUARY				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher Note
This is important because of all the different opinions.	appraisal- "important",	relational process- "is"	lexical chain is unclear	Is not aware of her audience. What is important? All the different opinions about what?
This is important because of all the different opinions.		verb process- "say" to introduce her opinion, close to a mental process		Puts herself before claim, weakens argument
students should be payed for school performance	modal- "should"	"be payed" - passive construction, misspelled	students in the theme position which is skillful so she doesn't have to deal with where the money would come from, <i>claim</i>	did not pick up spelling from the prompt
because than you can keep saving money	modal- "can"	connector of causation between clauses- "because," material process- "keep saving." nominalization- "saving"	problem in lexical chain- "you" Who is you? A specific or general person., <i>evidence 1</i>	
so you can get into a good collage	modal- "can" appraisal- "good"	connector of causation between clauses- "so", material process- " get"	unidentified "you"	She is putting subordinate clauses in the same sentence now.
My evidence is that		relational process- "is", a field specific word for the style of writing rather the content of text, "evidence"		
if people get payed for school	if- conditional upon fulfillment of her wish	passive- "get payed", the people are receivers of the action, "people" generalized		

		participants, too generalized		
they will be motivated.	appraisal- "motivated"	relational process- "be" future	<i>evidence 2</i>	
They will work twice as harder.	appraisal- "twice as harder"	material process- "work"	<i>evidence 3 or evidence 2 explained?</i>	
The negative thing about it though, is	appraisal- "negative", "though" concession to opposing view	relational verb- "is"	<i>counterargument</i>	opening door- opens to other side but never rebuts
that they will only do it for the money not to learn.	appraisal- "only for money", modal- "will"	future, material process - "do"	counterargument continued	
If students get payed	if- condition on audience action	passive construction "get payed"		
they can get to a good collage and get a very good job	appraisal- "very good" modal- "can"	material process- "get" still places the people as receivers	<i>evidence 3</i>	
They then would be able to help poor people and their family.	modal- "would be able to "	material process- "help"	<i>evidence 3 result</i>	
Then they will be to buy food for the poor and maybe give them a house.	modal mistake- "be to" instead of be able to , "will"	future	<i>evidence 3 result</i>	pathos
It would be a very good idea to pay students.	modal- "would" appraisal- "very good idea"	relational process- "be"	<i>restating claim</i>	SEE BELOW
<b>CHANGES NOTED</b>				
longer response Seems closer to her interests Less formulaic				

More varied use of tense and voice  
Evidence not supported or explained, just long list  
Using language of appraisal not in prompt  
Appealing to feeling of reader  
Still, audience is unclear

Beatriz May				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher Note
<b>Dear neighbors,</b>	connecting to neighbors		letter format, salutation	I choose the Wrd font nearest her original font which is in all capital letters. Writing is bolded form in the original font, because capitalization looks so different if font is changed.
<b>My name is Beatriz</b>		relational verb- "is"	introducing self	
<b>and i am a six grader at psuedonym middle school.</b>	seeking credibility?	relational process- "am"	adds more information to name,	
<b>For a school project, i want to help puerto rico by collecting money</b>	does school project make her more credible? appraisal- "help"	mental process-help	call to action?/ claim?	She is Puerto Rican and list that on her identity chart as key to her
<b>so i can send that money to the unidos por puerto rico</b>	modal- "can", name of agency adds credibility	material process- "send", using name of organization that will lend credibility, not capitalizing.		In the original font all letters were capital, but in Arial uncapitalized

( United by puerto rico) charity				
This is very important to me	appraisal- "very important"	relational process- "is"	evidence / reason to donate, <i>introduce a topic</i>	She had been taught to stating the importance of a cause was a way to introduce a subject. She is still centering on herself then broadening to her family. This works here. I wonder if this is because she was only 12 at time of writing. All the students wrote from their identity but her language choices most reflect it, because she is the youngest? has the most urgent need?
because i am originally from puerto rico	establishing connection to cause with audience	relational process- "am"	"because" between clauses to show reason, <i>link ideas through transitions</i>	
and most of my family is still there.		relational process- "is"	<i>justify with concrete evidence and examples</i>	
My family still has no water,	appraisal- "still has no water", connects to self- "My family", "still" strengthens .		details hardship= pathos, <i>generalization that draw from their own experience and that of others</i>	
And their roof is leaking.	appraisal- "roof is leaking"	relational process- "is"	<i>justify with concrete evidence and examples</i>	Much improved in specificity of appraisal
My family didn't have any electricity for 8 months,	negation of a human need- "didn't have any electricity for 8 months"	mental process- "have"		
and they recently just got their electricity back.	would connect to other people in her apartment complex			

