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# **Reconsidering Calkins' Process Writing Pedagogy for Multilingual Learners: Units of Study in a Fourth Grade Classroom**

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## Abstract

Lucy Calkins' curriculum *Units of Study for Writing* is a process approach to writing pedagogy used in thousands of elementary and middle schools in the United States and internationally (Teachers College Reading Writing Project, 2020). Process approaches have been highly influential on writing pedagogy for the past 30 years (Brisk, 2015; Hyland, 2003) and continue to be popular in the United States today, particularly in the context of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Alim & Paris, 2017). However, as with all movements in education, we need to step back and critically examine the role of process approaches in promoting equity in the present context. Do this approach and curriculum still meet the needs of today's learners, in particular multilingual learners? Most importantly, do they promote and maintain equitable learning outcomes for all students? This paper examines how Calkins' curriculum conceptualizes the teaching of writing in the disciplines; how one teacher made sense of the curriculum; and what is missing from the curriculum that may limit its curricular and pedagogical appropriateness to promote equity. We focus on one of Calkins' units, *Bringing History to Life* (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013) and one elementary school teacher. We found that in this unit, writing was conceptualized as a cognitive process of thinking, imagining, planning, and noticing. The main writing activities were drafting and free writing, without explicit attention to language. The privileged pedagogy promoted by this unit of study was discovery-led, with achievement based on students' prior knowledge of language and exposure to the genres. As a result, access to the knowledge necessary for achievement was not equally distributed. In this way, we found the *Bringing History to Life* script to be potentially complicit in both creating and maintaining opportunity gaps in writing development, as the students who made progress did so because they did not need help from the teacher, and those who needed explicit language teaching to make progress, did not get enough support. We conclude with recommendations for teaching writing with a more visible pedagogy that makes the rules for being a successful writer explicit, visible, and accessible to all.

# Reconsidering Calkins' Process Writing Pedagogy for Multilingual Learners: Units of Study in a Fourth Grade Classroom

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*Because you are not teaching towards mastery, when you feel the content of your mini-lesson is a lot for your learners to grasp, instead of slowing that lesson down, adding in a zillion scaffolds, paraphrasing and discussing each aspect of it, you will want to speed up.* (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017, p. 4)

## Introduction

Lucy Calkins' curriculum *Units of Study for Writing* is used in thousands of elementary and middle schools in the United States and internationally (Teachers College Reading Writing Project, 2020). It is based on a process approach to writing pedagogy and was developed in the context of the whole language movement of the 1980s by Donald Graves (1983, 1994), Nancie Atwell (1988), Donald Murray (1985), and Lucy Calkins (1986). While many variations of process writing developed over the years, the advent of the approach marked an important shift in emphasis from a product requiring formal accuracy to writing as a creative and iterative process requiring multiple drafts, extensive feedback, and peer review (Brisk, 2015; Graves, 1983; Hyland, 2003). This shift changed the mindset of both teachers and students of writing. Writing was no longer seen as a set of difficult, decontextualized tasks, but as an activity that could be done by everyone, for authentic and meaningful purposes. In the elementary classrooms this approach de-centered the role of the teacher to focus on individual students, placing great value on their thinking and expression of ideas (Graves, 1983; Atwell, 1988; Murray, 1985; Calkins, 1986; Hyland, 2003). Writing instruction was done through "writing workshops" modelled after artist studios, where the teacher presented strategies in short "mini-lessons" and then students went off to spend large amounts of time writing independently on topics and using strategies of their choosing. Teachers would conduct one-on-one conferences with students (Atwell, 1988; Calkins 1986). The assumption was that writing improves through writing on one's own, as well as through talking with peers and conferencing with the teacher (Calkins et al., 2005). Perhaps the most significant feature of these writing workshops was the development of a community of writers within a classroom. The role of the community was to provide a supportive, nurturing place where students felt valued for their individual expression (Calkins, 1986 and elsewhere).

In the 1980s, process writing, and writing workshops in particular, were instantly appealing to teachers immersed in the whole language movement, which privileged constructivism and emphasized student choice. These approaches have been highly influential on writing pedagogy for the past 30 years (Brisk, 2015; Hyland, 2003) and they continue to be popular in the United States today, particularly in the context of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Alim & Paris, 2017). The focus on individual voice and expression of self, the reduction of stress and anxiety about writing, and the creation of a positive classroom community all help teachers create inclusive

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learning environments for their increasingly diverse groups of students. Arguably, the most popular curriculum used today based on the process writing approach is what teachers colloquially refer to as “Lucy Calkins.” After her initial work with Graves and Atwell in the 1980s, Lucy Calkins moved to Columbia University and developed the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) with the aim of supporting teachers to implement writing and reading workshop pedagogy. Originally, this work was limited to New York City schools, but over the past 30 years, TCRWP expanded to provide curriculum and professional development to thousands of schools in the United States and abroad (TCRWP, 2020). Over time, Calkins developed the curriculum into a series of *Units of Study for Writing and Reading Workshops* published by Heinemann (e.g., Calkins, 2006). These scripted versions of writing or reading workshops explicitly show teachers what to say and do. They are organized around particular units that address different text types proposed in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (Calkins et al., 2012).

Process writing and the work of Lucy Calkins have had a strong influence on writing pedagogy historically and to the present time. However, as with all movements in education, we need to step back and critically examine the role of process approaches in promoting equity in the present context, which is arguably very different from the context in which the approach and curriculum were developed and popularized. As educators, we must ask if this approach and curriculum still meet the needs of today’s learners, and multilingual learners (MLs) in particular. Most importantly, does the approach promote and maintain equitable learning outcomes for all students? First, while process writing may be useful to help students write narratives about their weekend, or personal opinion pieces about their favorite ice cream, process writing as an approach may not be enough to support students to meet the current demands placed on them as a result of high stakes testing, Common Core, and the new edition of the WIDA English Language Development framework, all of which demand a higher level of writing skills than previously. To meet new criteria, students need to develop writing skills in disciplinary literacy (Gebhard, 2019; Moje, 2018; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Disciplinary literacy positions writing and reading as a specific way of knowing, reasoning, and communicating by members of a particular discipline. Writing in the disciplines means coming to understand the “norms of practice” for constructing and communicating in those disciplines (Gee, 2001; Lemke, 1990). In this view, disciplinary literacy becomes more than a mere deployment of isolated literacy strategies, such as writing an introduction or adding details. In social studies, for example, students are expected to articulate evidentiary reasoning by supporting their claims with evidence from sources (C3 Framework).

The underachievement of MLs in writing, both historically and at present, also causes us to question the appropriateness of process writing. MLs score lower than their non-ML peers on standardized tests of writing such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (The Nation’s Report Card, 2020). For example, in 1998 and 2002, fourth grade MLs scored 28 and 30 points lower than their non-ML peers (The Nation’s Report Card, 2020). This achievement gap worsens as students grow older. In 8th grade in 2011, on the writing portion of the NAEP, MLs scored 44 points lower than their non-ML peers (The Nation’s Report Card,

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2020). The data here do not make clear what pedagogy students who take the NAEP have received, but it is likely that many grew up with process writing due to its prominence over the past three decades. Benefits of process writing for MLs include: freedom of choice in writing topic; long stretches of time to write; one-on-one conferences with teachers; and the inclusion and appreciation of their languages and cultures. However, a troubling achievement gap between MLs and their non-ML peers has persisted over the last 20 years. In addition, while there are no studies we know of that correlate *Teachers College Units of Study for Teaching Writing* with this achievement gap, a recent report examining the *Units of Study for Teaching Reading* (Adams et al., 2020) found that the units “fail to systemically and concretely guide teachers to provide English Learners the supports they need to attain high levels of literacy development” (p. 6). Specifically, activities designed to practice a reading skill were positioned as optional, and students were left to “make their own adventure.” As a result, the authors were concerned that crucial aspects of reading acquisition were being missed. Ultimately, they found that the units did not provide enough opportunities to build knowledge about how language works in both reading and writing. For those students whose linguistic and cultural experiences did not match with the culture and expectations of school, the impact of this neglect was particularly severe (Adams et al., 2020).

Calkins & Cockerille (2013) attempted to respond to disciplinary literacy demands by adding a unit called *Bringing History to Life*, where they acknowledge the “architects of the world-class standards because their leadership made it especially imperative that we wrestle with the content that we bring to you in this book. We’re grateful for their efforts to ... think seriously about content literacy and to prioritize writing instruction” (p. iii). In this way, they attempt to address the disciplinary literacy demands placed on writing.

Despite attempts to address disciplinary literacy in the *Units of Study* and to address the needs of MLs, we wonder whether process writing is still the right approach to meet the disciplinary demands of writing. Guided by this question, we set out to examine how Calkins’ curriculum conceptualizes the teaching of writing in the disciplines. We focused on one teacher, Sara, and one unit of study, *Bringing History to Life* (BHTL; Calkins & Cockerille, 2013). Using legitimation code theory (LCT) and systemic functional linguistics (SFL), as described in the theoretical framework below, we aim to reveal the underlying assumptions about achievement in the practice of process writing. Researchers often use both LCT and SFL to analyze teaching and learning data (e.g., Maton et al., 2016). While LCT makes knowledge practices visible, SFL makes linguistic practices visible. Thus, we offer a different explanation to the differences in writing achievement between MLs and their non-ML peers. By critically examining the practice and the conceptualizations of writing, our research will make visible how practices and beliefs act to advantage some and disadvantage others, whether tacitly or overtly, and will contribute to important work that looks at inequity in literacy development from a systemic perspective (Harman & Khote, 2018; White et al., 2015; Rose, 2010).

### **Theoretical Framework**

We use legitimation code theory and systemic functional linguistics to analyze conceptualizations of writing and teacher practice. LCT makes teacher practices visible and SFL makes linguistic conceptualizations visible.

#### **Legitimation Code Theory**

LCT is a theoretical framework that enables us to see how knowledge is built in a context, what counts as achievement in the context, and how the people, or actors, interact to both achieve and to define what achievement looks like, what Bourdieu called the ‘rules of the game’ (Maton, 2014; 2016). The framework is based on the work of Basil Bernstein’s code theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory, and was developed by Maton (2013) and others. (For a fuller account, see Maton, 2014, and elsewhere.) It has been used to study educational practices with the aim of gaining insight into power structures (e.g., Maton et al., 2016; Maton & Chen, 2016; Kasztalksa & Maune, 2021). These LCT-informed insights serve to reveal “what is possible for whom, when, where and how, and who is able to define these possibilities, when, where, and how” (Maton, 2013, p. 18). Significantly, knowledge is not viewed as a single object, outcome, or standard, but instead within a context that includes what is being learned, how it shapes the process of learning, and the power relations (Maton, 2013).

LCT includes a “multidimensional conceptual toolkit for analyzing actors’ dispositions, practices and contexts, within a variegated range of fields” (Maton, 2013, p. 17). We utilized one particular dimension of LCT, “specialization” (Maton, 2013). The assumption underlying specialization is that practices and beliefs in a context are always oriented towards something (knowledge) and by someone (knowers) and these practices and beliefs form the basis of legitimation (Maton, 2013). When a practice (e.g., BHTL) is oriented towards knowledge, this means that possession of specialized knowledge, such as knowledge of technical aspects of writing or knowledge of the process of writing, is emphasized as the basis of achievement. When a practice is oriented towards knowers, this means that specialized knowledge is less significant and instead the knowers’ (e.g., students’) attitudes and behaviors are emphasized as the basis of achievement. Because we were interested in revealing the underlying assumptions about writing and about achievement in this practice, specialization provided an analytical lens through which to examine what counts as legitimate knowledge in writing and who counts as a legitimate knower (or writer).

#### **Systemic Functional Linguistics**

We use the systemic functional linguistics theory of language in this paper to make visible the linguistic dimensions of writing. According to SFL, language is a dynamic system of choices responsive to context, not an inventory of structures or a set of grammar rules devoid of context. Language is functional because it allows us to do things with it, such as represent experiences, enact roles and relationships, create coherent discourse, and ultimately act on the world, not just participate in it (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). SFL sees language not as an inventory of structures students need to produce correctly at the sentence level, but a meaning making resource at two

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levels of context: *genre*, representing the context of culture, and *register*, representing the context of situation. Genre is any text that fulfils a social purpose and unfolds in such a way that it meets that purpose. Because language is always social and not a purely cognitive endeavor, by “social” purpose we mean an aim or a goal that a language user undertakes to achieve something in relation to a reader or a listener, real or imagined. In the context of writing in school, for example, an oral presentation where a student explains underlying causes of a phenomenon such as why earthquakes happen or how tornadoes form constitutes a genre, because it serves a social purpose to explain how something works or why something happens. Register is often reduced to formal or informal, but in SFL, register is a configuration of meanings that include the topic, the roles and relationships among language users, and the channel of communication.