	with these reasons			
<b>please help me, my family, and others in puerto rico.</b>	"please"- polite, appraisal- "help me, my family, and others in puerto rico"	her to family to Puerto Rico, specific to broader appeal, material process- "help"	call to action	
<b>With the money raised they will buy food, tools and buy the things that are needed</b>	appraisal- "needed"	connects to basic human needs	why need to act	
<b>to help puerto rico go back to how it was.</b>	appraisal- "help"	material process- "help"		
<b>According to the mission discovery union, 2 hurricanes hit puerto rico, irma and maria.</b>	establish credibility with outside source and details of destruction	material process- "hit"	calls on outside authority, <i>incorporate and acknowledge the writing of others</i>	
<b>They were both category 5,</b>	appraisal- "category 5"	relational process- "were", field-specific language "category 5"		

hurricane sustained winds over 150mph.	appraisal - "winds over 150mph"	field-specific language- "hurricane", "sustained winds", technical language- 150mph		used language from research
According to ryan grenoble , in in some communi- ties about 80 to 90 percent of homes have been complete- ly destroyed.	appraisal- "completely destroyed"	material process, present perfect- "have been completely destroyed"	cites research as evidence 2 forgot to tell reader who Ryan Grenoble is	
Similarly to my family, Puerto rico still needs help with rebuilding houses, buying tools and food	appraisal - "still needs help"	mental process- "needs help"	connects evidence back to her situation and call to action	
for the people that need it.	appraisal- "needs"	mental process- "need"	repetition of the word need which parallels the listing of the needs of the people of Puerto Rico	
Hurricane season	appraisal "Hurricane season"	urgency in process- "is coming up"	establishes urgency in call to action	

is coming up,				
the people in puerto rico need to be prepared .	appraisal "prepared"	mental process- "need", the sensor/needer is no longer just her or her family it is broader- "The people in Puerto Rico", relational process- "be prepared"	establishes urgency in call to action	
Many people still don't have water or power.	negation of a human that continues- "don't have water or power" appraisal- "still"	relational process- "have"	establishes urgency in call to action	
That is why			connects back to call to action	
i need your help to donate money to help puerto rico.	appraisal- "help Puerto Rico"	relational process- "have", returns to the personal "I" as she started her original claim		
Please turn in the money in the donation box in the office.....	"please"- adverb added to make polite	material process- "turn in" imperative- asking the reader to take action,	specific logistics with donating money, ellipsis plus two extra periods indicates the reader knows something that is left out???, "the office" describes an office all the neighbors would know	She used extended ellipse throughout the year. I noticed in September sample, too.
Thank you.....	"Thank you"		expressing gratitude, ellipsis plus two extra periods indicates extra gratitude???	

<p><b>Have a great day!.....</b> .</p>	<p>appraisal- "great day"</p>	<p>relational process- "have", imperative, Exclamation mark- emphasis, perkiness</p>	<p>ellipsis times 2, is she just putting them</p>	
<p><b>-Beatriz (last name) (last name)</b></p>				

IBRAHIM SEPTEMBER				
	interpersonal	ideational	textual	teacher note
Dear, DR SIMMONS 9/11/17				principal pseudonym
My name is Ibrahim (family name),			introduces self	
and I want to draw a Dog for my poster	directly expresses "want" inappropriate to principal	mental process- "want to draw"	claim, "and"- will repeat this 4 times, connects between clauses	They were supposed to write a letter to the principal about what should be painted on the entry wall of the school
and i want to put things about the Dogs on the poster			claim continued	he always uses capital d, maybe supposed to be lowercase
like Dogs are good pets		relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs, the connects with "like"	
because they love people		mental process- "love"	connects with "because"	
and they are so cute	appraisal- "cute"	relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	many relational processes, no unmarked theme, always "and" or "they"
and they are sweet	appraisal- "sweet"	relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	
they are funny	appraisal- "funny"	relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or	

			why they are worthy of the wall?	
they are fun to play with	appraisal- "fun to play with"	relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	
they are so many kinds of Dogs.		relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall? This clause ends with a period	
they keep you company and love.	appraisal- "keep you company and love"		listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	Not sure if this is intended to be one sentence. There are no capitals
they are important to your life.	appraisal- "important to you life"	relational process- "are"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	
they love other Dogs.		mental process- "love"	listing the things he wants to write about dogs or why they are worthy of the wall?	
From	informal		closing	
Ibrahim				
(family name)				

IBRAHIM JANUARY				
	interpersonal	Ideational	textual	teacher notes
YES	definite answer, all caps.		<i>does not make a claim explicit, in answer to the prompt, "Should students get paid for good grades?"</i>	This time he has 3 paragraphs and has divided text into sentences. This was an all-school writing prompt, but since this student's family was living in poverty, many of the reasons come from Ibrahim's experience
Because some people in school need money		mental process- "need" here and repeated several times throughout text	<i>evidence - need money</i>	
because so they can get snacks in the vending machine	modal- "can"	material process- "get"	why need money, affordances of money	New vending machine in school that year. This student could never buy snacks there.
and they need money for their lunch money.		Mental process- "need" here and repeated several times throughout text, The choice of some people in school" and "they" is interesting, because it puts him outside that group though he is in it. Embarrassed?	why need money, reason 2, This time has a clear lexical chain, "they" = "some people in school"	
They need money		They need money		
so if there's a field trip going on	if- describing a condition	"going on"- existential process, "so" causative	themes are casual connectors	

		connector between clauses	or unmarked	
the can pay the money	modal- "can"	"pay" material process	why they need money, reason 3	
so they can go and have fun on the trip.	appraisal- "fun" tied to money, modal- "can" all these abilities tied to money	material process- "go" relational process- "have"	continues with money for field trip	
And something else is		connecting phrase relational process- "is"		
if they don't have money	"if"- conditional, negation "not"	state of not having money, relational process- "have"		
they will not get to get school supplies for their classes.sometimes	negation - "not" modal- lke- "get to" "sometimes" appraisal-" get to get school supplies"	There are lots of verbs about receiving, getting	what happens when they don't have money 1	
Sometimes if the kids ask their mom and dad	"sometimes", "if"- conditional	verbal process- "ask"	explaining reason	
if they do not have money	"if"- conditional, negation "not" Lots of conditions	relational- "have"	explaining reason	
and then they can not have to get things from school	"can" -modal negation- "not", "have to" expressing obligation	"get" repeated	what happens when they don't have money 2	
so thats why		"so thats why" expressing causation, relational process- "is"	transition, did not break sentence, referring to ll previous lessons	

kids need money in school		"need" repeated	returning to altered claim	He is not referring to the part of the prompt that linked the money to good grades. He wants money for school, but doesn't think good grades are possible?
just in case their mom or dad or brother or sister don't have money to give to them.	"just in case"- establishing a condition. negation- not	"do not have"- relational verb negated	returning to parent lack of money as reason	This is true of I.
People would be more likely and motivated to go to school	"would"- modal, appraisal- "more likely," "motivated"	relational process- "be"	<i>new reason</i> - school attendance	
if they were paid to go there.	"if"- conditional	"were paid" - passive construction	The question was not about attendance, altered question, paragraph breaks	
And school is like work		relational process- "is"	new reason- school is like work, connector expressing addition	
if kids have to do a lot of work	"if"- conditional, appraisal- " a lot" modal- "have to"	material process- "do"	explaining reason, condition for payment, connector expressing condition	
then they deserve to get paid for their hard work.	appraisal "deserve", "hard work"	"get paid"- another process about receiving	effect connector	

and if the kids are doing good in school like getting good grades	"if"- conditional, appraisal- "doing good", "good grades"	material process in present progressive- "are doing"	<i>States claim</i> returns to test prompt,	
then they should paid for their good grades	modal - "should" expressing obligation, appraisal- "good grades"		result of meeting conditions	SEE BELOW
<b>CHANGES NOTED</b>				
<p>Clear lexical chain with only one exception                  Reasons appropriate for a reader, assuming audience is a teacher                  Divided into paragraphs                  Wrote much more than previously                  Need and receive repeated often                  Reasons match personal experience, but did not include self in people, othered                  Still some run-on sentences but fewer than before                  Did not start with a clear claim</p>				