Specific to writing, SFL views grammar as a social resource that writers use to make meaning rather than something internal to the individual (Schleppegrell & Christie, 2018). Because language is viewed as a resource, the development of language in writing is an expansion of students’ language resources in a variety of contexts as students go through the years of schooling (Schleppegrell & Christie, 2018; Christie & Derewianka, 2008). More specifically, the development of language in writing follows three dimensions: 1) students’ growing capacity to express and elaborate on their experiences in a variety of genres and disciplines, 2) growth in their ability to develop and adjust voice and perspectives for a variety of audiences, and 3) control of the discourse patterns of various genres in a variety of texts they produce (Schleppegrell & Christie, 2018, Christie, 2002). In this view, for students to participate in and act on the world requires that teachers expand students’ meaning making potential by expanding their linguistic repertoires and developing their metalinguistic awareness of what language does for them and what language choices they need in what context. To develop metalinguistic awareness and to grow along the three dimensions (elaboration of ideas; development of voice and perspectives; control of various discourse patterns of genres of written texts in various disciplines), teachers must give explicit attention to language in the context of text. Informed by SFL, the “teaching and learning cycle” pedagogy (Rothery, 1996) was developed in school contexts by educational linguists who understood that disciplinary language was the “hidden curriculum” of schooling (Christie, 1985); they set out to make it visible and accessible to the marginalized students in particular.

### Methods

The data used in this article were collected by the authors as part of a larger study of scaffolding writing for MLs in a K–5 elementary school. We focus on one particular Teachers College unit of study, *Bringing History to Life* (BHTL; Calkins & Cockerille, 2013) as it was taught in a fourth grade classroom.

### Context

The study took place in one fourth grade classroom in a suburban, public school district in the Midwest in the United States. This district had been using the *Teachers College Units of Study for Writing* for 2 years, trying to address literacy needs of their students, many of whom

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were MLs. The district student demographics are quite diverse, with 35% of the total district population as non-White, comprised of 47% Hispanic, 21% Black, 18% bi- or multi-racial, 12% Asian American, and 1% Native American and Pacific Islander students. The focal school population is 37% non-White, comprised of 40% Black, 23% bi- or multi-racial, 21% Hispanic, and 14% Asian American students. The district population of students identified as MLs is 14%; the school ML population is slightly higher, with 22%. Forty percent of the school population qualified for free and reduced-price lunch. The MLs come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds including Arabic, French, Hindi, Hmong, Kinyarwanda and Spanish languages. Spanish speakers are the largest ML group. Students' English language proficiency scores ranged from level 1 to 4.3 on ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup>.

The classroom teacher was Sara, a White female with 8 years of teaching experience. In addition, we observed this teacher's interactions with one focal ML student, Maria, who came from Mexico and started at the school in Kindergarten. Maria received additional language instruction daily from an ESL resource teacher, and classroom support a few days a week from a volunteer. Maria's ACCESS literacy composite score (reading and writing combined) was 2.8 on a 5.0 scale at the time of the study.

### Data Sources

We observed the implementation of the entire unit, which took place over a 6-week period. We focused on one fourth grade teacher Sara's discourse during the writing workshops as well as her interactions with the ML students. The data sources used in this paper included 20 observations of the 90-minute morning literacy block with field notes; the BHTL curriculum guide script (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013); a teacher-made PowerPoint slide deck based on the script and created by the curriculum coordinator for use by all Grade 4 teachers in the district; a transcript of the teacher interview and a curriculum leader interview; and student work during and at the end of the unit. Additionally, to uncover the way writing supports for MLs are conceptualized and presented for teachers, we reviewed the *Supports for English Language Learners in Units of Study in Opinion, Information and Narrative Writing: Grade 4* (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017) and *A Guide to the Writing Workshop* (Calkins, 2013).

### Data Analysis

We began data analysis with open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) by looking for patterns in the raw data and noting themes as they emerged. The predominant themes were as follows: writing practices, writing outcomes, writing supports, student behavior, and classroom discourse. We then grouped these themes into categories such as conceptualization of writing in the materials, conceptualization of the writing supports for MLs, and teacher's sense making of Calkins' script.

The next level of data analysis was the LCT coding, drawing on procedures from Maton and Chen (2016). LCT helped us examine both the types of knowledge, and whether the knower was being privileged or neglected in the curriculum. We grouped our data sources into two main

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categories. Category 1 consisted of the BHTL script, the PowerPoint slide deck, and fieldnotes from classroom observations. All fieldnotes cited are from 2019. Category 2 consisted of two documents, *ESL Supplement (Supports for English Learners in Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing: Grade 4*; Calkins & Colleagues, 2017) and *A Guide to the Writing Workshop* (Calkins, 2013). We used two knowledge codes. Data that referred to aspects of the practice that focused on knowledge of the writing process were coded as *conceptualization of writing 1*. Data that referred to the knowledge of the technical aspects of writing such as transition words and organizational structure was *conceptualization of writing 2*. We used one knower code, which referred to how students showed their ways of knowing through dispositions and behaviors. This code was called *conceptualizations of teaching writing*. Examples from the empirical data are shown in Table 1. For each code, we interpreted what counts as achievement. For example, with conceptualization of writing 1, what counts as achievement is students are expected to revise their own writing relying on intuition about what’s good and not good about their writing.

**Table 1. Data Analysis Table**

Data Source	Codes and Indicators	Examples from Data	What is Expected of Students/What Counts as Achievement?
<b>Category 1: BHTL script; PowerPoint; classroom observations</b>	<b>Conceptualization of Writing 1</b>  Refers to aspects of the practice that focus on knowledge of writing as process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mini-lesson is focused on revising one’s own writing “What’s not so good that I can fix up?”; “Channel writers to study their own writing with a critical eye, looking for parts that would benefit from more detail”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are expected to revise their own writing relying on intuition about what’s good and not good about their writing</li> <li>● Students are expected to look at the rubric as an optional resource to improve their writing</li> </ul>
	<b>Conceptualization of Writing 2</b>  Refers to aspects of the practice that focus on knowledge of the technical aspects of writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mini-lesson is focused on                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ organizing text following categorical or chronological structures</li> <li>○ using transition words</li> <li>○ adding details</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are expected to participate in the mini-lesson activities</li> <li>● Students are expected to implement technical knowledge from the mini-lessons as they see fit (optional)</li> <li>● Students are not expected to write with mastery</li> </ul>
	<b>Conceptualization of Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher gives directions to students for their independent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are expected to write for volume,</li> </ul>

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Data Source	Codes and Indicators	Examples from Data	What is Expected of Students/What Counts as Achievement?
	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p>Refers to how teachers teach writing</p>	<p>writing time, “Write until your hands are gonna hurt”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher affirms volume of writing “Wow you wrote so much”; Write, write, write!</li> <li>● Teacher acknowledges different expectations, “You should have gotten some sentences written. If you didn't get sentences written, you didn't get sentences written”</li> </ul>	<p>following the dedicated allotment of time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are expected to develop stamina</li> <li>● Students are expected to produce a product at the end of the unit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Category 2: ESL Supplement; A Guide to the Writing Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>Conceptualization of Writing 1</b></p> <p>Refers to aspects of the practice that focus on knowledge of writing as process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher should use simplified and shortened mini-lessons</li> <li>● Teacher should give more time for independent writing practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Same as above</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Conceptualization of Writing 2</b></p> <p>Refers to aspects of the practice that focus on knowledge of the technical aspects of writing</p>	<p>Provide explicit instruction in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tenses, pronoun references; elaboration and writing with description and specificity, transition words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Same as above</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Conceptualization of Teaching Writing</b></p> <p>Refers to how teachers teach writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers should not attempt to scaffold learners during the mini-lesson “Because you are not teaching towards mastery, when you feel the that the content of your lesson instead of slowing down and adding a zillion scaffolds, you will want to speed up”</li> <li>● “Scaffold children’s writing with conversational prompts” (Calkins, 2013)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Same as above</li> </ul>

## Research Questions

Our analysis and the findings are framed around the following research questions:

- How is writing conceptualized in the materials and in teaching?
- How does the teacher make sense of that conceptualization of writing?
- How are supports for MLs conceptualized in the materials?

## Findings

In this section, we describe three workshops that we observed in Sara's classroom. For Workshops 1, 2, and 7 of a 20-workshop sequence, we illustrate how writing is conceptualized in the materials and how Sara makes sense of the materials. We use three complementary strategies: 1) a narrative describing the workshop from beginning to end, focusing on aspects related to the conceptualization of writing and including excerpts of classroom dialogue and Sara's one-on-one teaching with Maria as relevant; 2) a table that illustrates the relationship between the BHTL PowerPoint slides created by the curriculum coordinator, the BHTL script, and Sara's talk about writing; and 3) a summary analysis.

### **Workshop 1: "Getting a Sense of Information Books"**

#### *Workshop Description*

This was the first lesson in the unit. It introduced students to the new writing unit, which would allow students to write about their knowledge about the Ho-Chunk, the Native American nation that they had just finished studying in social studies. The lesson focused on technical knowledge about writing, knowledge about the writing process, as well as knowledge about the Ho-Chunk. The learning target for the lesson was "students imagine the text they are going to make." At the beginning of the lesson, the students were gathered at the front of the room, sitting on a carpet facing the screen on which the slides were projected. Sara the teacher (T) said,

T: We are starting a new writing unit. It's going to be hard but you can do it. It's going to include everything you learned. It's going to include our work with Ho-Chunk, writing evidence, thesis, doing research. (Field notes, Workshop 1, 4/19)

Then she projected a slide with "Choose your topic. Your topic could be a person and an event, or a group of people and an event, for example, Black Hawk and the Black Hawk War, Ho-Chunk and Removal from their lands." Then, after reading the slide to the students, Sara directed students' attention to an essay of the type they were going to write, which was at their tables. She said,

T: At your table, you have an example of an essay you are going to write. Ms. Peterson [pseudonym] wrote this essay. This is an adult example. I'm hoping to get examples from your writing to use next year.

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The essay was written by a curriculum and learning specialist to provide teachers with a “mentor text” of the informational text about the Ho-Chunk (Figure 1). We refer to her as Ms. Peterson. The text Sara referred to was displayed on the slide. She directed students’ attention to the slide. The following table shows the slide, Calkins’ script, and the classroom discourse we observed.

*Figure 1. “What Do You Notice About This Part?” (T = teacher, S = student)*

### BHTL PowerPoint Slide

What do you notice about this part?

What kind of writing is it?

How is this part organized?

What would I need to do to be ready to write something like this on my topic?

## Ho-Chunk. Hooçaągra. People of the Big Voice.

The First People of Wisconsin: All About the Bigger Topic

The Importance of Land and Nature: An Essay

Government and Clans: Tribal Sovereignty

Oral Tradition, Language, and Boarding Schools: My Questions and Wonderings

### Chapter One: The First People of Wisconsin

The first people of Wisconsin were Native Americans. In fact, prior to European immigration, it is estimated that at least 6-10 million Native Americans lived in the United States. Wisconsin is home to eleven **officially recognized** Native Americans **tribes**, including: Menominee, Ojibwe, Oneida, Potawatomi, Stockbridge-Munsee, five bands of Chippewa, and Ho-Chunk. Native Americans are also a big part of our state today, with over 61,000 tribal members. Much can be learned about the rich cultures of Native American tribes and all they have contributed to and continue to contribute to the state of Wisconsin.

Many changes have faced Native Americans across the state of Wisconsin over time. Since Europeans came to Wisconsin, changes to Native American culture and life include: trading, farming, craftsmanship, artistry, schooling, and land. Many of the changes were devastating, including **relocation** and **removal**, fighting, and forcing Native American children to attend **boarding schools** far from home.

To understand some Native American changes, challenges, and cultural contributions, it is helpful to begin with one **tribe**, such as the Ho-Chunk. The Ho-Chunk have called southern Wisconsin, including Madison, their home for centuries. The Ho-Chunk people value storytelling, nature, family and **clan**, and land. While the Ho-Chunk were forced off their land numerous time, many Ho-Chunk returned to or remained in Wisconsin.

### Chapter Two: The Importance of Land and Nature: An Essay

*“We were created here, it is our land. It will be our land and has been our land.”*

- Andy Thundercloud

It is clear that land holds great value for the Ho-Chunk people, especially the land in Wisconsin. One way this is clear is by the respect shown for plants and animals. Another way is the way Ho-Chunk who were forced off land in Wisconsin kept returning. Finally, Ho-Chunk ancestral land covered 10,000 acres in Wisconsin indicating a love for the land.

One example of how the Ho-Chunk value land is in the respect shown for plants and animals. In the past, Ho-Chunk farmed foods such as corn, squash, beans, rice,

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### The BHTL Script

*“How did the writer probably go about making that?” I wonder if chefs look at finished cakes and try to figure out the recipe for those cakes, because that’s a bit what writers need to do. We need to look at Naomi<sup>1</sup>’s finished work and try to figure out how she made it, and how we could go about making something sort of similar. When we study an information book that has different chapters or parts, it is helpful to look at each part, asking specific questions of that part. We’ll focus on the first part, the first chapter, so that you can be ready to write your own version of that tomorrow.” ... “Let’s start, then, by noticing some things about the first chapter.” (p. 7)*

*“Will you scan this section, and try to figure out how she has organized her information? While you do that, will you also figure out what you might need to do during today’s workshop to write a section like this in your book, tomorrow? Work with each other.”*

### Mini-Lesson Classroom Discourse

T: *What are you noticing about this type of writing?*  
(Students do not have a text in front of them).

S: *It’s long.*

T: *It’s pretty long. Honestly, you guys might end up writing an essay this long.*

S: *Essay, essay, essay, every 5 seconds you gotta do an essay.*

S: *It’s called a literary essay.*

T: *Where else do you see this in your life? This kind of book (showing picture book)? Is this fiction?*

S: *No, nonfiction book.*

T: *Is it made up or true?*

S: *True.*

T: *What do you see in non-fiction book?*

S: *Headings*

T: *Right, chapter 1: The first people of Wisconsin [refers to the slide]*

T: *What else do you notice?*

S: *Something up on top*

T: *What else do we notice?*

S: *Words*

T: *Words, we see words*

S: *We see multiple paragraphs in each section.*

T: *This is a good place to stop. Go back to your desks and write things you notice. How does she know when to start a new paragraph? How does she know when to start a new chapter?*

Sara then sent students off to their tables to work in groups of four on the slide in Figure 1. In addition to drawing their attention to the slide, she also told them to discuss why the different words are bolded, what the text is broken into, why the text is broken into chapters and paragraphs, and what the meaning of each paragraph is. For example, what is the main idea? The independent work focused on the concept of “noticing.” Students were invited to notice whatever they wanted, such as bolded words, length of text, headers. For approximately 20 minutes, students worked in groups with the mentor text, highlighting what they noticed. Each student had a copy of the mentor text. The mentor text consisted of four pages of text back to back. Students followed Sara’s instructions. The groups highlighted features of the text including: bolded words,

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<sup>1</sup> Naomi is an imagined fourth grade student who wrote the mentor text in the Calkins’ script.

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facts, direct quotes, and chapter headings. Sara had various groups come up and work with her at the crescent table. For one group she directed the students' attention to the main ideas, asking them to locate the main idea (which was presumably the chapter headings). For a second group, she asked the students to highlight the bolded words. For the third group, she asked students about the purpose of the pictures and directed their attention to the captioning underneath the pictures. When we asked the ML student Maria why she chose to highlight what she did, she said that she highlighted "important words;" these were words previously bolded by the author—boarding schools, relocation, and removal.

None of the groups "noticed" organizational structure of text such as what purposes the different paragraphs achieved. After 20 minutes of conferencing, Sara reconvened the students for a share session. The purpose was presumably to re-teach what the students were supposed to have noticed during their independent work time. The following transcript shows the classroom discourse that took place while students were looking at a copy of the mentor text (Figure 1) that was previously projected on the slide.

T: What do these words tell us? Chapter one: The first people of Wisconsin. What is the main idea of the whole section of this book? It's getting our brains ready to get the rest of the essay. Since the main idea is the first people of Wisconsin, why is this not one paragraph?

S: She finished one paragraph for each piece of evidence.

T: Look at the first sentence, the first people of Wisconsin were native Americans? Why did she need three paragraphs?

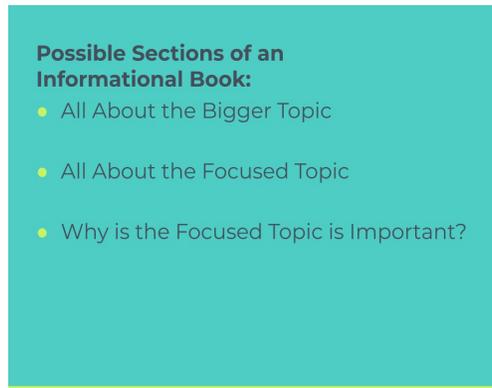
S: Because each paragraph has a new idea.

T: People coming and leaving - idea one - paragraph one. Is it still about the first people? Yes. She is giving you a little bit of information to get your brains ready. What is the second paragraph about? Land and nature. Chapter two is also about the land and nature. She is getting us ready for the second chapter. What is the third chapter about? Did we see anything about the government and clans? Chapter 3 is about government and sovereignty. Again, she is getting our brains ready for what we are going to be doing later. Why is land, and language not in the first section? In this type of writing, you are going to be giving some facts and then telling the reader why it's important. Why is this important? The reason she didn't put the language part in there is because it's just an overview. You'll notice that in every nonfiction book. They are going to give you information to start with.

Sara seemed to realize that the students did not understand what she was trying to teach, however she moved on to the next slide (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. “Possible Sections of an Informational Book”**

**BHTL PowerPoint Slide**



**The BHTL Script**

*“Writers, please gather in the meeting area because we have a lot to talk about now” ... “Now that you have studied Naomi’s book [mentor text], I bet you are getting some ideas for how your book will go. I think a lot of you are planning to include the same sections that Naomi [author of the mentor text] has included: all about the bigger topic, all about the focused topic, the story of a big moment, why this focused topic is important.” (p. 10)*

**Mini-Lesson Teacher Discourse**

*“I’m going to give you your job. Your job is to choose your topic and think of sections. What are some sections? What topic do I want to write about? What information do I need? The thing that you need to do is to pick the topic. You need your notes from social studies.” (Field notes, Workshop 1, 4/19)*

The lesson ended with Sara dismissing the students by telling them to think of their topic and be ready to write the next day.

**How Is Writing in Workshop 1 Conceptualized? What Does ‘Knowledge of Writing’ Mean?**

The concept of writing originating from the BHTL script, and reproduced in the PowerPoint slides for this workshop, was that writing is a cognitive process. Knowledge about writing consisted of imagining, planning, and thinking, all aspects of knowledge of writing as something that occurs inside the writer’s head. This was presented with the slides: “Students imagine a text they are going to make” and “Choose your topic and think of sections.” Students were meant to acquire this knowledge through discovery-based activities where they analyzed a mentor text. The BHTL script directs teachers to frame this discovery by asking the students, “How did the writer probably go about making that? ... Let’s start, then, by noticing some things about the first chapter...Will you scan this section, and try to figure out how she has organized her information?” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 7) After the brief teacher-directed mini-lesson, which introduced the students to the activity, the majority of the discovery was meant to be

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student-led. The instructions in the script are as follows: “You also figure out what you might need to do during today’s workshop to write a section like this in your book, tomorrow. Work with each other.” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 8). In sum, for this part of the BHTL script, the knowledge of writing consists of engaging one’s mind in the processes of analysis, discovery, thinking, and planning.

### **How Did Sara Make Sense of the Way Writing is Conceptualized During her Teaching of Workshop 1?**

Sara made sense of the way writing was conceptualized in the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides by going through the slides one by one and reproducing the messaging from the script in her classroom discourse in the mini-lesson, throughout the independent work time and into the closing lesson. Sara’s talk was done predominantly through questions designed to get the students to discover something for themselves, e.g., “What do you notice?” and “What is this paragraph about?” What exactly she intended for them to notice was unclear, as she seemed to emphasize open-ended discovery of the text. The students noticed, “It’s long,” “headings,” “something up on top,” and “words” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 1, 4/22). Sara also attempted to guide the discovery by using more direct and leading questions than those in the script, e.g., “What is the third chapter about? Did you see anything about language and clans?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 1, 4/22). In this way, she seemed to realize that she needed to guide the students more directly in order to have them notice the organizational structure of the text. She seemed very aware of the outcome of the particular workshop, which was to decide on a topic and think about what sections to include for the paper. The closing part of the lesson was focused on directing students toward this outcome. The BHTL script framed this task to suggest how students could think about doing this, “I bet you are getting some ideas for how your book will go. I think a lot of you are planning to include the same sections that Naomi has included” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 10). Sara was more direct in her instructions: “I’m going to give you your job. Your job is to choose your topic and think of sections. What are some sections? What topic do I want to write about? What information do I need? The thing that you need to do is to pick the topic. You need your notes from social studies” (Field notes, Workshop 1, 4/19). These sections were listed on the slide: “All about the Bigger Topic, All about the Focused Topic, Why the Focused Topic is Important (Workshop 1 Slides).” However, Sara did not give any more guidelines about what these sections would include, nor did she draw the students’ attention to where these sections were in the mentor text.

### **What Were Students Supposed to Learn About Writing From Workshop 1?**

The workshop is designed to teach students to create a piece of writing called ‘Information Book,’ which should have three different sections, each with a slightly different purpose. Students are supposed to learn to engage in the process outcomes of imagining, thinking, and planning. At the end of the workshop, they should have decided on an overall topic, “a bigger topic,” and a “more focused topic.” The workshop emphasized that an important part of writing is studying mentor texts and noticing what the author does. However, what was supposed to be

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noticed was not made clear, and that whatever features they and their peers noticed from the text were valid—features such as bolded words, facts, direct quotes, and chapter headings.

Furthermore, Sara did seem to have an agenda about specific things she wanted them to notice (e.g., “What is this paragraph about?”). However, no one could answer Sara’s question, nor did she provide the answer. It’s possible students learned that while there were certain things they were supposed to notice, these weren’t that important after all. It is unlikely that anyone learned the difference between “bigger topic” and “focused topic.” Ultimately, we observed that the main learning from Workshop 1 was that as long as you highlighted something on the mentor text, you would meet the teacher’s expectations. While Sara gave directives at the end to “Choose your topic and think of sections,” the students did not actually have to show their work. We observed only one or two students writing something down in their notebooks before it was time for recess.

### **Workshop 2: “Planning the Structure for Writing”**

#### ***Workshop Description***

The second workshop focused on organizational structure. Sara began by showing a slide that listed two ways to structure a section in an information book: “chronologically” or “categorically.” See Figure 3.

**Figure 3. “Did She Do Chronologically or Categorically?”**

#### **BHTL PowerPoint Slide**

**Now You Choose What to do and WRITE!**

<b>Chronologically:</b> Telling things in order from First to Last	<b>Categorically:</b> Different Categories on a Topic
How might this be organized?	How might this be organized?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Origin</li><li>2. Movement to Lands</li><li>3. Life on those Lands</li><li>4. European Arrival</li><li>5. Consequences of Arrival</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▫ European Arrival</li><li>▫ Removal from Lands</li><li>▫ Early Traditions</li><li>▫ Current Traditions</li></ul>

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### The BHTL Script

*“[there are] a few different ways to structure your all-about section of your book. In case you’ve forgotten, I jotted them down all here on this chart paper. I’ll leave it out for you to use in your planning. It’s up to you to figure out how your plans will look, and then of course, how your notes will look.”*

Ways to structure a section of an informational book

- Chronologically - telling things in order from first to last
- Categorically - different categories within the topic
- Other? (p. 16)

*“The important thing is that you take some time to think about how you will structure your writing so that not just one section, but the entire piece, fits together. Every one of us needs to write, write, write, according to the plans we just talked through and jotted down, write, write, write, without stopping. So get going, fast and furious!” ... “You’ll be writing like crazy, probably filling up four or five pages for your first section... in just the next half hour. Go!” (p. 18).*

While this slide was displayed, Sara led the whole class in a 10-minute mini-lesson where they looked back at the mentor text on the screen and talked about how it was structured. Next, Sara set up the goal for independent writing: “Today’s big goal is to write, write, write. I want you to leave with as much writing as you can.” Sara then sent them off to work independently. As students started working on a task that we assumed was to be writing the first draft of Chapter 1 using one of the organizational structures, Sara met with Maria, our focal ML student, to help her get started.

### *Sara’s Conference with Maria*

Sara: What do you think people need to know about this topic?

Maria: They need to know about the schools.

Sara: That’s going to be in chapter 2. What should they know before they read this, if they know nothing about this topic?

Maria: [Silence]

Sara: Do you think they need to know about the Ho-Chunk? What should they know?

### Mini-Lesson Classroom Discourse

T: Which one did Ms. Peterson do [referring to the author of the mentor text]? Did she do chronologically or categorically?

S<sup>2</sup>: Categorically, because she put everything in categories.

T: But categories are not organized in a timeline

S: She started talking about now and then last.

T: Whatever info you think it’s important for someone who doesn’t know about the Ho-Chunk. You have two jobs today, you are going to be writing the first draft of chapter 1. Your job as a historical writer is to give your reader info about the Ho-Chunk. It’s easier to do chronological. Today’s big goal is to write, write, write. I want you to leave with as much writing as you can. Your hands are gonna hurt. Write down everything you know. Use your notes, use your book, use Ms. Peterson’s text. You are trying to write chapter 1 (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23).

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<sup>2</sup> This student (S) participated in the mini-lesson, but is not our focal (ML) student.

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Maria: The US government. The US government stole their land. They live on islands.

Sara: They live on islands?

[Maria points to a map with the Wisconsin Door County peninsula.]

[Sara takes Maria's notebook and writes They originally came from Moga Shoosh]

Sara: What else do you know?

Maria: The Ho-Chunk traded with Europeans.

Sara: You know so much. How do you want to write about it? In order? What happened first?

[Sara draws a circle around what she had written, "They originally came from Moga Shoosh"] I'm gonna stop. Do you want to write in order about what happened first? Make some sentences about it. (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23)

After Sara left, Maria opened her journal to a new page and wrote the following:

Chapter 1  
the moga shoosh [sic]

Soon it was the end of the independent writing block and Sara called all the students back to the carpet for the closing share session. The purpose of the closing seemed to be to teach the students how to edit their work by putting in transition words that matched the structure they chose. Sara showed the students the following slide which celebrated the volume they had written: "Wow! You wrote so much!" (Figure 4) and invited them to revise what they had written by adding transitions.