IBRAHIM MAY				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher notes
12345 G(street name) Drive,			letter conventions, his inside address	
(city), (state abbreviation)			letter conventions, inside address	
(zip code)			letter conventions, inside address	
President Donald Trump	uses title of respect		letter conventions, addressee's name and title	
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW			letter conventions, inside address of addressee	researched address
Washington, DC 20500			letter conventions, inside address	
Dear President Trump,	use of title- "President", no first name indicates formality	clear audience	salutation	
I am a 13 year old boy who come to school at (school name) Middle School, who doesn't like people who are racist.		relational verb- "am",	identifies and positions self, connects sentence parts with "who", does not	

We, the people of United States, do not like	negation "do not like"	intertextual reference to the constitution, I think there is a content-specific connection to the rights as guaranteed in the Constitution, mental process "like"	draws on authority of the Constitution, places himself in the group of "We, the people of United States" to express displeasure	He studied this in U.S. history that year
how you are being rude to other cultures	rude	toward nominalization		
that you don't know about.			modifies previous statement	
The fact you are building a wall with the U.S-Mexico border, shows		nominalization "the fact that you are building a wall" much more description, circumstance "with the U.S.-Mexico border" technical language	actions Trump is taking against people of other countries	connection to friends in school
that you don't understand	appraisal "you don't understand"		Trump lack of understanding	
how people are struggling in other countries.	appraisal "struggling"	toward struggling with other countries"		
Mexican people don't like	using another identity group		Mexican displeasure at Trump	He has Mexican friends
what you are doing right now,				
You started saying		nominalization of verbal process,	What Trump said	

		projection "saying"		
that Muslim people are terrorists	appraisal "terrorists"	relational process "are"		He is Muslim
but they're coming here to live a good life	appraisal of Muslims "they're coming here to live a good life"			
because there countries are at war		circumstance/ relational process		
I read in an article by Newsweek			cites outside authority	
that you said some bad things	appraisal "bad"	verbal process "said"	repeats what Trump has said	
about Haiti and African nations coming to the U.S.				He is African, read about Haitians
Newsweek quoted you saying,		verbal process "quoted"	cites outside source, "Newsweek" again repeats what Trump is saying	
"Why do we need more Haitians?,"	implied negation of need	question relational process "need"	cites Trump	
Take them out,"		material process / double meaning	cites Trump	
and you said			cites Trump	
all Haitians have AIDS.	Trump appraisal		cites Trump	
You need to stop talking about Haitians and Africans negatively	appraisal in adverb "negatively"	Imperative	CLAIM	
because it makes		causation in process		
American people think bad about those different countries.	appraisal: "bad"	mental process "think"	Reason	
These feeling makes				

These feeling makes other immigrants scared to live in America.	"other immigrants" positions self with immigrants. appraisal "scared"	nominalization "these feelings" process of causation, "makes"	Reason	
This is not fair	negation "not" appraisal, "not fair"			
because those people who come to America are here for a better life.	appraisal "here for a better life"	relational process "are"		
I am writing this letter to you		verbal process "writing", I am saying	repeat call to action	
so you can stop saying racist things.	appraisal "racist"	cession of a verbal process "stop saying"		
When you say these racist things,	appraisal "racist" repeated			
it makes other American citizens uncomfortable and makes then more mean and rude to other people from other cultures.	positions self-opposed to Trump "other American citizens," appraisal: "mean," "rude," "uncomfortable"	causation in process "makes"		
America is not welcoming.	negation "not" appraisal "welcoming"	relational process "is"	reason	
I have family members that are trying to come to America.	positions self with future immigrants	relational process "have"	I	
It is hard for them	appraisal "hard"	relational process "is"	them his family members, lexical chain follows	
because of the things you have been saying is making things worse.		"Have been saying" verbal process in the present	connects back to the things T. has been saying	

		perfect progressive		
Sincerely ,	formal		closing	
Ibrahim (family name)				