**Figure 4. "Wow, You Wrote So Much!"**

### The BHTL Script

*"Writers, shake out your hands! Nice work. ... Now, I want you to think about a few things that might nudge you to do even better work. First, ... address the parts you left out. And secondly, when you use subheadings to help you stay within an organizational structure, sometimes you also need to use transition words that help the reader know how one part of your mosaic glues onto other parts."* (p. 20)

### BHTL PowerPoint Slide

**Share: WOW! You wrote so much!  
How can we make it a bit better?**

#### Transition Words for Chronological Writing

- First
- Then
- Next
- After that
- Finally
- Before
- After

#### Transition Words for Comparing & Contrasting

- Different
- Same
- Alike
- Similar
- Although
- But
- Yet
- Or

### Mini-Lesson Teacher Discourse

T: *You should have gotten some sentences written. If you didn't get sentences written, you didn't get sentences written. If you have them written, now look at these transition words. Look what you wrote and see where you can add these in.* (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23)

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Maria arrived at the front of the room for the closing, but had only written those two lines above, so clearly the affirmation prepared ahead of time on the slide, “Wow! You wrote so much!” did not apply to Maria. Many students did have a full page or more written, so they read through their pieces and attempted to add transitions. Because Maria did not write any text, she could not participate in the activity. During this part of the lesson she just sat there and looked at the screen until the lesson ended.

### **How is Writing Conceptualized in Workshop 2? What Does ‘Knowledge of Writing’ Mean?**

Workshop 2 has two messages about writing in the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides. The first concerns genre, specifically the organizational structure of the first section of the “Information Book,” called “All about the topic.” The message is that there are multiple ways of structuring this particular section: “categorically, chronologically, and other” (Calkins & Cockerille 2013, p. 16). “Other” was not included in the PowerPoint slides (see slide, Figure 3). Writers are empowered to choose which structure to use, “Now you choose what to do and WRITE.” The second message is about the process students should follow, namely to draft, then revise, adding in the organizational structure. The drafting process is scripted in the following way: “Every one of us needs to write, write, write, according to the plans we just talked through and jotted down, write, write, write, without stopping. So get going, fast and furious! ... You’ll be writing like crazy, probably filling up four or five pages for your first section... in just the next half hour. Go!” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 18). At the end of Workshop 2, the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides assume students wrote multiple pages, as directed to do during the previous half hour. The script says: “Writers, shake out your hands! Nice work” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 20). There is also the implication that writing is so physically difficult that students will need to shake out their hands at the end. To the teachers the script says, students should be “celebrating the sheer volume of writing” that they did (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 20) and the PowerPoint slide says, “Wow you wrote so much!” (Figure 4). The second part of the process for this workshop is to revise and re-shape the draft into the organizational structure the students chose by adding in subheadings and transition words. The knowledge about writing that is privileged in this workshop is two-part: knowledge of organizational structure, and process knowledge of how to draft by quickly writing down information.

### **How Did Sara Make Sense of the Way Writing is Conceptualized Through Her Teaching in Workshop 2?**

Sara reproduced the messaging from the BHTL unit through the PowerPoint slides for her whole class teaching, but she took a different approach with Maria. In her mini-lesson on organizational structure, she taught students about the choices by presenting the slide (Figure 4) and had them analyze the mentor text in order to figure out how Ms. Peterson made choices.

Sara: Which one did Ms. Peterson do? Did she do chronologically or categorically?

Student: Categorically, because she put everything in categories.

Sara: But categories are not organized in a timeline.

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Student: She started talking about now and then last.

Sara: Whatever info you think it's important for someone who doesn't know about the Ho-Chunk. (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23)

This discussion showed a lack of a clear distinction between the chronological and categorical organization of texts, both in the PowerPoint slide and in Sara's discussion around it, as both of them contained categories such as European arrival and consequences of arrival (referred to as removal from lands in the categorical column). Sara seemed to realize that she wasn't able to communicate the clear differences when she said, "Whatever info you think it's important for someone who doesn't know about the Ho Chunk," and shortly thereafter, "It's easier to do chronological" (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23). Next, Sara reproduced the concept about the process of drafting, particularly the expectation of volume and concept of writing being painful. "Today's big goal is to write, write, write. I want you to leave with as much writing as you can. Your hands are gonna hurt. Write down everything you know" (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23). She then made sure students had an uninterrupted half hour to write, as recommended in the script.

While the rest of the class worked independently, Sara worked with Maria. Sara's conceptualization of writing and the tasks for the day played out slightly differently with Maria. First Maria was not given time to draft, or to write as much as she could, as was the directive to the class. Instead, Sara sat down with her right away and began the conference by eliciting what Maria knew about the content.

Sara: What do you think people need to know about this topic?

Maria: They need to know about the schools.

Sara: That's going to be in chapter 2. What should they know before they read this, if they know nothing about this topic? (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23)

However, while Maria answered Sara's question accurately, Sara rejected it and appeared to be trying to elicit events from Maria that would fit a chronological organizational structure. So, unlike the message about choice coming through the BHTL script and PowerPoint, Maria did not seem to have a choice in the organizational structure for her piece. Sara used questions to teach this structure to Maria, saying, "How do you want to write about it? In order? What happened first?" (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23). Maria had the content knowledge, as evidenced when she responded to Sara's questions, saying "the schools," "the U.S. government stole their land," and "they traded with the Europeans" (Fieldnotes, Workshop 2, 4/23), but her responses did not seem to fit what Sara was looking for, even though Sara told her that she "knew so much." Sara ended up writing the first sentence for her and then left her to finish. Maria seemed stuck and confused and by now there was hardly any time left in the workshop for writing. Sara's concept of writing for Maria for this workshop was that Maria should write about the Ho-Chunk in chronological order. This seemed more important than having Maria do the free writing or drafting that her peers were doing. Sara did not expect Maria to produce the 4–5 pages of writing prescribed by

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the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides. Sara tempered this expectation for the whole class as well, saying after the half hour of independent writing: “You should have gotten some sentences written. If you didn’t get sentences written, you didn’t get sentences written. If you have them written, now look at these transition words.” About half the class had between half a page to a page written. This was considerably less than what was expected in the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides. Sara accepted this and taught the closing lesson. She seemed to be under pressure to follow the script and slides, regardless of whether they applied to the whole group or not.

### **What Were Students Supposed to Learn About Writing From Workshop 2?**

First, students were supposed to learn that writers make choices about organizational structures. They were meant to learn this through reading and analyzing a mentor text and thinking through what they wanted to say. Second, students were expected to learn about writing by writing. They were supposed to write several pages of text in a short period of time and use that experience to apply their learning about organizational structure.

However, this learning was delivered in an implicit way. Choices were presented, such as chronological or categorical, but there was no explicit teaching about these structures. Only students with previous experience and skills would be able to analyze a mentor text to determine independently the underlying structure. Thus, for the majority of students, chronological was the only choice. The second part of the learning, about learning to write through writing, was accessible to all students. The emphasis on volume as a measure of achievement was something else that students were supposed to learn during this workshop. Students who did not produce a lot of writing might receive the message that their work wasn’t as good as others who wrote a lot.

### **Workshop 7: “Essays Within Information Texts”**

#### ***Workshop Description***

This lesson focused on writing the second chapter of the Information Text. The learning target for this lesson was “Students will write a mini-essay for their information text.” Sara began this lesson with a slide that outlined what she called the “essay,” which included what each of the three paragraphs needed to include. She reminded the students they had written essays before (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. “Parts of an Essay”

**The BHTL Script**

*“You have written so many different kinds of writing over all the years of writing workshop. ... And today, you’ll think about calling on another kind of writing, essay writing, and doing that within your information writing. But the essays you’ll be writing require an extra twist because you’ll be writing essays that are comprised not just of your own opinions and claims, but of information that comes from research.” (p. 57)*

**BHTL PowerPoint Slide**

**Parts of an Essay**

- **First Paragraph**
  - **Thesis**
  - **Main Ideas for Body Paragraphs**
- **Body paragraphs 1 - 3:**
  - **Topic Sentence**
  - **Evidence**
  - **Write more about it (prompts)**
- **Last Paragraph**
  - **Thesis**
  - **Leave the reader something to think about**

**Mini-Lesson Teacher Discourse**

T: *We’ve written a couple of essays already this year. We wrote an opinion essay. Like ice cream is the best kind of dessert. You wrote a literary essay about novels. Remember that kind of poster [pointing to an anchor chart poster that showed examples and reasons] and how to set that up. Remember your first paragraph, it’s an introduction of what’s going on.*  
 (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1)

The next part of the lesson was about identifying the thesis statement in the mentor text. Sara directed the students to Chapter 2 from the mentor text used in Workshops 1 and 2 above (see excerpt in Figure 6). Sara told them that in this text, there is a thesis statement, that this Chapter 2 is an ‘essay.’ She led them through an activity where they had to find the thesis.

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Figure 6. “Who Can Give Me an Idea of What the Thesis Was?”

The BHTL Script	Excerpt from the mentor text, “Ho-Chunk. Hoocąągra. People of the Big Voice”	Mini-Lesson Classroom Discourse
<p><i>“Today I want to teach you that when you are writing mini-essays about your topic, you want to keep in mind all the things you already know about writing essays: the structure, the thesis, the supports, as well as hold in your mind what is different: using only facts to develop and support an idea.”</i> (p. 58)</p>	<p>Chapter 2: The importance of land and nature: An essay</p> <p>“We were created here, it is our land. It will be our land and has been our land.” - Andy Thundercloud</p> <p>It is clear that land holds great value for the Ho-Chunk people, especially the land in Wisconsin. One way this is clear is by the respect shown for plants and animals. Another way is the way the Ho-Chunk who were forced off the land kept returning. Finally, Ho-Chunk ancestral land covered 10,000 acres in Wisconsin, indicating a love for the land (Ms. Peterson’s Mentor Text, p.1).</p>	<p>T: <i>Let’s look at Ms. Peterson’s writing and underline what her thesis is. What does she want readers to think about? Who can give me an idea of what the thesis was for that first paragraph?</i></p> <p>S: <i>It shows the importance of land and how the Ho-Chunk people were forced out of their land.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Did anybody else look at how the chapter title is related to the thesis? What part of this paragraph tells you where the thesis is?</i></p> <p>S: <i>The first paragraph.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Is she making the readers think about the Ho-Chunk?</i></p> <p>T: <i>Tell your partner what Ms. Peterson wants her readers to think about the Ho-Chunk?</i></p> <p>S: <i>They don’t want us to think about what happened to their land.</i></p> <p>T: <i>What does she want us to think about then? Land is important to the Ho-Chunk. In this whole paragraph what are those three sentences about? You can use a hint.</i></p> <p>S: <i>It’s evidence.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Where are those things going to show up?</i></p> <p>S: <i>Lots of evidence.</i></p> <p>S: <i>In paragraphs.</i></p>
<p><i>“Writers, let’s study the way that Naomi’s essay is like the essays you wrote during the personal essay unit, and ways in which it is different. I’m going to read [it] out loud, and you’ll join me in thinking, ‘How is this the same?’, ‘How is this different?’”</i> (p. 58)</p>		
<p><i>“Writers, I agree with you that Naomi starts her essay with a <b>claim</b>, supported by reasons. That first paragraph is sort of an outline for the rest of the essay - the rest of the paragraphs seem to follow that order. Now let’s look at the way she uses facts to support her reasons.”</i> (p. 60)</p>		

Sara appeared to be inviting the students to deduce both what the “thesis” statement was for the first paragraph and what the purpose of a thesis statement is. She asked a series of questions designed to elicit student responses to this effect, but she provided no affirmation to indicate whether the student responses were correct or not. Next, Sara used questions to guide students to

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notice how the introductory paragraph contains a roadmap of the subsequent body paragraphs. She color-coded the text to illustrate this (see Figure 7).

### Figure 7. “What Else Do You Notice?”

#### BHTL PowerPoint Slide

##### Chapter Two: The Importance of Land and Nature: An Essay

“We were created here, it is our land. It will be our land and has been our land.”

- Andy Thundercloud

It is clear that land holds great value for the Ho-Chunk people, especially the land in Wisconsin. One way this is clear is by the respect shown for plants and animals.

Another way is the way Ho-Chunk who were forced off land in Wisconsin kept returning.

Finally, Ho-Chunk ancestral land covered 10,000 acres in Wisconsin indicating a love for the land.

One example of how the Ho-Chunk value land is in the respect shown for plants and animals. In the past, Ho-Chunk farmed foods such as corn, squash, beans, rice,

and strawberries. Hunting produced meat and fur. Plants were harvested for medicine. In addition, thanks was given to the animals and plants that provided food, shelter, and clothing. Often the thanks was given by a gift of tobacco.