RAVI SEPTEMBER				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher Notes
From,	more typical of a note, informal		end salutation in the beginning	trying at letter conventions, but doesn't quite have them down
Ravi (family name)			inside address, identifies self	
To,	more typical of a note, informal			
Ms. Dr. (principal name)	double title, trying at formality			
11 September, 2017			date, day before month	
Respected Principal,	formal address, no name	title after honorific		
I would like to inform you	"would"-modal	mental process- "like" combined with verbal "to inform" This is formal but inappropriate, usually this used in business or government addressed to an individual from group or one of higher stature to lower		
that I am having an idea for the plain wall in the hallway.	appraisal- "plain"	mental process, present progressive - "am having" typical of newcomer Indian students	<i>claim - is wrapped in a mental process and unclear as to whether it requires action on</i>	

			<i>the part of the principal.</i>	
We should basically paint on sports star	modal- "should" to express value of his idea "basically"	material process- "paint"	<i>claim</i> "we" is unclear, who should paint on the sports star?	
as in school we study more than play.		behavioral process "study",	"as" connection between clauses evidence for claim	
We should paint Cristiana Ronaldo in his playing movement.	modal- "should"	material process "paint" circumstance- in his playing movement awkward		
By seeing this more student's would like to join our soccer team.	modal- "would",		evidence who is "our"	
It would also make the wall look good.	modal- "would", appraisal "look good"	make- causation	evidence 2	
I also choosed a photo of Ronaldo from google		material process, past tense, incorrect irregular verb - "choosed"	evidence 2 repeated	
it is a colorful which would make the wall look more attractive	appraisal- "attractive", modal- "would"		he is trying to pack information into one sentence; it is close but still a runon. "it" as theme	unmarked themes
It would give inspiration to more students to word hard to succeed like him in their field.	modal- "would"	inspiration- nominalization	evidence	

	modal- "would" it sounds like he is ordering the principal to talk to others	mental process, statement would have been much more effective as a question	call to action	
I would like you to discuss with other teachers and principals about this				
Thanking you, (signed name)		present progressive tense	closing	
( <i>typed name in parentheses</i> )				

RAVI MAY				
	Interpersonal	Ideational	Textual	Teacher Notes
Ms.G____	use of family name and Ms.	title and family name	<i>inside address</i> addressees noted, business letter conventions	to director of after-school activities at our school
( <i>school acronym</i> ) Principal	use of title	second addressee	title of second address, but no name	Did not use principal's name, he used "Mr. President" for another letter, confusion? Forgot to take out for second letter?
Dear Ms ( <i>name</i> ),	title and address appropriate to audience, fairly formal		<i>salutation</i> lexical chain connects to inside address	
I am a 7th grader at ( <i>school acronym</i> )		identifies connection, introduces self, relational process- "am"	uses first person, appropriate to letter genre, beginning of the letter so must identify "I", puts self in theme position, then establishes identity to set up his position	
and our school needs to have more sports activities like softball, soccer,	"our school" connects to administrator as joint partner in school	expresses a "need" for change in his/ their school,	<i>claim</i>	This student on identity chart listed "athlete" as a key piece of his identity.

basketball and more.				
We usually only have tournaments	positions self with reader- "We" Appraisal "only have"	lack in the current level of sports programming, relational process - "have"	provides <b>background</b> for concern, justifies claim	All after-school sports at the time of wiring were played only two months once a week at each grade level.
which end in just 3-4 weeks	Appraisal-"just"	lack in current programming continued, material process	He is missing commas in compound sentences.	
but we need longer	positions self with reader- "We"	expands on the school "need",		
sessions of these sports.		mental process- "need"		
Even if we can't have these practice sessions with other schools	negation and modal- "can't," conditional- "even if," counterargument	recognizing a possible hurdle, Humphreys "opening space", "have" relational process	<b>counterargument</b>	
we could definitely do them with grade levels.	definitely	closing space with answer to problem above, material process - "do"	<b>rebuttal</b>	
The fact I want to have more sports is		his opinion tied with a "fact", nominalization- on?, addition of a grammatical metaphor?, mental process, "want"	clear lexical chain of "I" and "we"	