A second example of respect for the land is shown by the act of returning to Wisconsin after being removed from the land. The Ho-Chunk people were removed five times to different states. Often this happened by U.S. soldiers forcing the people onto cattle cars, to drive them to a new location. The land in new locations was poor land and the climate not often hospitable. Chief Baptiste said, “It is...cold country...no wood... bad country for Indians” when he was forced into northern Minnesota. Some Ho-Chunk stayed in their new homes but many returned to Wisconsin, “My people are from here and this is my land,” says Tara Tindall, a Ho-Chunk Leader.

#### The BHTL Script

“Writers, I agree with you that Naomi starts her essay with a **claim**, supported by reasons. That first paragraph is sort of an outline for the rest of the essay - the rest of the paragraphs seem to follow that order. Now let’s look at the way she uses facts to support her reasons.” (p. 60)

#### Mini-Lesson Classroom Discourse

T: *What should the first paragraph be about?* [points to the mentor text] *Who’s got an idea? What should the third body paragraph be about?*

S: [unintelligible]

T. *No, that’s the second.*

S: *Land.*

T: *That they had a lot of land and their love for land.*

T: *What is the third paragraph about?*

[Highlights the title in blue then sentence 1 in paragraph 1 in blue, then highlights sentence 2 in paragraph 1 green and sentence 1 in paragraph 2 in green, and then sentence 3 in paragraph 1 orange]

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T: *Where should that sentence show up?* [highlights sentence 1 in paragraph 3 orange]

*What's the purpose of the first paragraph?*

S: *Thesis.*

T: *What else?*

S: *Evidence.*

T: *Your reader should leave your first paragraph knowing what you want them to think.*

(Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1)

The next part of the lesson focused on planning the essay. Sara used questions to elicit student ideas about a thesis. When no one could provide a thesis statement, Sara wrote one herself on the whiteboard (see Figure 8).

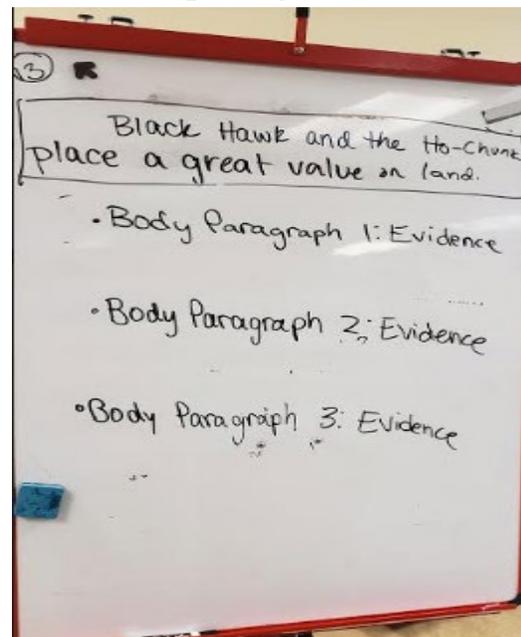
**Figure 8. "Boxes and Bullets"**

### BHTL PowerPoint Slide

Let's try to write to plan out an Essay together

1. We want to write an essay about the Ho-Chunk and Land Removal
  - a. What do we want our readers to think about the Ho-Chunk being forced off their lands?
2. Now that we have our thesis. What evidence do we have to support our thesis?
  - a. Which do we want to be our main ideas for body paragraphs?

### BHTL Corresponding White Board



### The BHTL Script

*"... right now, would you and your partner look over these facts and pick ones that you think would make really great evidence for this reason? Then, talk about what you might write to show the*

### Mini-Lesson Classroom Discourse

T: *What should our thesis be? What do you want your readers to think about? It's either about Ho-Chunk and the removal of the lands or the Black Hawk War.*

S: *I think it's about how ... is important. What did they do to help their lands?*

S: *They started a war.*

T: *What else did they do when they came to Wisconsin?*

S: *They were taking the land.*

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*connection between the fact and the reason.” (p. 61)*

*T: That’s not what we are talking about. We are talking about what the Ho-Chunk did? They fought yellow thunder. They wanted to buy the land back. Even today, you can see.*

*“Right now, ... would you take a few minutes to start planning your essay? Think about what your thesis might be, and what your reasons might be.” (p. 62)*

*T: I see you guys are confused.*

*S: Yes.*

*T: What’s your first thing?*

*S: Have a thesis.*

*T: It could be about the Black Hawk War or why land is important.*

*T: What might be something you write about the Black Hawk War? You can’t just describe, you have to make sure you make the readers think that. Why did they do the Black Hawk War? They did it to fight for their lands.*

*S: Ho-Chunk people tried to fight for their land.*

*T: Can you be more specific?*

*T: (writes) How about Black Hawk and the Ho-Chunk place a great value on land? Am I telling the readers something to think about? Am I even tying in Black Hawk into that? What is step #2?*

*S: Give a statement for each paragraph.*

*T: After your thesis, you are going to be writing out your body paragraph. [scribes on the whiteboard]*

*“Writers, can I interrupt you for a minute? I’m noticing that most of you have set up your essay so that early on you have a claim - and some reasons to support that claim. Listen for example to Milo’s essay, and let’s ‘palm’ the claim (I pointed to my palm), and ‘list’ the reasons” (I counted off one, two, three across my fingers).” (p. 63)*

*If I leave you with that job, will you be less confused? This is your 5th essay. What do you need help with? If I leave you with the job to figure out your body paragraph statements, what we highlighted here. Do you feel like you could do this? Your exit ticket today is to do your boxes and bullets. Now, go to work with your partner. (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1)*

For the independent writing time that followed, Sara’s instructions were for the students to “figure out your body paragraph statements,” using the mentor text as a guide, “what we highlighted here.” The last part of the instructions was to do the “boxes and bullets,” “your exit ticket today is to do your “boxes and bullets.” After that, Sara dismissed the students to do independent work and went to work with Maria.

### **Sara’s Conference with Maria (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1)**

[Sara is sitting at a crescent table with Maria and one other student. She divided her time between Maria and the other student.]

Sara: What’s your thesis?

Maria: xxx [unintelligible]

Sara: That’s not a thesis, it’s an idea. You want your readers to think about something.

[Maria stared at her notebook while Sara talked with another student. Then she turned back to Maria.]

Sara: Remember thesis is you want the reader think about something. What do you want your readers to think about the Black Hawk War? Why aren’t you writing this sentence? The

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sentence that was right up there. [Points to the whiteboard, which says “Black Hawk and the Ho-Chunk place a great value on land.”] You are telling me information. Is that what you mean by boxes and bullets? What’s one way that you think that Black Hawk showed that land was important to them? He fought a war to get his land back. What’s another way they showed it was important?

[Sara worked with another student for a few minutes, while Maria wrote “How is land important?”]

Sara: How is that land important to them? Your thesis should not be a question. How can you re-write that so that it’s not a question? Why is it or how? How? Why? Where? What? What are those kind of words?

M: It’s a paragraph.

Sara: What kind of sentence is that? How many cookies are there? Where is the supermarket? When are we going to go eat? Can you give me an example of a question? Your sentences shouldn’t start that way. How might you restart that sentence? How would you start that? How was their land important to them? You could start by saying I feel sad. How can you restart that sentence to turn into from a question?

Maria: Their land is important to them.

Sara: Can you change “their” to Ho-Chunk?

[Sara left to work with another student]

[Maria wrote]:

I know that land is important to the Ho-Chunk.

- because some of the Ho-Chunk went to live there.

This particular lesson did not have a “share out” session at the end. The day’s workshop ended right after Maria wrote the bullet point above.

### **How is Writing Conceptualized? What Does ‘Knowledge of Writing’ Mean?**

In Workshop 7, The BHTL script and PowerPoint slides conceptualized writing as knowledge of skills that, once learned, can be transferred to other types of writing in other genres and for other social purposes. The set of skills here was framed as “essay” writing. Knowledge of these skills in writing is framed as “keep in mind all the things you already know about writing essays: the structure, the thesis, the supports” (p. 58). Prior knowledge and prior experience with writing these essays is privileged, and it is assumed that students possess this knowledge. The new knowledge for Workshop 7 is presented as “hold in your mind what is different: using only facts to develop and support an idea” (p. 58). Using facts to support a thesis is the new skill. In previous “essay” writing in other *Units of Study*, writers used opinions, surveys, and/or literary references to support the thesis (e.g., “Boxes and Bullets, Personal and Persuasive Essays” (Calkins, Hohne, & Gillette, 2013), and “The Literary Essay, Writing about Fiction” (Calkins, Tolan & Marron, 2013). Another way writing is conceptualized in Workshop 7 is through the assumption that students have previous knowledge in planning their essays with a “Boxes and

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Bullets.” Throughout the *Units of Study*, the scripts teach topic sentence and supporting details with a strategy called “Boxes and Bullets.” The main idea goes into a “Box” and then “details” are listed in with bullet points. In addition, as in Workshops 1 and 2, writing is conceptualized as involving cognitive processes of reading, thinking, and noticing. In this workshop, students must evaluate facts and analyze mentor texts in order to develop knowledge of how to support a thesis with facts. The script asks students to work with partners to “pick ones [facts] that you think would make really great evidence for this reason? Then, talk about what you might write to show the connection between the fact and the reason” (p. 61). In sum, Workshop 7 conceptualizes knowledge of writing as knowledge of a particular essay structure that students learn early on in their experience with the *Units of Study* and continue to use for different genres. There is an assumption that students can and will make use of this previous knowledge in Workshop 7.

### **How Does Sara Make Sense of the Way Writing Is Conceptualized During Workshop 7?**

Sara reproduces the messaging in Calkins script: the assumption that the essay structure is transferable to this new “Information Books” genre, as well as expectations about students’ prior knowledge of the particular essay structure. Sara does this by telling the students to “remember” writing “an opinion essay” and “a literary essay” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1). However, Sara did not point out how this essay would be different, which was included in the script. Instead, Sara’s language implied that the students already knew how to do this type of essay, and that this type of essay was the same as previous essays they had written: “Remember, your first paragraph is an introduction to what is going on” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1). She spent the first part of the lesson trying to get the students to locate the thesis in the mentor text using directed questions, e.g., “What part of this paragraph tells you where the thesis is?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1), and attempting to get students to notice the organizational structure of the mentor text. Her explanation of what a thesis statement was referred only to the cognitive aspects, e.g., that the purpose of a thesis statement is to make someone think, “Is she making the readers think about the Ho-Chunk?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1), ignoring the functional role of a thesis statement, such as ‘make a claim.’ However, as Sara stated in the discourse in Figure 8, students were already supposed to know how to write a thesis, as they had done it several times before. With Sara’s color-coding of the mentor text it seemed that she was trying to get the students to remember or realize that the purpose of the first paragraph is to outline the rest of the essay. Her questions “What are these three sentences about?” and “Where are those things going to show up?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1) presumably referred to organizational patterning.

In the last part of the whole class mini-lesson, the aim seemed to be to jointly construct an outline using “boxes and bullets.” She used the questions from the BHTL script to guide the students’ thinking and elicit ideas for a thesis statement. She then noticed that the students were confused. By the end of the lesson, Sara seemed frustrated with the students’ overall level of understanding. She seemed to expect that writing the thesis and planning an “essay” would be easy for them, “This is your fifth essay, what do you need help with?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1). Despite the fact that the students seemed unprepared to do the tasks for the day, Sara adhered to the PowerPoint slides for the day and sent students off to work independently, saying:

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“If I leave you with the job to figure out your body para statements, what we highlighted here. Do you feel like you could do this? Your exit ticket today is to do your boxes and bullets. Now, go to work with your partner” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1).

Sara’s work with Maria that day also focused on developing Maria’s knowledge about writing a thesis statement. Her methods of doing this were similar to her work with Maria during Workshop 2. Sara asked questions to elicit what she was looking for, and Maria answered. If Sara didn’t get the response she was looking for, she rejected Maria’s responses. However, she did not explicitly tell Maria how to write a thesis statement. Instead, Sara repeated her explanation of what a thesis is: “Remember thesis is you want the reader to think about something” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1); she referred to the example on the whiteboard, “Why aren’t you writing this sentence? The sentence that was right up there” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1); and rejected and reframed Maria’s ideas for the thesis statement three times during the conference without explaining why. When she told Maria that her thesis couldn’t be a question she then said, “How can you re-write that so that it’s not a question? Why is it or how? How? Why? Where? What? What are those kinds of words?” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1). Then, when Maria answered “paragraph,” Sara gave examples of questions, perhaps to make sure that Maria knew what a question was. This was very confusing to us, but Maria did seem to follow along and came up with a statement, “Their land is important to them” (Fieldnotes, Workshop 7, 5/1). Sara asked Maria to change “their” to “Ho-Chunk,” but Maria did not take this up, writing instead, “I know that land is important to the Ho-Chunk.” This seemed to be a legitimate thesis statement according to Sara’s parameters. However, the first of Maria’s bullet points was not coherent. We were not sure where ‘there’ is or why that statement would serve as a supporting sentence for the thesis statement. However, when we looked back at the mentor text, we found that the second reason to support the thesis is “Another way is the way the Ho-Chunk who were forced off land in Wisconsin kept returning.” Thus, it seemed that Maria’s strategy was to paraphrase from the mentor text.

### **What Were Students Supposed to Learn About Writing From Workshop 7?**

No new knowledge about language in writing was taught or built, but there were assumptions about how students would make use of their prior knowledge about “essays” to evaluate and analyze how claims, evidence, and reasoning were structured in the mentor text. Students were supposed to be able to apply this knowledge to planning out their own text. They were meant to come up with a thesis statement and three supporting statements to serve as a frame for a three-paragraph “essay.” The use of boxes and bullets was the expected tangible outcome.

Maria may have learned something different. She may have learned that there is a very specific way of writing a thesis statement and that her way was not it. She may have learned that everyone else in the class already knew how to do this, but she did not.

### **How Are Linguistic Supports for MLs Being Conceptualized?**

We deduced conceptualizations from two documents where MLs were specifically mentioned: *A Guide to the Writing Workshop* (Calkins, 2013) and *Supports for English Language Learners [ELLs] in Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing* (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017). There were no linguistic supports for MLs in the unit script, except for tips meant for “strugglers,” such as “sometimes you’ll decide that there are enough strugglers that you want to adapt your teaching to support them” (Calkins & Cockerille, p. 6). Supports for MLs were conceptualized in three ways: first, they were informed by particular theoretical assumptions about language and second language learners; second, they were manifested through specific instructional strategies; and third, they were represented through particular conceptualizations of language in writing.

#### ***Theoretical Assumptions About Language and Second Language Learners***

Some supports were made for each stage of second language development, such as pre-production and early production and later stages of learning English. They included working in triads, learning instructional language, using visuals, using students’ first language, providing conversational prompts, and others (Calkins, 2013). These recommendations may have come from the assumptions about second language learning related to providing lots of opportunity for practicing English, and in this case, specifically providing opportunities for students to talk about writing, as well as lots of time dedicated to writing. These recommendations also may have come from Krashen’s theory that children will learn English provided they are exposed to comprehensible input, and that explicit attention to language is not necessary and may potentially create anxiety (Krashen, 1987). The point here is not to debate the applicability of these theories of language learning in the context of the *Units of Study*, but to illustrate how these theories inform conceptualization of language and then become recommendations, implications, and messages for teachers.

#### ***Instructional Strategies***

In both documents, the majority of the teaching strategies were generalized and available to all students to support listening comprehension and speaking production, as opposed to clear and explicit ways to teach the language needed for writing achievement. In addition, there were suggestions about using instructional language consistently, giving students frequent opportunities for writing practice, and providing differentiation strategies through choice and social interaction (Calkins, 2013). For MLs, the documents emphasized limiting scaffolding, reducing teacher talk, and tempering expectations for mastery. Teachers were told throughout the *Supports for ELLs* document to limit their talk because teacher talk was not conducive to second language learning. “Our counsel, then, is to tighten, trim, weed, delete—and to avoid adding even more Teacher-talk” (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017, p. 4). Instead of slowing down and using scaffolding to support learning, teachers were advised to speed up the pace of lessons, as shown here:

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Because you are not teaching towards mastery, when you feel the content of your mini-lesson is a lot for your learners to grasp, instead of slowing that lesson down, adding in a zillion scaffolds, paraphrasing and discussing each aspect of it, you will want to speed up. (p. 4)

Other suggestions explicitly counseled teachers against scaffolding. The *Supports for ELLs* document explained that scaffolding doesn't work because learners need to move step-by-step at their own pace:

Keep in mind that learners can only get better in a step-by-step way. No amount of scaffolding will enable readers who are reading Level J books to have success with Level U books! Instead those learners need to progress to Level K books, and they should be able to do that with limited and brief scaffolding. (p. 4)

This example was about reading levels (A to Z), however this was used as an example here in the *Supports for ELLs* document for writing: “writing workshops are designed to allow every writer to function at his or her own level” (p. 4). The implicit message not to expect mastery was stated in messages such as,

It will help if you keep in mind that you are not teaching towards mastery. Learning always involves approximation, and it is clear that students will not fully grasp a writing skill or strategy simply because you have talked about it and demonstrated it. (p. 4)

The assumption here seems to be that what counts as achievement is only approximation. There is no expectation that the teachers will teach in a way that the MLs will ‘grasp’ all the skills and strategies. Instead teachers are encouraged against this: “Aim only for your learners to grasp the gist of the most important content” (p. 4).

### ***Conceptualizations of Language in Writing***

Finally, among Calkins' supports for MLs were suggestions such as “scaffold students' work on elaboration and writing with description and specificity” (p. 83), “provide explicit instruction in tenses, pronoun references, connectors, and so on,” and “provide small-group instruction for students to learn figurative language” (pp. 84–85). Other manifestations of how Calkins conceptualized language supports were sentence stems, recasting, word banks, and graphic organizers and advice to teachers to use synonyms and paraphrasing (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017).

As we discuss below, we found these approaches to be problematic for supporting the writing development of MLs. Following our discussion, we provide recommendations for teaching writing.

## **Discussion**

From an SFL perspective on language learning and pedagogy, we understand that writing is realized through language resources that vary based on the genres and registers students

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experience in different contexts in school (Christie, 2016; Brisk, 2015). As students go through the years of schooling, they constantly encounter new and more complex genres provided by the disciplines (Schleppegrell, 2004; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; de Oliveira, 2014). These disciplinary writing demands must be met by teachers who are equipped with a pedagogically useful theory about language and a pedagogical framework that provides explicit and contextualized learning opportunities for students about how language works in written texts (Gebhard, 2019; Khote, 2018). Multilingual students deserve to learn how language works in those texts, and they deserve to be explicitly taught the language resources they need to realize those texts (de Oliveira & Westerlund, 2021; de Oliveira, 2017; Brisk, 2015; Westerlund & Besser, 2021). To support students to do this, teachers need to use and develop shared metalanguage that makes language visible, and to support students' development of language resources and the expansion of their linguistic repertoires (Schleppegrell, 2013; Humphrey & Macnaught, 2016). The development of student linguistic repertoires and explicit attention to language about knowledge of genre and register are important because students' disciplinary knowledge is often assessed through writing (Gebhard, 2019; Brisk, 2016; de Oliveira, 2014).

The findings from this study showed that several of these key implications described above were missing from the conceptualizations of writing found in the BHTL script, PowerPoint slides and Sara's discourse. Specifically, the following areas were lacking:

- development of a shared metalanguage grounded in a theory of language
- development of language resources as an outcome
- explicit teaching of language knowledge about register and genre

In this section, we first describe these aspects in the context of the data and discuss potential consequences as a result of the absence of these supports for MLs. Then we describe these missing aspects in the context of the ML support guide, and discuss potential consequences for MLs.

### ***Development of a Shared Metalanguage Grounded in a Theory of Language***

Development of a shared metalanguage grounded in a theory of language is notably absent in the BHTL *Unit of Study* script, PowerPoint slides, and Sara's discourse. While there is development of metalanguage throughout, it is mostly based on metaphors and not on descriptions of language features necessary for those tasks. For example, "you have done a lot of priming the pump" (Calkins & Cockerille, p. 37) and "to write with your hands, you must write with your head" (p.13) are used as metaphors for thinking and planning. Further, "writing is a little like sledding (PowerPoint slides) and originally "drafting is like tobogganing: first the preparation, then position, then the whoosh!" (Calkins & Cockerille, p. 97) are used as a metaphor for the drafting process of writing, which should be easy and go fast. Two examples of a simplified description of language are "boxes and bullets" (Workshop 7), which refers to the main idea and supporting details in an essay, and "what you want your reader to think," which Sara used to explain the purpose and structure of a thesis statement.

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While metaphors are not problematic themselves, they become so when the teacher does not bring them from the abstract to the concrete, as was the case in the data. In some cases, the metaphors made the technical knowledge so abstract and confusing that learning was impeded. For example, the informational text itself as a genre, which was the target genre for the BHTL unit, was compared to “a cluster-like rock... made up of many pebbles ... bound together in a matrix of sand and clay” (Calkins & Cockerille, 2013, p. 2) and “a conglomerate form of text, ... quirky texts full of variety of forms” (p. 3). While this metaphorical use of a rock to refer to a genre was presumably well-intentioned, as a consequence the students were denied access to learning how to write the kind of informational report that has just one social purpose, “to communicate factual information on a topic” (WIDA, 2020, p. 219). Informational reports are texts that students use to define, describe, compare and contrast, and classify information on any topic of students’ research (WIDA, 2020, p. 225). Calkins’ use of metaphoric language did not provide teachers with the knowledge about various types of informational reports and their linguistic characteristics. Similarly, simplified language is not inherently problematic, but can become so when there is no depth of understanding behind it. For example, the BHTL script “Writers, I agree with you that Naomi starts her essay with a claim, supported by reasons” (Calkins & Cockerille, p. 60) models how to teach essay writing: start with a claim and then support the claim with reasons. However, the teachers are not directed to explicitly identify or develop metalanguage such as claim and reasons, but to ask questions trying to elicit this knowledge. Repeatedly, Sara’s students did not generate the right metalanguage and she did not provide it for them. Thus, while the overall ethos of the teaching emphasized individual discovery, there was an underlying, more explicit agenda based on knowledge of writing. However, this agenda was not accessible to most of the students, and particularly the MLs.

While we understand the rationale behind the simplification of explanations about language and use of metaphors in the data, we also found this problematic. First, even though the simplified explanations fit with the implicit nature and culture of the script, they were often not tied to concrete and technical descriptions of language that MLs need. In other words, the explanations were too implicit to promote language learning. Second, even though such simplification can make language easier to teach and learn, particularly for teachers who do not have a great deal of knowledge about language, simplified explanations don’t do enough to develop understanding about language, and as a result do not promote language learning. Furthermore, we found that BHTL script and other *Units of Study* do not have a theory of language that could serve as a framework for metalanguage and for the development of writing. Consequently, the script writers resorted to the metaphors and vague descriptions we saw in the data. This is problematic because by not providing teachers with support in teaching language, the BHTL unit of study effectively denies teachers an opportunity to develop their own knowledge about language and the role of language in writing. Sara was not required be clear or explicit about the technical ways that language was used in the texts. As a consequence, she was systematically denied the opportunity to explicitly teach the students technical knowledge, and

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relatedly, had limited opportunity to develop her confidence about this kind of knowledge in a way that she could teach it.

It is likely that Sara depended on the script, and did not elaborate her language explanations in ways that would have made them clearer, because she did not receive knowledge about language in her teacher preparation coursework (Teacher Interview, March 2019). Lack of systematic teacher preparation with a focus on building teacher knowledge about language is widely documented (e.g., Gebhard et al., 2013, Athanases & de Oliveira, 2011; Bunch 2013). Gebhard et al. (2013) wrote about this lack of preparation specific to teaching reading and writing of disciplinary texts because teachers' training in language of writing was reduced to structural grammar, not language as a meaning-making resource in the context of disciplines' ways of using language. The analysis of ML underperformance in Gebhard et al. led them to the same conclusion as ours: a main reason why MLs have so many challenges to learn disciplinary language is that teachers "often have not developed an explicit understanding of how language works in the texts they are routinely required to read and write in school" (Gebhard et al., p. 108).

### *Development of Language Resources as an Outcome*

Clear expectations that students will develop language resources through their participation in the curriculum were notably missing from the BHTL script, PowerPoint slides, and Sara's discourse and pedagogy. Instead there was an over-emphasis on process as an outcome. This came at the expense of outcomes that focus on building knowledge of language in writing that is necessary for expanding students' language resources in the written mode and in particular genres. For example, outcomes such as writing in paragraphs, knowing sentence boundaries, adding transition words, and supporting claims with evidence were present, but downplayed. Students were not held accountable for these kinds of outcomes. They could pick and choose from an assortment presented during mini-lessons, referred to as strategies, e.g., "adding transition words" (Workshop 2), or they could choose to use none of them. Furthermore, during the conferencing with Maria, there was not a clear focus on developing Maria's language resources so she could make progress with her academic writing. For example, in Workshop 2, instead of explicitly teaching Maria the language that she could use to write the origin section of her paper, which we assumed was Sara's intent, Sara obliquely referred to origin with leading questions such as "What they should know before they read this, if they know nothing about this topic?" Likewise, during the conference for Workshop 7, Sara did not explicitly teach Maria in a way that was needed to develop the technical knowledge behind writing a thesis. So, while Maria wrote a thesis that seemed to meet Sara's expectations, there was no evidence that Maria would be able to write a thesis on her own for a different piece of writing.

Calkins, Cockerille, the district curriculum specialist who assembled the PowerPoint slides, and Sara all seemed to be operating under the assumption that participating in the process of writing leads to better writing outcomes. Sara reiterated this philosophy in her teaching and during her interview with us: process is more important than product because students need time

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to “write for volume, develop stamina, and discover the joy of writing” (Teacher Interview, March, 2019). This over-emphasis on process as a measure of achievement has consequences for MLs. Over the course of the BHTL unit we observed, we found that there were little to no expectations that Maria would master the knowledge about language she needed to create a finished product that resembled the target genre. This is problematic because “in this country, students will be judged on their product *regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it* [emphasis added]. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit” (Delpit, 1988, p. 287; Delpit, 2001). Ultimately, the privilege of process over product, and the lack of attention to language in the teaching of writing, lead to low expectations for MLs. To emphasize process as the legitimate measure of achievement does a disservice to students outside the mainstream.