because that might inspire some kids to be athletes and maybe get better	appraisal- "inspire." "get better"	brings discussion outside of personal preference to the generalized- "some kids," relational causative process- "inspire to be"	<i>reason introduced</i>	
at sports they like to play.	appraisal-"like"	mental process- "like to play"	reason continued	he is not just talking about his mental processes here
If students participate in these sports	if	benefits of sports, material process - "participate"	reason explained	
they can be healthier, use their minds to make strategies, and exercise their bodies.	appraisal-"healthier" modal-can	benefits of playing sports, reasons appropriate to audience, relational process - "be," material processes- "use" "make" "exercise"	reason explained	
They can learn coordination by playing with their friends or teammates.	modal-can	mental process- "learn", nominalization- "playing"		
According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, "youth sports can help deter	creating credibility with audience	using research for authority "According to ...." transitions of saying, projection, material causative process-"help deter."	<i>citing research as evidence</i>	

negative behavior, such as joining a gang,		nominalization "joining a gang"		
because competitive sports provide an outlet for expression and controlled aggression. " Which can even prevent students to have bad behaviour in class.	appraisal-"outlet for expression" "controlled aggression" "prevent students to have bad behavior"	reasons playing sports is beneficial, "prevent students to have bad behavior," "provide" - causative relational process	explains research that he introduced, which clause capitalized	He used Indian/British spelling of behavior, "behaviour"
New research published in the journal Pediatrics suggests," that	suggests	introducing research, process of saying - "suggests"	<i>citing research as evidence</i>	
team sports may be better at keeping kids' weight down."	modal- "may" appraisal - "better"	benefit of sports per research, relational process- "be," nominalization- "keeping"		
Playing sports helps student lose the extra fat by running and exercising which can make them healthier.	appraisal- "helps," "make healthier"	causative material - "helps lose", nominalization- "playing," "running," "exercising"	paraphrases and expands research	lots of causative processes

<p>It might even help decrease the rate of obesity in our country.</p>	<p>appraisal- "help decrease the rate of obesity", "even" modal- "might"</p>	<p>goes from "students" to "our country" generalizing the benefits of sports, causative material process, "help decrease" U</p>	<p>paraphrases and expands research</p>	
<p>If we started having longer sessions of these sports</p>	<p>conditional- "if"</p>	<p>what would happen if his request were granted</p>	<p><i>connects evidence and research back to claim</i></p>	
<p>then it just gonna help us by decreasing rate of obesity in our country and increase their good behaviour in our school.</p>	<p>appraisal- "gonna help us" informal language- "gonna"</p>	<p>field-related word, nominalization- "decreasing rate of obesity," does not nominalize "increase" switches to future "gonna,"</p>	<p>connects evidence and research back to claim</p>	<p>he is in the process of learning to nominalize</p>
<p>These sport activities can be a really good practice for the upcoming tournaments against other schools.</p>	<p>modal- "can" appraisal- "really good practice"</p>	<p>field-related word- tournaments, relational process- "be"</p>		
<p>This year (acronym for school) has not been able to win tournament</p>		<p>need for our school to win against other schools in the district, "has not been able to" - relational process</p>	<p><i>new reason for claim</i></p>	

s against other ( <i>district name</i> ) schools.		in present perfect tense		
We need to have more trophies in the trophy box near the main office.		field-related word- "trophies," "trophy box"	evidence for and explanation of reason	There is a trophy case in the school which both he and the addressee would know
So we extremely need to have more longer sessions	appraisal - "extremely"	expression of the "need" to win as tied to needing more time to play sports	evidence for and explanation of reason	
as they are proven to be pretty beneficial.	appraisal- "pretty beneficial"	referencing outside authority		
If we started having longer sessions of these sports	conditional - "if" expresses causation	what would happen if his request were granted	<i>connects evidence back to claim</i>	
then our school team could be prepared for these upcoming tournaments to prove their dominance .	modal- "could" appraisal "dominance"	relational process- "be"		
I would be grateful	modal- "would"	polite request, relational process- "be"	<i>restates claim in new words, call to action</i>	
if you consider adding a longer season to	conditional - "if"	"consider"- mental process, more polite than the material in this case,		