Furthermore, there does not seem to be sufficient support in the research literature to justify this over-emphasis on process: “While process approaches have served to instill greater respect for individual writers and for the writing process itself, there is little hard evidence that they actually lead to significantly better writing in L2 contexts” (Hyland, 2003, p. 17). Previous critiques of process writing argue that over-reliance on participation in the process comes at the expense of developing knowledge of how language works in a variety of genres, and developing disciplinary literacy, which obscures and weakens disciplinary knowledge (Horowitz, 1986; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Christie, 2004; Martin, 2009; Ramirez, 2014). This emphasis on process in the BHTL units, reproduced through the PowerPoint slides and Sara’s discourse and pedagogy, did not support development of knowledge of language resources needed for writing a variety of genres and development of disciplinary literacy.

### ***Explicit Teaching of Language Knowledge About Register and Genre***

Instead of systematic explicit teaching of language knowledge about register and genre, a discovery-based method of teaching language was privileged. For example, much of the teaching about language was done by having the students notice what was going on in the texts. The noticing was open-ended and unspecific. Students were free to notice what they liked without any clear direction. At the same time, there was an implicit expectation that students would notice certain technical aspects of the writing piece, such as organizational structure, development of coherence, and the purpose of the thesis statement. For example, during Workshop 7, Sara seemed to be attempting to demonstrate how cohesion was developed in the text, as the BHTL PowerPoint slides directed her to do. However, she did not explicitly draw the students’ attention to the way language in the text served to build coherence; instead, she asked questions to try to get students to notice this for themselves, but she didn’t guide the noticing. Sara didn’t affirm or correct student responses to those questions, so it was unclear what she wanted to hear. When students did not notice what they should have noticed, e.g., ways coherence was built, Sara tried to redirect them through pointed questioning. But asking questions was not explicit enough to draw students’ attention to the language in ways that would build their technical knowledge, nor did Sara use or teach any metalanguage such as claim, reasons, transitions. As a result, she did not help students build any new knowledge. There is

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little guidance from the BHTL script on how to talk explicitly about the language and genre in the text. Instead, as explained above, the language in the BHTL script seems deliberately un-technical.

Discovery-based language is common in constructivist approaches to education, as well as in process writing, an approach to instruction which “fails to make plain what is to be learned” (Hyland, 2003, p. 19). In addition, this type of teacher talk, which aims for students to learn implicitly, often hides an explicit underlying agenda. While Sara’s questioning was open-ended, we noticed that not many students actually responded to her. Often Sara answered her own questions, suggesting that there was a ‘right’ answer. The students who did respond rarely seemed to give Sara the answer she was looking for. What makes this discovery teaching even more problematic for MLs or any student who was not familiar with this genre, is that the script explicitly directs the teachers “be sure to refrain from pointing out what you notice in the text long enough to learn what each individual is noticing” (p. 10). Sara seemed caught between inviting students to explore and discover the text, and making sure they discovered the ‘right’ things. These ‘right’ things were directed to her by the BHTL script.

Similar to Hyland (2003), we found that students were supposed to obtain this knowledge from individual conferencing, from “unanalysed samples of expert writing, from the growing experience of repetition, and from suggestions in the margins of their drafts” (p. 3). But how are students supposed to notice genre structures and language in those texts when they were never taught what to look for and what to notice? Students who come to the workshop already possessing this knowledge can advance and develop further knowledge. These students are typically mainstream students who share the same cultural codes as the ones underlying the BHTL unit. However, it is difficult to gain language knowledge if you are not explicitly taught it and are not privy to the cultural codes, or part of the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988; Delpit, 2001). MLs and students of color whose experiences do not match those of mainstream students and who do not share the same cultural codes are disadvantaged by process writing because the knowledge of the “culture of power” is hidden from them (Delpit, 1988, p. 283). As Delpit argues, “If such explicitness is not provided to students, what it feels like ... is that there are secrets being kept, that time is being wasted, and that the teacher is abdicating his or her duty to teach” (p. 287). In this way, we found the BHTL script to be potentially complicit in both creating and maintaining achievement gaps in writing development; the students who make progress do so because they did not need help from the teacher, and the ones who need explicit language teaching to make progress, did not get enough support.

### *What’s Missing From the ML Support Resources*

Before analyzing the conceptualizations of language, language theory, and instructional strategies in the resources for MLs, it is important to mention the physical marginalization of the resources. The supports were not included within the unit for teaching writing, but were added as an afterthought, as ancillary materials, which made them difficult to find. One document was in an obscure location on the website and the other was in the final pages of the document *A Guide*

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to the *Writing Workshop*. Neither our teacher nor curriculum leader were aware of their existence.

Overall, we found the BHTL unit and *A Guide to the Writing Workshop*, as well the *Supports for ELLs* documents, to lack systematic support for teachers on how to teach language and how to draw attention to the way language is used in specific writing genres. *A Guide to the Writing Workshop* contained several references to language, such as helping MLs with higher levels of language proficiency, elaborate and add details, and teach pronouns and connectors. However, those supports did not include considerations for which genres needed what kind of elaboration or description. Neither did the *Guide* attend to the functional nature of pronoun references and connectors (such as to create cohesion) and tenses (to use timeless present in information reports or explanations). The *Supports for ELLs* document included general strategies such as building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge, however those strategies do not attend to the explicit development of language resources needed for school genres.

Regarding instructional supports for MLs, the *Supports for ELLs* document also lacked a systematic approach to teaching language and, instead, explicitly limited teacher talk. Teachers were advised to curtail explanations but add more time for students to talk to their partners. In addition, teachers were encouraged to shorten the mini-lessons, reduce scaffolding, avoid teacher talk, and not to focus on mastery of outcomes other than process outcomes. The teachers were instructed to “speed up” the lesson instead of “adding a zillion scaffolds” (Calkins & Colleagues, 2017, p. 4).

We found the strategies of limiting teacher talk and relying on student talk problematic because students were left to discover on their own how language works in writing (which is different from speaking) in a language they are still learning. We acknowledge that providing opportunities for student talk is important for oral language development in a second language, as well as development of concepts and negotiation of ideas (Gibbons, 2006; 2015). However, these opportunities do not automatically translate into the development of students’ language resources needed for the written mode (Schleppegrell & Christie, 2018). The assumption that talking to peers is the main strategy for teaching language in writing, found in the script, perpetuates the idea that writing is speech written down. While it is natural for younger learners in primary years to write the way they talk, in upper elementary and beyond, students need explicit instruction on how language works in written texts (Schleppegrell & Christie, 2018, Brisk, 2015; Christie & Derewianka, 2008).

Conceptualizations of what MLs were expected to produce were also limiting. Teachers were told that approximation was more important than mastery. Certainly, approximation is an important and productive part of language development. However, when approximation is privileged over meeting high expectations with high support (Mariani, 1997; Gibbons, 2015) and standards-based outcomes for writing, it’s problematic, as there is no expectation that the teachers will teach in a way that the MLs will ‘grasp’ all the skills and strategies. In addition,

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teachers are not held accountable for teaching the skills and strategies well enough for MLs to learn. This is very flawed advice for teachers, for two reasons: it absolves them of responsibility to support their MLs to progress from where they are to grade level expectations, and it perpetuates low expectations for MLs.

These conceptualizations of language and instructional supports, and low expectations for what MLs can do with support, coupled with directives to teachers that effectively let them off the hook to provide support, result in implicit neglect of the language learning needs of MLs.

### Summary

In the BHTL *Unit of Study*, writing is conceptualized in the following ways. First, writing is presented as a cognitive process of thinking, imagining, planning, and noticing what is going on in a piece of writing. Second, writing is seen as a process where the main work is drafting and free writing. Third, although the writer is empowered to make choices about aspects such as topic and organizational structure, many times we observed that these choices were limited, as the teacher privileged certain choices in implicit ways. In addition, choice in organizational structure resulted in confusion about genre, as often the genres children need to write for school have set organizational patterns. Lastly, knowledge about writing is conceptualized as developing a set of transferable skills. “Boxes and bullets” exemplified this. Once students learn how to outline an essay using this structure, they can then apply it to any genre, whether it be argument, informational, explanatory and so on. While we do not dispute the importance of teaching outlining, we feel students need to be taught that organizational structures are genre specific. Furthermore, this knowledge, for example “boxes and bullets,” was privileged over knowledge of language resources.

These concepts of writing were reproduced in the PowerPoint slides, in many cases word-for-word from the script, and in Sara’s discourse and pedagogy. Sara made sense of the way writing was conceptualized in the BHTL script and PowerPoint slides by going through the slides and reproducing the messaging from the script in her classroom discourse in the mini-lesson, throughout the independent work time, and into the closing lesson. The only time she diverged from the messaging of the BHTL script was when she worked one-on-one with Maria.

In all three workshops, students were supposed to deduce organizational patterns specific to the genre they were studying; however, we observed that none of the students were able to do this. Instead, students learned implicitly that there are patterns, but these are difficult to find. For MLs, learning about organizational patterns without explicit instruction is very difficult. The nature of the BHTL scripted teacher talk, as manifested in the PowerPoint slides and further reproduced through Sara’s classroom talk, was such that neither Sara nor the students could talk about language in a way that facilitated knowledge building, and by extension, language development. The two characteristics of the teacher talk that were most limiting to this knowledge building were the discovery-based nature and the metaphorical nature of the talk about language. By following the script and the PowerPoint, Sara, therefore, becomes complicit

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in this neglect of students who deserve to learn how language works in writing. MLs, and most other students for that matter, need explicit instruction on the role of language in text organization, construction of thesis and evidence, and other technical aspects of writing.

The supports for MLs were conceptualized in different ways. First, they were informed by theoretical assumptions about language and second language learners that were not informed by the development of language in the written mode and how culturally and linguistically diverse students develop as writers. Second, the supports were manifested through specific instructional strategies, for example grouping students in triads and giving students time to talk. And third, the supports for MLs were represented through particular conceptualizations of language in writing that were not responsive to the textual features of genre and register.

We found the BHTL *Unit of Study* lacking in several key areas that have negative implications for MLs. First, the unit did not develop a shared metalanguage grounded in a theory of language. As a consequence, there was limited opportunity to develop teacher knowledge and confidence about language and the role of language in writing—resulting in systematic denial of the opportunity to explicitly teach the students about the technical knowledge. Second, there was a lack of clear expectations that students will develop language resources through their participation in the curriculum. Instead, the over-emphasis on process as an outcome came at the expense of outcomes that focus on building knowledge of language in writing that is necessary for expanding students' language resources in the written mode and in particular genres. Last, we found the BHTL *Unit of Study* to lack explicit teaching of language knowledge about register and genre. This leads perhaps to the greatest potential consequence for MLs. Because the overall ethos of this teaching curriculum is based on individual discovery, achievement is based on prior knowledge of language and genre, and access to the knowledge necessary for achievement is not distributed equally. In this way, we found the BHTL script to be potentially complicit in both creating and maintaining achievement gaps in writing development, as the students who make progress do so because they did not need help from the teacher, and the ones who need explicit language teaching to make progress, did not get enough support. The ML resources also failed to provide support for teachers that would help reduce this achievement gap. In addition to the physical marginalization of resources and difficulty in accessing them, we found that the conceptualizations of language and instructional supports did not address the development of language resources needed for the written mode and particular genres students were expected to write. The low expectations for what MLs can do with support, coupled with the directives to teachers that effectively let them off the hook for providing support, result in implicit neglect of the language learning needs of MLs.

### Recommendations

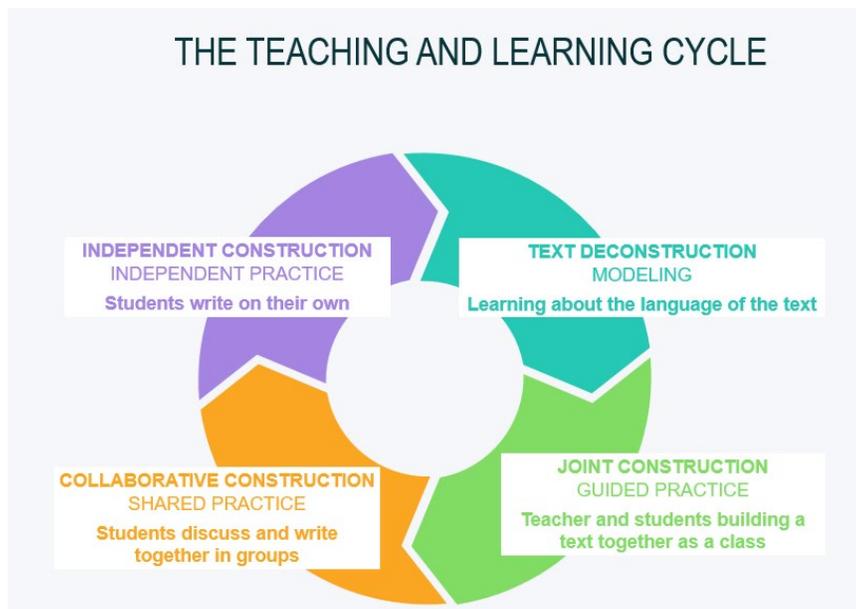
Our recommendations for teaching writing follow the work of teachers and researchers who have replaced the process writing approach with a more visible pedagogy that makes the rules for being a successful writer explicit, visible, and accessible to all (e.g., Maria Brisk, Luciana de Oliveira, Beverly Derewianka, Meg Gebhard, Sally Humphrey, Mary Schleppegrell, Pamela

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Spycher, and many others). These SFL researchers have followed the work of Australian educational linguists Joan Rothery (1994), James Martin and David Rose (e.g., 2003, 2008), and Mary Macken-Horarik (2011), Frances Christie and Beverly Derewianka (2008), all of whom have worked alongside teachers to ensure that marginalized students have equal access to the same genres of power as those who belong to “the culture of power” (Delpit, 1988, p. 285). Their work created conditions for what David Rose calls “democratization of the classroom” and a leveling of the playing field for all students (Rose, 2005).