these sports.		nominalization- "adding"		
Sincerely,	formal closing	Closing	<i>salutation</i>	
Ravi (family name)		full name	<i>signature</i>	SEE BELOW
<b>CHANGES NOTED</b>				
<p>Writing from his identity: reflected in his topic choice and his competitive nature matches his reason</p> <p>Expressing cause in verbs</p> <p>Starting to nominalize using -ing consistently</p> <p>Not just listing but explaining and connecting reasons</p> <p>Mental process not as common and not just his</p> <p>Reasons tied to audience</p> <p>Conventions of a letter present</p> <p>Using modal to express possibility as well as politeness</p> <p>Use of first and second person appropriate to letter</p> <p>Modal adjuncts: extremely, really, definitely</p> <p>Broader range of processes- not just in his head</p> <p>Stages of argument genre present</p> <p>Cites outside authorities</p> <p>Punctuation is more correct</p> <p>Interpersonal changes to U.S. dialect</p>				

**Appendix D: Example Rubric, Tala's Commercial Analysis**

Name ~~Tala~~ Tala

Presentation content: I can

Identify strategies used to persuade	Advanced	Proficient	<del>Developing</del>	Beginning
Look at how the author word choice and connect it to strategies	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Identify the audience and say how I know	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Identify how the author uses pictures to sell the product and say how I know	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	<del>Beginning</del>
Look at the name of the product and say why the authors chose it	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Find grading	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Find evaluative words	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Find technical vocabulary	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Beginning

KAIROS  
 Pathos  
 Slow start but great later

- 2018 explained well  
 - do more like that

This was well done

There were great pictures. Talk about them even more

2018 explained well!  
 but I had to ask

Shut up and just dribble

assassin

You used good basketball words. Did the commercial

Proficient  
 - quotes from Michael  
 More  
 - Kids loved the commercial

LaBran James  
 - racist  
 ↓  
 ex. cell lent  
 connection



## Appendix E (Slip or Trip, Hillocks, 2011)

### "Slip or Trip?"

At five-feet-six and a hundred and ten pounds, Queenie Volupides was a sight to behold and to clasp. When she tore out of the house after a tiff with her husband, Arthur, she went to the country club where there was a party going on.

She left the club shortly before one in the morning and invited a few friends to follow her home and have one more drink. They got to the Volupides house about ten minutes after Queenie, who met them at the door and said, "Something terrible happened. Arthur slipped and fell on the stairs. He was coming down for another drink—he still had the glass in his hand—and I think he's dead. Oh, my God—what shall I do?"

The autopsy conducted later concluded that Arthur had died from a wound on the head and confirmed that he'd been drunk.

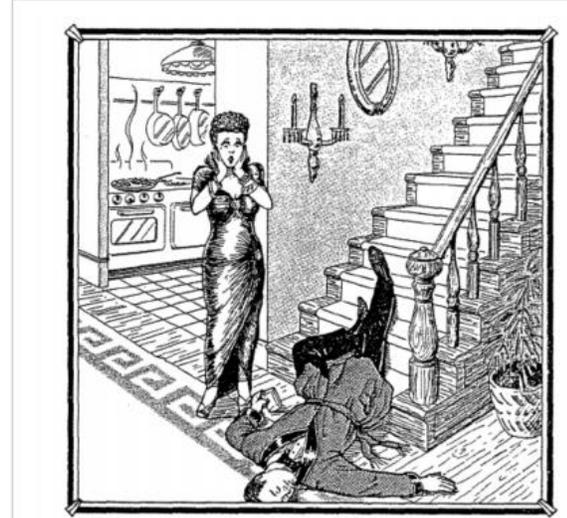


FIGURE 1.1 "Slip or Trip?"