Informed by SFL and the work of the many SFL scholars above, we recommend a pedagogy for teaching writing that aims to develop teachers’ and students’ knowledge about writing and the language resources needed for a variety of genres. This pedagogy does not wait for students to discover how language works in writing, but teaches students about language in context. This pedagogy is mostly known as the “teaching and learning cycle” (e.g., de Oliveira, 2019) and consists of the following phases (Figure 9).

**Figure 9. The Teaching and Learning Cycle (adapted from de Oliveira & Smith, 2019)**



During the text deconstruction phase (see Figure 9), the teacher guides the students to study the language of the desired genre (identified from the curricular context) by analyzing the language in the context of the whole text. Deconstruction starts at the whole text level and teaches students that text and purpose are closely linked, and that the text unfolds the way it does because of the purpose it serves. Text deconstruction activities can include, for example, using cut-up text and physical movement of students in the room as they become the text. Deconstruction is followed by joint construction, in which teacher and students jointly build the text together through negotiation of language choices that aims to illuminate how these choices fit or do not fit the context. This phase can be described as a guided conversation about language

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with the teacher leading the discussion to shape students’ language to match the context of the audience, genre, register, and mode. Both deconstruction and joint construction develop students’ language knowledge and metalanguage to talk about language, which gives agency to students to gain independence and transfer those linguistic skills across contexts. During collaborative construction, students discuss and write together in groups a text for a desired genre with the teacher providing more support using the jointly constructed text and other language tools from previous lessons. During the collaboration and independent construction, MLs benefit from even more support and more joint construction.

We demonstrate deconstruction and joint construction by rewriting an excerpt from the BHTL script to show how to use this pedagogy to make language visible and how to build teacher and students’ knowledge about language. Figure 10 illustrates what deconstruction could look like, and Figure 11 illustrates what joint construction could look like. The commentary in the right column unpacks the intentions underlying the teacher talk in left column.

**Figure 10: Re-written Teacher Discourse Focusing on Deconstruction**

Revised Script Modeling Deconstruction	Commentary
<p>T: <i>Today we are going to start working on a new genre. It’s called an Information Report. Information Reports have a special purpose which is to provide generalized information on a topic. These texts are different from stories because they are not telling myths or legends of the Ho-Chunk. They are different from opinion pieces because they do not persuade a reader. They only inform a reader.</i></p> <p><i>Let’s look at this text together to see what makes this text an Information Report. The title of this text is Ho-Chunk. Hoocqagra. People of the Big Voice. Even from the title we can tell it’s an informational text. It doesn’t say “Stories about the first people” - that would be a story, not an information report. It also doesn’t say “The negative consequences of the European arrival on the culture and language of the Ho-Chunk.” That would be an explanation of consequences. It says “Ho-Chunk. People of the Big Voice” and with that language of naming people, we can see that this is an informational text about the Ho-Chunk people.</i></p> <p><i>This text is organized as follows: There are 4 chapters. The chapters help organize information categorically throughout the whole text. The whole text is held together by categories such as Origins, Land, Language and Culture, etc. We describe people through</i></p>	<p>The teacher starts by telling students that this will be a new genre and names the genre. She doesn’t just say it’s going to be “nonfiction” writing because that is too broad a category, since explanations and arguments are also non-fiction writing. She proceeds to teach that information reports have a specific purpose, different from narratives and arguments. This teaches students that we have different texts because they have different purposes. Then she proceeds to draw students’ attention to language in the title to identify the genre by saying “let’s see what makes this text an information report.” Then she contrasts this title with other possible titles of stories or explanations. In doing so, the teacher does not ask students to discover the answer to what language makes this text an information report. Instead, she explicitly teaches students because they are learning a brand-new genre.</p> <p>The teacher shows to students that there are four chapters. These serve to organize the text into categories within chapters, which help us organize our knowledge into subtopics.</p> <p>The teacher proceeds to teach about categorical organization of text by contrasting them with</p>

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Revised Script Modeling Deconstruction	Commentary
<p><i>their origin, land, culture, etc. Categories help us organize our knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>The difference between stories and information reports is that you can move categories and write about those topics in any order. Stories, however, are organized around a plot that develops over time and needs to go in a particular order. On your desk, you'll find four pieces of paper with different categories. Land, Origins, Culture, Language. Put them in a different order from the mentor text: Talk with the people at your table and compare your order of categories with theirs.</i></p> <p><i>Let's look at Chapter One. I will read the first sentence. "The first people of Wisconsin were Native Americans." Even from the first sentence, we see that it doesn't say "In the beginning, Earthmaker sat in space and there was nothing around him."<sup>3</sup> The people are not fictional in the information reports. They are named below.</i></p>	<p>stories. Students use manipulatives to move the categories around to see and compare how others can organize their text. Ultimately, we want the students to learn that in an information report they have choice in how to arrange their categories.</p> <p>The teacher draws students' attention to language in the first sentence, showing that the language in the first sentence is characteristic of an information report, contrasting it with a language found in legends.</p>

The revised script illustrates our recommendations for explicit teacher talk about the language, which contrasts to the open-ended discovery talk in the original script and Sara's discourse, framed as "What do you notice?" The revised script aims to develop students' knowledge about text and by explicitly drawing attention to the language (not just content) in the title of the text, to show what kind of language makes an information report, and contrasts it with stories, explanations, and arguments. In the revised script, the teacher contrasts organizational structures of stories and informational texts explicitly, teaching them the distinct organizational patterns of each. She draws their attention to the first sentence, telling them to notice the language and contrast it with language found in legends, even if the legend is on the same topic, such as the origins of the Ho-Chunk. The teacher does not wait for students to notice without guidance or discover the language, because it is a brand-new genre for students.

In Figure 11, we illustrate another stage of the teaching and learning cycle: joint construction. We make recommendations for how to jointly construct a text with students before sending them off to do work independently. As mentioned previously, joint construction is a phase of collaborative writing where the teacher and students focus on the language of writing and how language creates meaning. Similar to deconstruction, joint construction is also characterized by talking, where the teacher is the guide and the students are contributors of language. Together,

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<sup>3</sup> The Origin Story. Ho-Chunk Oral Tradition. Milwaukee Public Library <https://www.mpm.edu/content/wirp/ICW-140>

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they negotiate meaning in a highly collaborative, but teacher-led, discourse. In this revised script, we retain the original focus of writing a claim and evidence paragraph, but we only focus on jointly constructing a claim. We demonstrate how successful joint construction builds on the previous deconstruction, where the teacher shows students the claims and evidence paragraphs in different mentor texts.

**Figure 11. Re-written Script Modeling Joint Construction**

Revised Script	Commentary
<p>T: <i>In the next few lessons, we are going to write a paragraph together that has a very specific job. The job of this paragraph is to make a claim and support it with evidence. This paragraph needs to persuade the reader, not just inform the reader. Today we will only focus on writing a claim.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Let's look at a claim from our text. "The Ho-Chunk placed great value on their culture." Placed great value means it was important to them. Now let's write a claim that tells us how the Ho-Chunk feel about land.</i></p> <p>S: <i>Land was important to them.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Land was... Class, should I write land was important to them?</i></p> <p>S: <i>Who is them?</i></p> <p>T: <i>Excellent question. We need to specify who them is because our audience didn't study with us. They don't know who we are talking about.</i></p> <p>S1: <i>Replace them with Native Americans.</i></p> <p>T: <i>All Native Americans or a specific group? Our choice of language matters because we are telling our audience that land was specific to this particular group.</i></p> <p>S2: <i>The Ho-Chunk.</i></p> <p>S: <i>Land is important to the Ho-Chunk.</i></p> <p>T writes. <i>Land is important to the Ho-Chunk.</i></p> <p>S3: <i>Land is important or was important?</i></p> <p>T: <i>Excellent observation. Class, 'is' means present and 'was' means past. Let's decide together on the word.</i></p>	<p>Here, the teacher tells her students that paragraphs have a job and she names the job: "make a claim and support it with evidence." This serves two purposes: 1) we do not assume that students know why we need paragraphs, and 2) it names that job, showing that paragraphs have different jobs, depending on the genre, and its place in the context of the whole text.</p> <p>Here, the teacher uses a claim from the deconstruction activity from the previous day: "The Ho-Chunk placed a great value on their culture" as a mentor claim for the new claim they'll be writing. She teaches the synonym "important" for "placing great value" and students take up that language and say "Land was important to them." Here, the student states a claim and the teacher begins to write it. Then she pauses and asks the class if she should write it the same way as the students said. In this way, she draws her students' attention to the pronoun 'them.'</p> <p>She comments on the audience that the audience who'll be reading their papers does not share the same knowledge as we do. This helps students think beyond here and now and toward an unknown audience.</p> <p>When one student suggests a general noun group such as Native Americans, the teacher asks students whether it should Native Americans or a specific group. She tells them that our choice of language matters.</p> <p>The student says the Ho-Chunk, another student says Land is important to the Ho-Chunk, and the</p>

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<p>S: <i>I think we should write <i>Is important because they still live here.</i></i></p> <p>T writes: <i>Land is important to the Ho-Chunk. The word “is” is not just a simple verb. It tells, like she said, that they still live here. Really good thinking class. You are growing in your awareness about language.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Now let’s write this claim differently. What if I said the Ho-Chunk loved their land? How is that different?</i></p> <p>S: <i>The Ho-Chunk is in the beginning.</i></p> <p>T: <i>Right. And when you put something at the beginning, it means it’s about that thing. So, if we want to emphasize the land, then we put the land at the beginning. If we want to emphasize the Ho-Chunk, we put that at the beginning. When we change the order of words, we change meanings. Tomorrow we are going to write together evidence to support the claim we just wrote.</i></p>	<p>teacher then writes a complete claim, ‘Land is important to the Ho-Chunk’.</p> <p>The teacher takes an opportunity to discuss meanings of small words students often use without putting much thought into them: is and was. She shows them that those small words change meanings drastically from living in the past to “they still live here,” meanings represented through such as a small word as “is.”</p> <p>One student suggests to use present “is” by saying “because they still live here.” The teacher reiterates to emphasize the meaning of “is” and develop critical language awareness to dismantle a stereotype that Native Americans only lived long ago or only valued land long ago. She praises the class that they are growing in their awareness about language, which moves the conversation beyond content only.</p> <p>Then the teacher teaches the students explicitly that changing the position of the word “Land” to the beginning places emphasis on the land. Moving the “Ho-Chunk” to the beginning will place emphasis on the Ho-Chunk. The teacher concludes by saying, “When we change word order, we change meanings.” By doing so, she develops students’ linguistic resources as well as their metalinguistic awareness.</p>
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Through our revised script, we aim to illustrate how to make knowledge about writing and language in writing visible, and to help the reader notice what the teacher did to achieve that through the process of jointly constructing a text. Joint construction is different from modeling because it focuses on negotiation of meaning through student and teacher conversations about language, allowing students to engage in the co-construction of text. This process invites all students’ contributions; together, the class reshapes the language to fit the text purpose. In the script, the teacher makes knowledge about text organization through paragraphs explicit and teaches students that paragraphs have different functions, depending on the genre and their place in the context of the whole text. The teacher also makes language visible by teaching different ways of saying “important,” renaming it with “placing great value” and by drawing students’ attention to the pronoun “them” and verbs “is” versus “was.” By engaging students in looking at words in context, the teacher does not just teach language towards accuracy, but for critical orientation towards texts.

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The main implication from these recommendations is that teachers need access to a pedagogically useful theory of language—we cannot do literacy without language (Halliday, 1996; Hasan, 2008; Christie & Derewianka, 2008). As mentioned earlier, systemic functional linguistics brings meaning, context, literacy, and language together and defines language in literacy not as grammar, spelling, and punctuation but as a system of choices in context. Teachers need to be supported to build their knowledge about language and have resources that support that knowledge. One such resource is the new edition of the WIDA English Language Development Standards that uses a functional approach to language and illustrates language in context of texts through annotated mentor texts organized by genre families, such as arguing, explaining, informing, and narrating genres.

We believe that teachers, once armed with a pedagogically sound knowledge about language and an apprenticeship pedagogy for writing, namely the teaching and learning cycle, will be able to break free from the scripted, prepackaged curricula and be cautious consumers of the teaching materials that deprive students of owning their knowledge of how language works in the context of text.

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